

 BLUE DELTA BOOKS®



PUZZLED

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CHAPTER 1

WELCOME TO SUMMER SCHOOL

Sara didn't want to go to summer school. She could be sleeping late and playing video games. Instead, she was taking a literature class. Her parents thought she needed to get out of the house. They wanted her to make friends.

Sitting in her car at school, Sara sipped coffee. She remembered her mom's words that morning. *"Your dad and I don't want you to spend all summer playing that silly game."*

Crime Scene Agent is not a silly game, Sara

thought. *It takes a lot of skill. They just don't understand.*

Sara put her hair in a ponytail. She tucked her phone inside her pencil case. After grabbing her coffee, Sara locked the car. Then she walked into class.

An angry voice stopped her. "Where do you think you're going with that?" It was the janitor, Mr. Ray. He was pointing at her coffee cup.

Sara looked at her cup. "It has a lid."

Mr. Ray didn't say a word. He just pointed to a sign on the door. It read No Food or Drinks.

Sara was too tired to argue. A trash can sat nearby. She walked over and dumped the half-full cup.

This day is off to a great start, Sara thought. She sat at a table in the back of the room and rubbed her eyes.

She knew her mom was right. It was hard

for Sara to make friends. Her family moved around because of her dad's job. That meant Sara often changed schools. Her only friends were online. Most were in the *Crime Scene Agent* chat group.

Sara looked around the room. A few familiar faces were present. But there were many she didn't know. Jake and Nathan were football team captains. They were sitting with Taz. He was the class clown. Behind them were the cheerleaders. Kate was the cheer captain. She was the most popular girl in school. Julie and Deb were talking to her. They were going on about a video posted on SnapGram. Deb asked Kate if she had liked it.

Kate twisted her hair around her finger. "I'm not on social media. Remember?"

"Still?" Deb asked. "When are you going to join the rest of the world?"

Julie made a *tsk* sound. “How do you do it? I would die without SnapGram.”

Kate shrugged. “I’m just not into it.” She started fixing her makeup.

Sara rolled her eyes. Girls like these made her feel invisible. This was the main reason she didn’t try hard to make friends.

A voice from behind Sara got her attention. “That’s my seat.”

She turned. A tall girl with blue hair stood there.

“Are you joking?” Sara asked.

“I don’t joke,” the girl said. “You’re in my seat.”

Sara looked around. There were many empty seats. “Really? I think we can sit where we want.”

“I know. And I want to sit here.”

Sara sighed. She didn’t want trouble. It

wasn't the time to argue. She stood and picked up her pencil case.

The girl smirked. "That's what I thought."

Shaking her head, Sara walked away.

A boy at the next table pushed back a chair for her. "You can sit here." He glanced at the blue-haired girl. "I see you met Mel."

"Is that her name?" Sara looked back at Mel. "What's her problem?"

The boy shrugged. "Who knows? I just try to stay out of her way. I'm Max."

Sara smiled. "I'm Sara." She saw the pictures he had been drawing in a sketchbook. Then she noticed his clothes. He was wearing dirty jeans, a heavy metal T-shirt, and old shoes. Like her, Max didn't seem to fit in.

Class finally began. Mrs. Parks gave them an assignment. They had to read a short story and answer questions. The story was about Detective

Sherlock Holmes and his trusted assistant, Watson. The plot was full of puzzles, just like her game. Sara liked it.

There was a break halfway through class. Mrs. Parks pointed at the clock. “Be back in 10 minutes.”

Sara set her pencil case on the table. Then she walked out of the room. Many of the students left the room during the break. But Max was still seated when she returned.

The first thing Sara did was reach into her pencil case for her phone.

She gasped. “Oh no!”

Max looked up. “What’s wrong?”

“My phone,” she said. “It’s gone!”

CHAPTER 2

A BIG PROBLEM

Sara was stunned. Her phone was everything. Access to *Crime Scene Agent* and her chat group was gone. The teen thought about Max. Hadn't he been sitting here the whole time? She didn't want to accuse him. But who else could it be?

"Max," she began quietly. "Weren't you sitting here? Did you see anything?"

Max shook his head. "I got up to talk to Mrs. Parks about a book. But I was only gone a few minutes."

Just then, one of the cheerleaders shouted from the front of the room. “Hey! Who took my phone?” It was Julie. She asked everyone around her. No one had seen it.

Sara raised her hand. “Mrs. Parks? Someone took my phone too.”

Other students got nervous. They checked their pockets and backpacks. Mel found that her phone was missing too.

The teacher’s face turned red. Her voice was stern. “Whoever did this has five seconds to return the phones.”

No one moved or said a word.

“Then I’ll be right back with the principal.” Mrs. Parks was out the door in a flash.

Seconds later, Mel was standing in front of Max. “Give the phones back, Max. I know you did it.”

Max's eyes widened. "It wasn't me." He looked at Sara for help.

A big part of her wanted to defend him. But she didn't really know Max. Maybe it *was* him.

Kate came up behind Mel. "What makes you think it was Max?"

Mel glanced at her. "Don't you remember? He's been in trouble for stealing before."

Max sank low in his chair. "I didn't take your phone." He picked up his backpack. Then he handed it to Mel. "See for yourself."

Mel grabbed the backpack. She dumped the contents onto the table. Everyone saw Max's sketchbook, colored pencils, and a bag of chips. There were no phones.

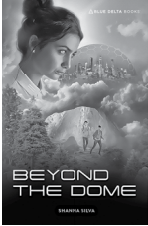
Kate stood face to face with Mel. "Now leave him alone."

The blue-haired girl looked down at Max.

“This isn’t over, thief.” Mel smashed his bag of chips with her fist. Then she went back to her table.

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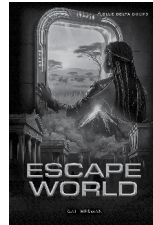
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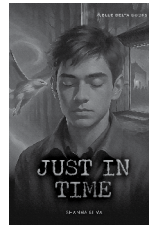
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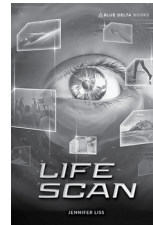
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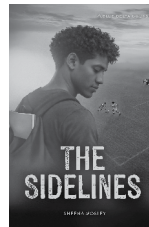
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DETECTIVE

PUZZLED

Sara dreads summer school. But when students' phones start to go missing during class, her days take an intriguing turn. A fan of crime scene games and mystery novels, Sara eagerly embraces the chance to play detective. Can she uncover the thief's identity and bring the crime spree to an end?



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