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Book Discussion Guide

The Case of the Missing Marquess: An Enola Holmes Mystery
By Nancy Springer

1. The Case of the Missing Marquess is a historical mystery. What is a historical mystery? What other historical mysteries have you read?

2. Prior to reading The Case of the Missing Marquess, were you familiar with Sherlock Holmes?

3. What was your first impression of Enola Holmes?

4. Why do you think Mycroft was so upset at the state of Ferndell Hall?

5. Why do you think Enola’s mother chose to leave? Do you think it was right for her to leave? Do you think she was right in her belief that Enola would do fine on her own?

6. Enola’s mother created a book of ciphers to tell Enola things she didn’t want anyone else to know. Have you ever used secret messages to talk to people?

7. Essentially, Enola’s mother lied to Mycroft about how the money he sent her was being spent. Do you think it was right for Enola’s mother to do that? Do you think she had any other choice? Is it ever okay to lie?

8. Why was Enola so upset at the prospect of boarding school?

9. How would things be different if Enola’s father were still alive?

10. Why does Enola put her plans for London on hold to investigate the case of the missing Lord Tewksbury? What draws her to it?

11. Were you surprised that she was able to solve the mystery of his disappearance? Why do you think Enola was able to solve the mystery of Lord Tewksbury’s disappearance so much faster than the Scotland Yard detectives? Is it believable that she would be able to outwit Scotland Yard detectives and her brother, the famous detective, Sherlock Holmes?

12. Disguising oneself is a theme which reoccurred often in The Case of the Missing Marquess. Mrs. Culhane turned out to be the old lady from the train. Cutter turned out to be Madame Laelia. Lord Tewksbury cut off his hair and headed to the shipping yards of London, and Enola herself took on the disguise of a widow, a young executive, Sister and finally Ivy Meshle, secretary to Dr. Ragostin,
scientific perditorian. How is disguise used in the story? Were those who used disguises up to no good? Is a disguise a lie?

13. Do you think Enola will make it on her own in London?

14. Do you think Sherlock and Mycroft will eventually find her?

15. Are you interested in reading any of the sequels to The Case of the Missing Marquess?

16. Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

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Author Biography

Nancy Springer has published forty novels for adults, young adults and children. In a career beginning shortly after she graduated from Gettysburg College in 1970, Springer wrote for ten years in the imaginary realms of mythological fantasy, then ventured on contemporary fantasy, magical realism, and women's fiction before turning her attention to children's literature. Her novels and stories for middle-grade and young adults range from contemporary realism, mystery/crime, and fantasy to her critically acclaimed novels based on the Arthurian mythos, I AM MORDRED: A TALE OF CAMELOT and I AM MORGAN LE FAY. Springer's children's books have won her two Edgar Allan Poe awards, a Carolyn W. Field award, various Children's Choice honors and numerous ALA Best Book listings. Her most recent series include the Tales of Rowan Hood, featuring Robin Hood’s daughter, and the Enola Holmes mysteries, starring the much younger sister of Sherlock Holmes.

Ms. Springer lives in East Berlin, Pennsylvania.
Review

THE CASE OF THE MISSING MARQUESS: An Enola Holmes Mystery
by Nancy Springer
Philomel Books
Hardcover: 0399243046
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Ages 8-12
224 pages

There is almost nothing ordinary about 14-year-old Enola Holmes. (She is painfully aware that her name spelled backwards is "Alone." ) The year is 1880; the place, England. Enola lives on a lovely estate, but there is nothing upper crust about her. Even more unusual is the fact that her much older brothers are the famous detectives Mycroft and Sherlock Holmes. And not to mention the fact that Enola's mother has gone missing on the very day of Enola's birthday.

Enola's mother has left her several birthday gifts: a drawing kit, a book about the hidden meanings of flowers, and a cipher book. Enola loves the presents but hates that her mother has disappeared. She wires her brothers to come and help find their mother. Mycroft and Sherlock arrive, only to discover that their mother has been getting money from Mycroft, who handles the estate, under false pretensions. But there's no sign of the missing money or the missing mother. Then, to Enola's shock and horror, Mycroft insists that Enola go away to a snooty girl's finishing school.

No way! Enola decides to leave home to find her mother herself. But before she departs, she uncovers a hidden message from her mother, written in the language of flowers, plus a message written in cipher. Acting on the clues, she goes through her mother's beautiful drawings of flowers and finds all the money hidden inside the picture frames. The money was left for her! She puts on a bustle to hide the money in and disguises herself as a widow, wearing her mother's black dress and hat.

After escaping by bicycle and on foot, Enola happens to arrive in the village where the young Marquess of Basilwether has just been kidnapped. Or has he? Enola finds clues as to what really happened and also meets Sherlock's famous associate, Inspector Lestrade. She goes to London, narrowly escaping from Lestrade, only to be kidnapped herself. And, by a not-so-strange coincidence, she finds herself captive on a boat with the Marquess himself!

How do Nola and the Marquess escape from the vicious Victorian villains who kidnapped them? Does Enola ever find her mother? Is Sherlock Holmes able to locate his missing sister? Does Enola end up in a horrid finishing school? All will be revealed in THE CASE OF THE MISSING MARQUESS. No young reader will want to miss it!

--- Reviewed by Robert Oksner (oksnerinc@attglobal.net)