

CHARACTERS

Choose the character you will play. *Characters with a large speaking part

*Stage Directors 1, 2, 3 (SD1, SD2, SD3)

Dr. Jenny Watson: Sherlock Holmes's associate

*Sherlock Holmes: a brilliant, famous detective

Sleuthsayer221, Time4Crime, GetAClue, HolmesFan, Treasure4Me: podcast listeners

*Sara Musgrave: wealthy owner of Musgrave Manor

Robert Brunton: property manager

Vera Howells: marketing director

Inspector Laura Lestrade: police investigator

As You Read

Think about how the different characters experience the events of the play.

SCENE 1

recording studio, London, present day

SD1: It's a perfect summer afternoon. The sky is clear.

SD2: The birds are chirping. The streets are full of people.

SD3: But Dr. Jenny Watson isn't among them. She's inside a small studio, recording her true-crime podcast.

Dr. Jenny Watson: Today on *Clued In*, we have a very special guest. As many of you know, I assist the world-famous detective Sherlock Holmes. He's solved dozens of crimes that puzzled the police—using only his astonishing powers of **deduction**.

Sherlock Holmes: Hello, Watson. I hope you enjoyed your cereal after your 5-mile run.

Watson: How did you know I went running and ate cereal?

Holmes: Your "Baker Street Running Club" T-shirt, which you always wear on long runs, has cornflakes stuck to it.

Watson: Incredible.

Holmes: Elementary, my dear Watson.

Watson: Our listeners are eager to hear from you. Let's take a look at the chat, shall we?

Sleuthsayer221: Who is the most memorable person you've met in your work?

Time4Crime: Are you rich?

GetAClue: You're not as clever as you think.

HolmesFan: Are there any cases that still haunt you?

Holmes: At last, a tolerable **inquiry**. In fact, I can think of one case, about the matter of the Musgrave Ritual.

Watson: Did you have trouble solving it?

Holmes: No, of course not. But there is one question about the case that remains unanswered.

SD1: Holmes settles back in his chair and closes his eyes.

Holmes: It all began on a sunny afternoon much like this one. . . .

SCENE 2

Holmes's apartment, 10 years earlier

SD2: Holmes is sitting on his sofa, gazing into space. A loud knock sounds at his door.

Holmes: Come in.

SD3: The doorknob turns, and an elegant woman hurries into Holmes's living room. Her clothes are stylish, but her hair is **disheveled** and her eyes are wild.

Sara Musgrave: Mr. Holmes, you have to help me!

Holmes: The police can't solve your case, and you have no one else to turn to.

Sara: How did you know?

Holmes: That's the only reason people visit me. Tell me about the problems with your country estate, Ms. Musgrave, and I'll see if I can help.

SD1: Sara's mouth drops open in astonishment.

Sara: Have we met before? How can you know so much about me?

Holmes: Your clothes are expensive and perfectly tailored. Your shoes are splashed with wet mud. It rained in the countryside but not in London, which tells me you traveled to London this morning. The necklace you're wearing is old and valuable, and the pendant is the letter "M." The Musgraves are the nearest wealthy family with a country estate.

Sara: When you explain it like that, it seems so simple.

SD2: Holmes sighs and closes his eyes.

Holmes: To be great is to be misunderstood.

Sara: If you already know of my family, Mr. Holmes, you know we've had our country estate for centuries. I am the eldest of my siblings, so after my father

passed away, the house and land went to me—along with the poem.

SD3: Holmes opens one eye.

Holmes: Poem?

Sara: The eldest child of each generation of Musgraves receives the poem when we **inherit** the estate. Then we must memorize it and recite it as part of a special ritual.

Holmes: Can you recite it now?

Sara: We're supposed to keep it a secret. I don't know why though. It's just a weird family tradition. *(clears her throat)*

It was his, and now it is ours

to keep in safety for his return.

*In June the sun stood over the oak
and the shadow fell from the elm.*

*Step north by ten and by ten, east by five and by five,
south by two and by two, west by one and by one,
and so under lies his helm.*

Holmes: How curious.

Sara: I don't see how it's relevant. What's more important is my best employees, Robert and Vera, have disappeared!

SD1: Holmes opens his other eye.

Holmes: Thank you for not boring me, Ms. Musgrave. You can tell me about your missing employees on the way to your estate.

SCENE 3

Sara Musgrave's car, a country road

SD2: Sara is driving. Holmes's eyes are closed.

Sara: Well, let's see . . . what can I tell you? Robert Brunton is our property manager. He's been with my family for decades. He's a bit old-fashioned but loyal—or so I thought. Vera Howells is my marketing director. I hired her to help me turn the estate into a hotel. She is smart and reliable.

