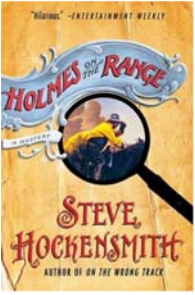
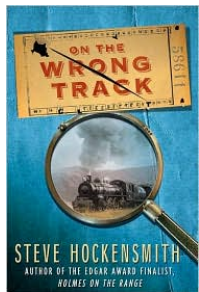
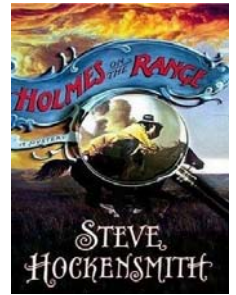


The “Holmes on the Range” series By Steve Hockensmith



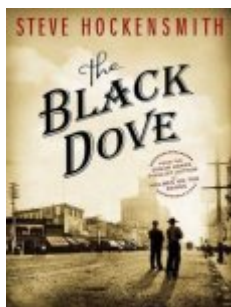
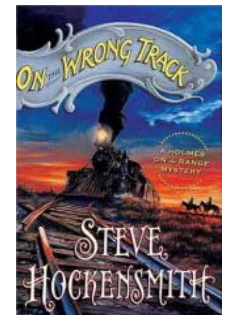
Holmes on the Range [2006]

It's 1893, a tough year in Montana, and any job is a good job. When Big Red and Old Red Amlingmeyer sign on as ranch hands at the secretive Bar VR cattle spread, they're not expecting much more than hard work, bad pay, and a comfortable campfire around which they can enjoy their favorite pastime: scouring Harper's Weekly for stories about the famous Sherlock Holmes. When the boys come across a dead body that looks a whole lot like the leftovers of an unfortunate encounter with a cattle stampede, Old Red sees the perfect opportunity to employ his Holmes-inspired deducifyin' skills. Putting his ranch work squarely on the back burner, he sets out to solve the case.



On the Wrong Track [2007]

It may be 1893 and the modern world may be in full swing, but cowboy Gustav "Old Red" Amlingmeyer is an old-fashioned kind of guy: He prefers a long trail ride even when a train could get him where he's going in one-tenth the time. His brother Otto ("Big Red"), on the other hand, wouldn't mind climbing down from his horse and onto a train once in a while if it'll give his saddle-sore rear end a rest. So when it's Old Red who insists they sign on to protect the luxurious Pacific Express, despite a generations-old Amlingmeyer family distrust of the farm-stealin', cattle-killin', money-grubbin' railroads, Big Red is flummoxed. But Old Red, tired of the cowpoke life, wants to take a stab at professional "detectifying," just like his hero, Sherlock Holmes, and guarding jobs for the railroad are the only ones on offer. So it is that Big Red and Old Red find themselves trapped on a thousand tons of steam-driven steel, summiting the Sierras en route to San Francisco with a crafty gang of outlaws somewhere around the next bend, a baggage car jam-packed with deadly secrets, and a vicious killer hidden somewhere among the colorful passengers.



The Black Dove [2008]

In the summer of 1893, Gustav “Old Red” Amlingmeyer and his brother Otto (a.k.a. “Big Red”) find themselves down and out in San Francisco. Though cowpokes by training, the brothers are devotees of the late, great Sherlock Holmes and his trademark method of “deducifying.” But when they set out to land jobs as professional detectives, they land themselves in hot water, instead.

First their friend Dr. Chan mysteriously takes a potshot at them, fatally wounding Big Red's new hat. Then a secretive young woman from their past pops up and convinces them that Chan's in trouble -- and they're just the men to get him out of it. Unfortunately, they're too late: By the time they track Chan down again, he's dead. The police call it a suicide. Old Red calls that a lie. When he and his brother set out to prove it, they put themselves on a collision course with shady S.F.P.D. cops, brutal Barbary Coast hoodlums and the deadly Chinatown tongs.

Before long, all sides are in a race to uncover the secret that could rock the city. And their only clue to what's actually going on is the enigmatic, exotic and extremely difficult to find “Black Dove.”

[handout prepared for Just Desserts mystery fiction discussion group]

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