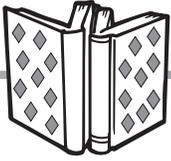


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## Frances Glessner Lee, The First Crime Scene Investigator (CSI)

Millions watch the *CSI* shows each week. They are some of the most popular television series of all time. Finding clues to figure out who did a murder is called forensic science. It is one of the hottest college degrees today. Each year, thousands of students take classes. They want to learn how to analyze a crime scene.

The very first crime scene investigator, or CSI, was a grandma. Her name was Frances Glessner Lee. She started Harvard's department of legal medicine. In 1936, she paid the first full-time teacher's salary. It was the nation's first program for forensic science.

In 1878, Lee was born. Her family was rich. When she grew up, she asked to go to college. At that time, most women did not go to college. Her family said no. At last, in 1930, she went to school. She was fifty-two.

Lee hated that some murders did not get solved. She believed that there was a way to solve them. As a child, she had read and reread the Sherlock Holmes' stories. She admired Holmes' keen observational skills. Lee wanted the police to use such skills to solve real crimes. She thought that the best way to do this was to recreate crime scenes in miniature. Then, they could be studied.

Lee studied real crime scenes. She became an expert. Soon, police departments around the nation asked for her help. They wanted her to train their detectives. So she made tiny crime scenes. She called them Nutshell Studies dioramas. She used them to teach officers to find clues. Some were based on real crime scenes. Most were a combination of crime scenes. Lee read about crime all of the time. She found it easy to reinvent crimes.

It took Lee months to make each diorama. She made about three each year. She bought tiny furniture. It came from around the globe. She made many of the things and each doll herself. She had a carpenter who made exact pieces of furniture. He made the rooms or buildings, too. He lived in a house on Lee's estate. Lee spent a lot on each diorama: each one cost what a home did at that time! Each one had clues. They pointed to what had occurred.

As an **heiress**, Lee had a lot of money. She held free classes for the police. First, a diorama was put in a room. Next, the police had a limited amount of time to take notes about what they saw in it. Then, they discussed it with each other and Lee. It was not as important to solve the case as it was to find clues that might be related to the crime.

The New Hampshire State Police said that Lee helped them to understand crime. They made her an honorary captain. It's hard to assess the depth of Lee's contribution to forensic science. The ripples keep going now. Today, the Maryland Medical Examiner's Office owns all eighteen of her Nutshell Studies dioramas. They are still used in crime scene evaluation classes.



**Frances Glessner Lee**



## Frances Glessner Lee, The First Crime Scene Investigator (CSI)

The *CSI* shows are some of the most popular television series ever. Finding the clues to figure out who committed a murder is called forensic science. In part due to *CSI*'s popularity, forensic science is one of the hottest college degrees today. Each year, thousands of students enroll in classes. They want to learn how to analyze a crime scene.

Few people know that the very first crime scene investigator, or CSI, was a grandma. Her name was Frances Glessner Lee. She started Harvard's department of legal medicine in 1936. She paid the first full-time professor's salary. It was the nation's first program for forensic science.

In 1878, Lee was born into a rich family. When she grew up, she asked to go to college. But at that time, most women did not earn college degrees. Her family said she could not go. Finally, in 1930, she defied them and went to school. She was fifty-two.

Lee hated that some murders went unsolved. She thought that there was a scientific way to solve them. From the time she was a child, she had read and reread the Sherlock Holmes' stories. She wanted to teach the police to use Holmes' keen observational skills to solve real crimes. She decided that the best way to do this was to recreate crime scenes in miniature. Then, they could be studied in detail.

Lee studied real crime scenes. She became an expert. Soon, police departments around the nation asked her to train their detectives. So she made miniature crime scenes. She called them Nutshell Studies dioramas. Then, she used them to teach officers to find evidence. Some of them were based on real crime scenes. Most were a combination of crime scenes. Lee read about crime all of the time. She found it easy to reinvent realistic crimes.

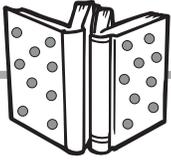
It took Lee months to make each diorama. She finished about three each year. She bought miniature furniture from around the globe. She made many of the items and every doll herself. She had a carpenter who made exact pieces of furniture and the rooms or buildings. He lived in a house on Lee's estate. Lee spared no expense: each diorama cost what a home did at that time. Each one had subtle clues that pointed to what had occurred.