SD3: Holmes does not respond.

Sara: I don't like being alone at the house. At night, the darkness is intense, as though I can feel all my family's ghosts. I can never fall asleep. Last Thursday was no exception. . . .

SD1: As Sara tells the story, the car fades away around her, until we see her standing in a massive stone hallway that smells of mold and time.

SD2: Dimly flickering wall lights do little to push away the darkness.

SD3: At the end of the hallway, a door stands open.

Sara: Is someone there?

SD1: Sara walks through the door into a library. Heavy wooden shelves are crammed with leather-bound books.



SD2: Robert Brunton stands over an oak desk at the far end of the room, looking through papers.

Sara: Robert? What are you doing?

SD3: Robert jumps. A guilty look settles on his face.

Robert: Ms. Musgrave! I—I didn't realize you were awake.

SD1: Sara strides across the room. She snatches the papers out of Robert's trembling hands.

Sara: This is our secret family poem! Why are you going through our private things in the middle of the night?

Robert: I—I can explain.

Sara: I'm waiting.

SD2: Robert looks miserable. He says nothing.

Sara: You're fired. Leave. Now.

Robert: I've been with your family since before you were born. At least give me some time to pack.

Sara (coldly): You have one week.

SD3: We return to Sara and Holmes in the car.

Sara: The next day, Robert was gone. But it was so strange. His car was still in the driveway. His keys and wallet were in his room, along with all his things.

Holmes: What did you do?

Sara: Vera was the only other person at the house, so naturally I went to talk to her.

SD1: Again the scene melts away, and we see Vera sitting at her desk in the front office. Sara walks in.

Sara: Vera, have you seen Robert?

Vera (uneasily): No. Why would I have seen him?

Sara: You look quite pale. Are you all right?

Vera: I... feel ill. I think I need to go home.

Sara: Very well. But do let me know if you hear from Robert.

SD2: We return to the car.

Sara: That was the last time I saw her—I think.

Holmes: You think?

Sara: Well, that evening, I saw someone outside the house carrying a bag toward the lake. I thought it might be Vera, but I couldn't be sure. When I ran outside, there was no one there. I called the police, and then I came to you.

SD3: Sara turns down a long gravel drive. At the far end looms a grim-looking mansion.

Sara: Welcome to my country estate, Musgrave Manor.

SCENE 4

Musgrave Manor

SD1: Musgrave Manor is crawling with police officers searching for Vera and Robert. Holmes turns to Sara.

Holmes: That giant old oak to the left of the house—that is

the tree from the poem, I assume?

Sara (confused): I suppose so. It's over 400 years old.

Holmes: And the elm?

Sara: There used to be one halfway between the oak and the house, but it was struck by lightning. You can see the stump there.

Holmes: How tall was it?

SD2: A look of surprise crosses Sara's face. Holmes sees it.

Sara: Sixty-four feet. It's so strange—

Holmes: Robert asked you the same question.

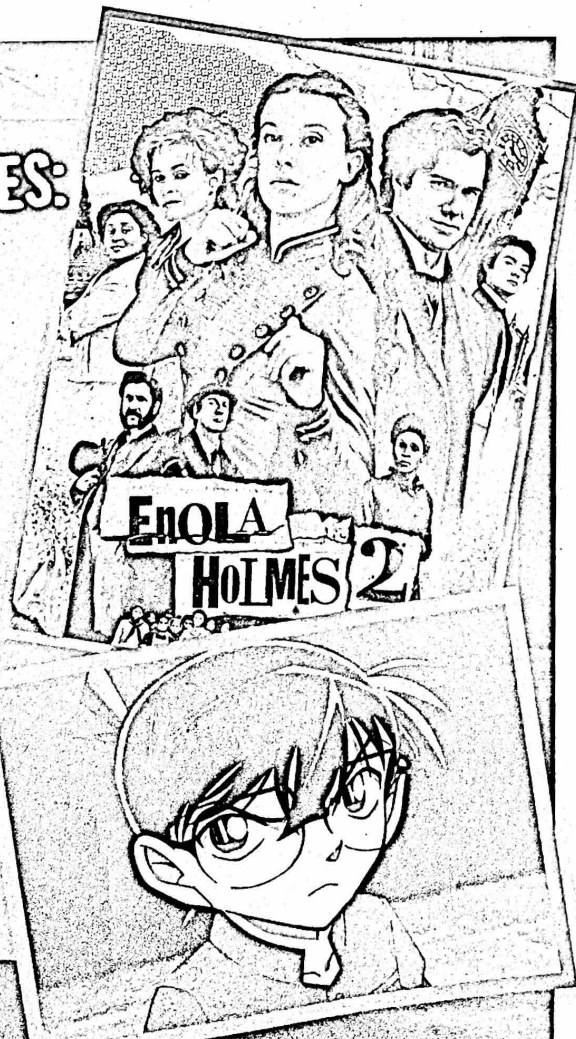
Sara: Yes, just the other week. How could you have known that?

