



FILM: **ENOLA HOLMES**

FDG RATING: 3.2 ☺☺☺○○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Harry Bradbeer *director*
Millie Bobby Brown: *actress, Enola Holmes*
Helen Bonham Carter: *actress, Eudoria Holmes*
Louis Partridge: *actor, Tewkesbury*

DATE: December 13, 2020

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **ENOLA HOLMES**

Enola Holmes, an entertaining, light-weight, murder mystery film, (based on the Young Adult novel series), is perfect for a teen audience but less satisfying for adults, especially those who are devoted Sherlock Holmes traditionalists. In this loose adaptation, Sherlock and his older brother who normally are fascinating characters were insubstantial while their fictional teenage sister Enola, is the clever crime solver. While searching for her missing mother, Enola uses her sleuthing skills to outsmart big brother Sherlock and help a teenage runaway lord, Tewkesbury, who is rebelling against the posh norms/expectations of his family.

Millie Bobby Brown is a charming Enola, who frequently talks directly to the viewer (breaking the 4th wall) which some discussion participants found distracting and irritating while others found engaging. In an early scene, she is briskly bicycling in the hills, hits a bump, and lands face first in the dirt. "Cycling is not one of my core strengths," she explains matter-of-factly looking directly at us, as she dusts herself off.

Enola notes that her name is "alone" spelled backward. She and her thoroughly unorthodox mother (a perfectly type cast Helena Bonham Carter) are exactly that as they prowl about their expansive country mansion doing whatever they please: painting, reading, even playing tennis and archery indoors. Her mother is a feisty, independent role model, who helps Enola master jujitsu and other survival skills encouraging her daughter to be strong and independent. She disappears suddenly as Enola turns 16, (we later learn her mother is a fervent activist involved in the Reform movement to give women the right to vote) leaving her daughter to fend for herself with a series of cryptic clues that she must decipher to find her. Meanwhile, her disapproving older brothers have returned to check on her. Mycroft is determined to have her learn how to be a proper young lady and wants to send her to an uptight finishing school. Enola will have nothing to do with it.

There are several references to a reform bill throughout the movie, which takes place in 1884. Tewkesbury reveals to Enola that he ran away because his family is set on sending him to the army before he replaces his late father in the House of Lords where he'd be able to vote on the bill. He confirms that he's in favor of the act, His stance is frowned upon by some members of his family, namely his grandmother, the Dowager, who believes that new thinkers threaten their way of life. She hires a henchman to assassinate Tewkesbury — just as she had his father killed, knowing the lord would support voter expansion.

We applauded the strong, clever, female teen character, a great role model for young girls. And especially liked the mother-daughter relationship. The artful 1890s costumes were a plus. But the tone, script, and pace felt a bit juvenile leaving a clueless score of 3.2 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!

Adriane Dedic, adedic@pacbell.net

www.filmdiscussiongroup.com