**Frances Glessner Lee**

As an **heiress**, Lee did not need money. She held seminars for the police for free. First, a diorama was placed in a room. Next, the police had a limited amount of time to take notes about what they observed in it. Then, they came back to discuss it with each other and Lee. More important than solving the case was learning to recognize evidence that might be important to the crime.

The New Hampshire State Police felt that Lee advanced their ability to understand crime so much that they made her an honorary captain. It's hard to assess the depth of Lee's contribution to forensic science. The ripples continue today. Today, the Maryland Medical Examiner's Office owns all eighteen of her Nutshell Studies dioramas. Even now they are used in crime scene evaluation classes.



## Frances Glessner Lee, The First Crime Scene Investigator (CSI)

The *CSI* shows are some of the most popular television series ever. Following the clues to determine who committed a murder is called forensic science. Forensic science is one of the hottest college degrees today. Each year, thousands of students enroll in classes to learn how to evaluate a crime scene.

Few people know that the very first crime scene investigator, or CSI, was a grandmother named Frances Glessner Lee. She started Harvard's department of legal medicine in 1936 by paying the first full-time professor's salary. It was the nation's first program for forensic science.

In 1878, Lee was born into a wealthy family. When she grew up, she wanted to attend college. However, back then, it wasn't "ladylike" to earn a college degree. Her family refused to let her go. Finally, in 1930, she defied them and went to school when she was fifty-two.

Lee hated that some murders went unsolved. She was convinced that there was a scientific way to solve them. From the time she was a child, she had read and reread the Sherlock Holmes' stories. She wanted to create a way for the police to use Holmes' keen observational skills to solve actual crimes. She decided that the best way to do this was to recreate crime scenes in miniature so that they could be studied in detail.

Lee studied real crime scenes until she became an expert. Soon, law enforcement officials requested that she train their detectives. So Lee made miniature crime scenes that she called Nutshell Studies dioramas. She used them to teach officers to identify evidence. Some of them were based on real crime scenes. Most were a combination of crime scenes. Lee read about crime all of the time, so she could easily reinvent grisly crimes.

Lee spent months making each diorama, completing about three each year. She bought miniature furniture from all over the world. She made many of the items and every doll victim. She hired a carpenter who made exact pieces of furniture and the rooms or buildings. He lived in a house on her estate. Lee spared no expense: each diorama cost what a home did at that time! Each one had subtle clues that pointed to what had occurred.



**Frances Glessner Lee**

As an **heiress**, Lee needed no money. She held seminars for the police for free. A diorama was placed in a room, and the police officers had a limited amount of time to take notes about what they observed. Then, they discussed the clues with each other and Lee. More important than solving the case was learning to recognize evidence that might be related to the crime.

The New Hampshire State Police felt that Lee so advanced their ability to understand crime that they made her an honorary captain. It's hard to assess the depth of Lee's contribution to forensic science. The ripples continue today. Today, all eighteen of her Nutshell Studies dioramas are housed in the Maryland Medical Examiner's Office. They are still used in crime scene evaluation classes.



# Frances Glessner Lee, The First Crime Scene Investigator (CSI)

**Directions: Darken the best answer choice.**

1. The Nutshell Studies dioramas are currently kept
  - (A) at Harvard University.
  - (B) at the New Hampshire State Police department.
  - (C) at the Maryland Medical Examiner's Office.
  - (D) in the Frances Glessner Lee Museum.

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2. An **heiress** is a
  - (A) charity that gets money and/or property from a will.
  - (B) child who gets money and/or property from a will.
  - (C) man who gets money and/or property from a will.
  - (D) woman who gets money and/or property from a will.

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3. Which event happened first?
  - (A) Lee funded the nation's first college forensic science department.
  - (B) Lee earned a college degree.
  - (C) Lee created eighteen Nutshell Studies dioramas.
  - (D) Lee got married and had children.

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4. Each of Lee's Nutshell Studies dioramas was
  - (A) expensive to make.
  - (B) based on a single, real crime scene.
  - (C) based on a Sherlock Holmes' story.
  - (D) eventually destroyed in a fire.

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5. You can conclude that Lee was not interested in
  - (A) learning about crimes.
  - (B) earning money.
  - (C) reading Sherlock Holmes stories.
  - (D) teaching detectives how to identify clues at a crime scene.

---

6. Frances Glessner Lee died in 1962. If she were alive today, she would be most surprised by how
  - (A) many women work in crime scene investigation.
  - (B) little it costs to go to college.
  - (C) many murders are solved.
  - (D) few men go to college.