

# REVIEW: In 'Enola Holmes 2,' Sherlock's sister sleuths in swashbuckling style



CHENNAI: The character at the center of Arthur Conan Doyle's masterful 19th century creation, Sherlock Holmes, has a sister, Enola, as we found out in Netflix's 2020 film "Enola Holmes," released during the dark days of the COVID-19 pandemic. While purists might have shaken their heads at the spinoff, the streaming giant is firmly out to give us a franchise, with "Enola Holmes 2" now just out.



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Determined to give her more sought after and reputed brother a run for his sleuthing, Enola, played with a delightful zing by bubbly Millie Bobby Brown, has opened her own agency, but is dismayed at the disappointment shown by her prospective clients (You are a girl! Is Sherlock Holmes not free?). Adapted from a six-part novel series written for young adults by Nancy Springer in 2006, Enola may not be particularly appealing to those used to Sherlock's sedate ways of cracking a case.

Set in the gas-lamp-lit London of the late 1800s, "Enola Holmes 2" takes us through the nefarious activities of a matchstick factory that places profit before people. The young women who work there succumb to sulphur poisoning but the deaths are cannily passed off as typhoid related. When the little sister of a worker, Sarah Chapman (Hannah Dodd), comes to Enola for help, she discovers a vicious and larger conspiracy. And, of course, Sherlock (Henry Cavill) also gets involved.

There is never a dull moment in the film as we follow Enola, wrongly accused of murder, being chased by police in horse carriages through handsomely reconstructed streets of 19th century London. Also seen are death-defying acrobatic fights with Enola, a master of martial arts, giving her pursuers a tough time.

Doyle loyalists might let out a long sigh, although the author had previously established his hero as an accomplished boxer and swordsman. I would presume Enola fulfills this with her swashbuckling style.

Returning director Harry Bradbeer and playwright-screenwriter Jack Thorne keep the narrative racing with a simple mystery, which takes inspiration from the real 1888 matchgirls' strike.

Brown is quite good but may appear a bit exaggerated in some scenes. And it is Cavill who is striking, and strangely carries the work.

Also part of this raucous party is a brilliant David Thewlis as the evil Scotland Yard commissioner, who just hates the sight of Enola.

With more parts in the offing, "Enola Holmes 2" introduces a little romance and, more significantly, Dr. Watson (Sherlock's sounding board and eternal companion), who steps into 221B Baker Street as the end credits roll.