SD3: A police officer carrying a bag approaches Sara and Holmes.

Inspector Laura Lestrade: Ms. Musgrave, we thought perhaps your employees fell in the lake and drowned. It's quite deep and cold. But this bag is all we found

SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS DETECTIVE

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) wrote four novels and 56 stories featuring his character Sherlock Holmes. Today Holmes remains a beloved character, inspiring countless retellings and stories—including the series *Enola Holmes*, about Sherlock's brilliant sister, and the hit anime series *Case Closed*, about a kid detective in Japan. It's hard not to wonder what Sir Arthur Conan Doyle would say if he could see how his character has endured and evolved.





Sara: That's Vera's bag!

SD1: Inspector Lestrade opens it. Sara and Holmes peer inside.

Sara: It's just a bunch of rusty metal. What was Vera doing with this old junk?

Holmes (to himself): Clever. But not clever enough.

SCENE 5

a few minutes later

SD2: Holmes is pacing the lawn underneath the old oak tree, muttering to himself.

SD3: Sara and Inspector Lestrade watch in **bewilderment**.

Sara: What do you think he is doing?

Lestrade: Who can say?

Holmes: One hundred north . . . 25 east . . . step north by ten and by ten, east by five and by five.

SD1: Holmes continues to walk and talk.

Holmes: South by two and by two, west by one and by one.

SD2: He stops in front of a large outbuilding near the main house.

SD3: The door is unlocked.

Holmes: Aha!

SD1: Sara hurries to his side and Inspector Lestrade follows.

SD2: Holmes flings the door open. They rush into the building.

Holmes: Someone has been here. Look, there are footprints in the dust. And this rug has been disturbed. Inspector, have your officers been in this building?

Lestrade: No, we didn't even notice it.

SD3: Holmes stands for a moment, lost in thought.

Holmes: "And so under." Of course!

SD1: Holmes flings aside the rug, revealing a trapdoor that leads to a cellar.

Sara: I didn't even know this was here!

SD2: Holmes tugs at the metal handle. The door doesn't budge.

Holmes: It's too heavy for one person. Help me, Ms. Musgrave!

SD3: Holmes and Sara struggle with the trapdoor. At last, they heave it open.

Lestrade (gasping): There's a body down there!

Sara: It's Robert! Is he . . . dead?

SD1: Holmes leaps into the cellar and holds his fingers to Robert's neck.

Holmes: There's a pulse. He's alive.

Lestrade (on her radio): Call an ambulance at once!



SCENE 6

the lawn, Musgrave Manor

SD2: Medics carry Robert out of the cellar.

Robert (weakly): Vera . . . she left me here to die!

Holmes: You'll recover nicely. And it's no less than you deserve!

SD3: The ambulance takes Robert away. Sara stares at Holmes.

Sara: Mr. Holmes, I don't understand anything that just happened. How did you know where to find Robert?

Holmes: Elementary. Robert was clever enough to see that the poem from your family ritual is a map to a priceless treasure. He knew he couldn't lift the trapdoor alone, so he asked Vera for help.

Sara: Where is this treasure then?

Holmes: The police have already returned it to you. It's in the bag they pulled from the lake.

Sara: That junk?

Holmes: Vera thought the same. That's why she threw it in the lake as she fled the scene of her crime. But it is a treasure more priceless than gold. It is the ancient crown of King Charles I of England!

SD1: Sara gasps, and her face lights up with shock and joy.

Sara: The helm from the poem is the crown! Of course! Many centuries ago, the Musgraves were close counselors to the royal family. When King Charles was arrested, he must have asked my family to hide his treasure. It's obvious!

