

The 100-Year-Old Secret (The Sherlock Files #1)

By: Tracy Barrett

Publisher: Henry Holt and Co.

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Genre: Mystery

Summary:

Xena and Xander have moved to London with their parents and find out they are related to Sherlock Holmes. They inherit his unsolved mystery casebook and find themselves in the middle of a mystery involving a painting that vanished 100 years ago.

Booktalk:

Xena Holmes and her younger brother Xander have moved from Florida to London, England with their parents. One afternoon they are playing their favorite game in front of their hotel, guessing people's jobs and hobbies by getting clues from their clothes, when a mysterious stranger presses a note into Xena's hand, mutters "It fades fast," and hurries away. What does it mean? Neither Xena nor Xander had any idea, but they were about to find out!

Author's Biographical Sketch:

Tracy Barrett is the author of numerous books and magazine articles for young readers. She holds a Bachelor's Degree with honors in Classics-Archaeology from Brown University and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Medieval Italian Literature from the University of California, Berkeley. Her scholarly interests in the ancient and medieval worlds overlap in her fiction and nonfiction works. For

<http://www.tracybarrett.com/>

<http://www.tracybarrett.com/bio.htm>

<http://biography.jrank.org/pages/1055/Barrett-Tracy-1955.html>

Interview with the author:

http://us.macmillan.com/AuthorExtras.aspx?AuthorKey=727709&m_type=4&m_contentid=4603#cmscontent

Other books written by the author:

On Etruscan Time

Cold in Summer

Anna of Byzantium

Challenging Words (pronunciation, spelling, definition):

p2 consulting	p44 agoraphobia
p7 illustrious, ploughman's lunch;	p85 scrimmage
p10 pub;	p95 brochures
p11 shandy;	p103 eliminated
p15 ominous	p105 ornithology
p17 cinder-block;	p114 improbable
p36 medieval illumination;	p116 scrutinizing
p39 depicted	

Discussion Questions:

1. How would you react if you found that one of your ancestors was a famous person in history?
2. What characteristics do the children have that make them good detectives?
3. What are some of the clues that led them to solve the mystery?
4. Who were the Baker Street Irregulars?
5. Who was Nigel Batheson and what was his part in the mystery?
6. How did Xander figure out who the 'girl' in the hat was?
7. To which famous person from long ago would you like to be related? Why?
8. What are Xena's strengths? What are Xander's strengths?
9. How have advances in technology helped detectives solve mysteries?
10. What did you learn about London that surprised you? What are some of the ways London is different from cities in the United States?

Suggested Activities:**Language Arts:**

1. Xena and Xanda have the unsolved casebook of Sherlock Holmes. Help them solve another mystery of your choosing from the book. Make sure to establish a plot, point of view, setting and conflict and relate the events of the story with an ending that resolves the mystery.

Indiana Academic Standards: English/Language Arts

5.5.1 Write narratives that:

- establish a plot, point of view, setting, and conflict.
- show, rather than tell, the events of the story.

2. Complete a Mystery Cube at this site:
http://readwritethink.org/materials/mystery_cube/ .

Indiana Academic Standards: English/Language Arts

5.3.1 Identify and analyze the characteristics of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction and explain the appropriateness of the literary forms chosen by an author for a specific purpose.

6.3.1 Identify different types (genres) of fiction and describe the major characteristics of each form.

Lifeskills:

cooperation

curiosity

effort

problem solving

RELATED INTERNET SITES:

Sherlockian.net

<http://www.sherlockian.net/>

Sherlock Holmes Museum

<http://www.sherlock-holmes.co.uk/>

Sherlock Holmes Society of London

http://www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/world/conan_doyle.php

Sir Arthur Canon Doyle Biography

<http://www.sherlockholmesonline.org/biography/index.htm>

Mysteries for kids to solve:

<http://kids.mysterynet.com/>

Kids Love a Mystery:

<http://www.kidsloveamystery.com/>

Bio of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes:

<http://www.mysterynet.com/holmes/>