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Activity Guide

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Sammy Keyes and the Search for Snake Eyes

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ABOUT THE STORY

Sammy Keyes is at it again. When a stranger at the mall tells Sammy is being chased and leaves Sammy she is being chased and leaves Sammy with a bag that contains a baby, Sammy can't help investigating. Her inquiries lead her deep into gang territory, and before long, the same man who was threatening the stranger at the mall is after Sammy. Will she be able to escape the creepy-looking man and find the mother of the baby?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wendelin Van Draanen lives in Santa Monica, California, where she teaches math and computer science as well as writing books for young people. She grew up reading series such as the Nancy Drew and Encyclopedia Brown books, so writing about a young detective was a natural move for her. Ms. Van Draanen is the author of several more Sammy Keyes mysteries, including *Sammy Keyes and the Hotel Thief* and *Sammy Keyes and the Skeleton Man*, both Live Oak Readalongs.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask students if they have ever experienced a mystery in which they had to find a missing person. Encourage volunteers to give suggestions about how missing persons can be found. Then tell the class that the book they will read is about a girl who has to find the missing mother of a baby.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- “What does the girl in the mall give to Sammy?”
- “What do Sammy and Marissa learn when they talk to the South West girls?”
- “Why can't Sammy play in the softball tournament?”
- “Why does Sammy refuse to get angry at Heather?” (*Draw conclusions*)
- “Where do Sammy and Marissa find Lena?”
- “How would you describe Sammy Keyes?” (*Analyze Character*)

Vocabulary

Write these words on the chalkboard. Ask volunteers to circle the prefix of each word. Then students can define the words, telling how the prefix changes the meaning of the original word.

ineligible	unlocked	unauthorized
rearranges	unnecessary	preoccupied
unidentified	disappear	

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Health: Softball Rules

Sammy Keyes and Marissa play on a softball team. Have students work in small groups to find out the rules for playing softball. Groups can write up the rules and discuss how they differ from baseball rules.

Language Arts: Character Sketch

Have students choose one of the characters in the book other than Sammy Keyes to describe in a character sketch. Students can write a physical description of their character and can also describe the character's personality traits.

Health: Caring for Baby

Sammy Keyes doesn't know anything about how to take care of Pepe. Have students work in pairs to look up information on how to feed, change, and care for infants. Each pair can write a brief explanation of one aspect of childcare.

Language Arts: Plot a Mystery

A good mystery usually has a complex problem and a surprising solution. Have students work in small groups to plan the plot of their own mystery story. Put the graphic aid on the chalkboard and encourage students to use it to plan their work.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Real Softball

Have students search the Internet using the keywords *softball teams* to find out about real softball teams around the country. Using what they learn, students can report on a softball team – where they are from, what their record is, and any other interesting information they find.