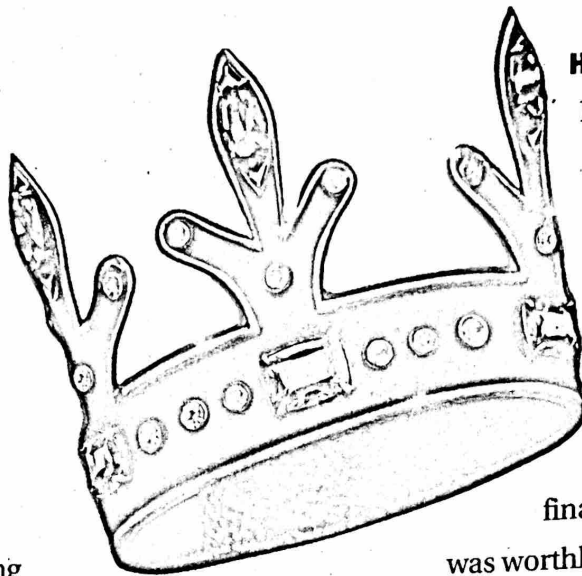
SD2: Holmes sighs.

Holmes (to himself): They always say that—after I've done all the work for them.

Lestrade: Why didn't the king come back for it?

Sara: He couldn't. He was executed.

Lestrade: So where is Vera then?



Holmes: Long gone, of course. Perhaps she locked Robert in the cellar to die. Or perhaps the trapdoor fell shut and she chose to leave him there.

Sara (sadly): Either way, leaving him meant she could keep the treasure for herself.

Lestrade: Except when she finally examined it, she thought it was worthless and tossed it in the lake.

SCENE 7

recording studio, London, present day

Watson: Amazing story! But there's one thing I don't understand. How did you know about the trapdoor?

Holmes: Once I knew the height of the old elm tree, I calculated the length of its shadow. The poem told me where to start walking and how many steps to take.

Watson: Elementary, right Holmes?

Holmes: Geometry, my dear Watson.

Watson: What happened to Robert?

Holmes: He went to prison for attempted robbery.

Watson: And Vera?

Holmes (shrugging): She was never found. I suppose she fled the country.

Watson: Mysterious. Let's check in with our listeners. Lots of comments coming through the chat!

Time4Crime: Simple! Anyone could've solved that case.

HolmesFan: No way! Sherlock is a genius.

SleuthSayer221: Maybe there was more treasure down there, and she's living like a queen somewhere.

GetAClue: Or maybe Vera fell in the lake and they never found her body.

Treasure4Me: I wouldn't worry about Vera. I'm sure she's doing just fine. ○

Writing Contest

Imagine you are one of the characters involved in the case of the Musgrave Ritual. Write a diary entry as that character, describing the events of the story and your thoughts and feelings. Entries must be submitted to **Holmes Contest** by a teacher, parent, or legal guardian.* Three winners will each get *The Plot to Kill a Queen* by Deborah Hopkinson.

*Entries must be written by a student in grades 4-12 and submitted by their teacher, parent, or legal guardian, who will be the entrant and must be a legal resident of the U.S. age 18 or older. See page 2 for details.

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CRIME SCENE - DO NOT CROSS CRIME SCENE - DO NOT CROSS

MEET A REAL CRIME SCIENTIST

The famous character Sherlock Holmes used his observation skills to solve crimes. Today's crime-solvers use science.

BY ALEX LIM-CHUA WEE



Craig O'Connor

A half-eaten pizza crust. An empty soda can. A plate of chicken bones. To you, this probably sounds like someone's leftovers. But to Craig O'Connor, they could hold clues to solving a crime.

O'Connor is a forensic scientist. He works at one of the largest public crime labs in the country. Every year, O'Connor and his team receive nearly 10,000 cases. Their job is to examine objects taken from crime scenes as evidence. We asked O'Connor to tell us about his important work.

Did you always want to be a forensic scientist?

As a kid, I liked science and solving puzzles. But it was watching crime

shows on TV that got me interested in forensic science. After college, I got my Ph.D. in genetics. Then I moved to New York City to work in a crime lab.

What do you look for when examining evidence?

Often forensic scientists look for fingerprints. For example, if a car was stolen, they'll check the steering wheel for prints. Our lab is mostly looking for DNA, a chemical structure found in your body. Everyone's DNA is unique to them. [DNA can be left behind in skin cells, hair, or bodily fluids like saliva and blood.] If we find DNA, it can tell us who an item belonged to and that can help us solve a crime.

How do you find DNA?

Let's say we're studying a pizza crust. We look at the bite marks. Next, we use a cotton swab to collect a saliva sample. We put the sample in a test tube and add chemicals that will allow us to identify any DNA.

Is your job like it looks on TV?

When you watch forensic scientists on TV, they're usually working on one case at a time. In real life, we often work on thousands. It can also take us 30 to 60 days to get results from testing. On TV, you see crimes get solved the next day! ◉

WHAT IS DNA?

Your body contains tiny chemical structures called DNA. Think of DNA like an instruction manual for how to build and operate YOU. Genes are made up of DNA. Each gene has instructions for something specific—your eye color, hair color, and more.

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