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Alex Geller
Library Director
Red Hook Public Library
7444 S Broadway
Red Hook, NY 12571
December 3, 2024

Dear Cynthia Brown,

Thank you and the Beacon Society for your generous support of the Red Hook Public Library's Sherlock Holmes Escape Room initiative and dedicated Sherlock Holmes collection of both physical and digital works. In total, 57 people participated in the escape room challenge, working in teams of 3-6, with each participant receiving a copy of one of the four Arthur Conan Doyle's original four novels of the canon. We added 15 Sherlock Holmes books to our permanent adult collection, 10 in our children's collection, as well as 15 eBooks and eAudiobooks to our digital collection.

The Escape Room

In the late summer, the Library hosted the Escape Room over three days, offering six rounds each day. A breakdown of the set-up can be found at the end of the report. Each team had 30 minutes to solve the puzzle, with the average solve time being 22 minutes. While it was possible to find clues without following the steps, we set it up that the answer could only be found if the team collected all the clues in order.

The program was a great success of intergenerational team work. With many participants requesting future escape rooms. We were able to reuse some of the materials purchased for this escape room (hollowed-out book and black-light pen) in a Harry Potter Escape Room we put together in the fall. Each participant also received a copy of one of the following titles: "A Study in Scarlet," "The Sign of the Four," "The Hound of the Baskervilles," or "The Valley of Fear."

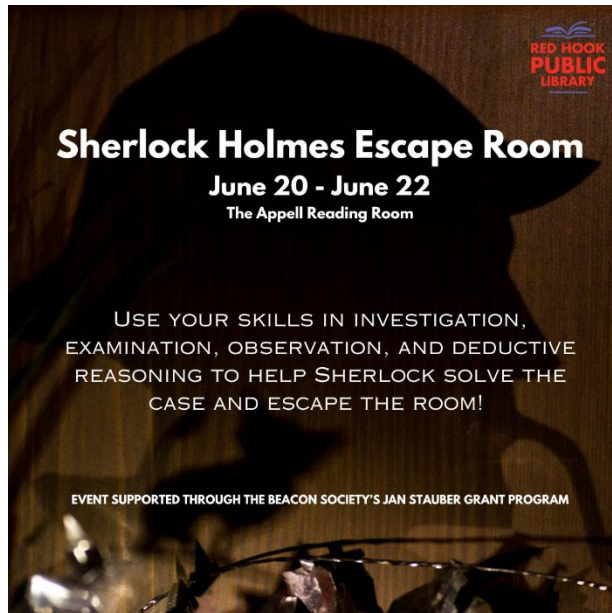
Scenes from the first day of the Escape Room

We promoted the program on social media, through our newsletter, and on flyers. We created social videos as well as the Instagram/Facebook flyer featured below. We captured photos from a few teams from day one, which can also be found below.



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New Collection

We also added copies of Sherlock Holmes' stories to our general collection, creating a dedicated space in our main circulation area. We added graphic novels, deductive reasoning books, and renditions of Holmes' stories for kids. And through our Libby App, we added 15 eBook and eAudiobook options for our patrons.



Conclusion

While this program was a big success, it also taught us some lessons about our community. 1) Our patrons enjoy immersive experiences. Not only do they want to read, they want to experience life as one of their characters. This led us to pursue a future grant for a dedicated media space and a creator-in-residence to create future immersive programming for our community. 2) Sherlock Holmes and characters and stories based on him and his exploits remain one of our most popular circulating genres. This allowed us to create a more targeted collection development budget. And 3) all of our programs are most successful when they encourage intergenerational participation. As the library works to create social cohesion in our community, we strive to offer programs that can be enjoyed across and with all generations.

Sincerely,
Alex Geller
Library Director
Red Hook Public Library



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Escape Room Set-up Instructions

Escape Room

Set up:

- The table with the long strip of red paper and the cardboard tube.
- Black light and clue in the Stephen King hollowed out book.
- Stephen King book and Walt Whitman Leaves of Grass go on the shelf according to the spine labels.
- The bookmark should mark the page where the highlighted line is.
- The white envelope with the puzzle should be taped to the back of the portrait.
- Paris lock box- on the table under the other travel books.

Make sure the box is locked at the beginning. To lock it the code must be displayed- 241- turn the knob to “locked” and then scramble the numbers.

The originals for the clues are in Teams in a folder called escape room.

Solution/How it works:

Let them know nothing needs to be ripped apart, broken or destroyed to find a clue.

Read the first clue: “Sherlock and Watson are on holiday - but crime never rests! Coming down to morning tea, they learn that Business magnate Michael Sheridan is dead. The duo suspects foul play, and that the killer was someone Sheridan knew. Can you help Sherlock and Watson solve the case in 30 minutes or less before the killer strikes again? If you solve it, the crime solving duo may just let you fill in during their next vacation.



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They should start at the table by the windows.

The red strip wraps around the cardboard tube to spell “Stephen King”.

The book “Needful Things” is on the shelf. This is a hollowed-out book with a black light.

The portrait has a message revealed with the black light, “turn me over.”

The envelope in the back of the portrait has a jigsaw puzzle and this clue: Michael Sheridan is found dead in his office at his desk on June 22, 2024, at 2 am by a custodian. The police put Michael’s estimated time of death between 8 pm and 10 pm. Police have narrowed the list of suspects down to three people:

1. His friend, Mr. Danny McMillan
2. Michael’s wife, Patricia
3. His assistant, Mason Baker

The jigsaw puzzle spells Walt Whitman.

Leaves of Grass by Walt Whitman is on the shelf.

The bookmarked page has the highlighted line “If you want me again, look for me under your boot-soles.”

Under the large carpet is a picture of a map of Paris.

Inside the Eiffel tower is a piece of paper with the numbers 241. This is the code to the locked Paris “book” on the table.

9 The clue in the box has a picture of the mason- so the solution is Mason Baker.



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