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Activity Guide

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The Case of the Climbing Cat

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ABOUT THE STORY

Miss Nancy's binoculars have been stolen from her twentieth floor balcony — and she saw the thief, a cat. It's up to Bunny and Jack, private eyes, to track down the culprit and bring him to justice in this second book of the High-Rise Private Eyes series.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cynthia Rylant has written several other books about the High-Rise Private Eyes, including *The Case of the Missing Monkey* and *The Case of the Puzzling Possum*, both Live Oak Readalongs. Her books have won dozens of awards; in 1993 she received the Newbery Award for her novel *Missing May*. She is also the author of the Henry and Mudge books. She lives with her family in Washington State.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

G. Brian Karas has illustrated more than 50 books. His first lessons in illustration came when he was five, and his sister taught him how to draw pilgrims. He went on to study art at the Paier School of Art in Connecticut. He lives in Rhinebeck, New York, with his family.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children if they have ever used binoculars. Have them talk about what binoculars are used to do. Then tell them that the book they will read is about a pair of binoculars that are stolen.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "Why doesn't Jack like balconies?"
- "What clues does Jack find on the stairs?"
- "Why was the thief on Miss Nancy's balcony?"
- "Where do Bunny and Jack find the thief?"
- "Why does Jack point out 'an incredible specimen'?" (*Draw Conclusions*)
- "What character traits does the cat turn out to have?" (*Analyze Character*)

Vocabulary

Write these words and definitions on the chalkboard. Have volunteers draw a line matching each word with its definition. Then ask children to write sentences using three of the words.

balcony	glasses that make objects look bigger
chopsticks	a platform hanging from a building
binoculars	an example of something
professional	Chinese eating utensils
elevator	someone who has trained for a job
specimen	a small room that moves up and down

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Science: Bird Watching

Have children think of a bird they might see at a zoo aviary and do research to learn about the bird. Encourage them to write a report describing where the bird is found, what it eats, and what its habits are. Children can illustrate their reports with drawings. Collect the reports in a classroom bird book.

Language Arts: What's Your Phobia?

Jack is terribly afraid of heights — a fear called acrophobia. Think of a strong fear or phobia you or someone you know has. Describe the fear, telling how it developed and how it affects daily life. Then write two suggestions on how to get over the fear.

Social Studies: The Tallest Buildings

Bunny and Jack live in a high-rise over 23 stories tall. But how tall do buildings get? Have children work in pairs to research the world's tallest buildings, using books about skyscrapers or encyclopedias. Ask them to choose one of the ten tallest buildings to describe in a report.

Science: How Binoculars Work

Ask children to work in small groups to find out when binoculars were developed and how they work. Children can take notes on the information they find in reference books or encyclopedias and use their notes to write an informative paragraph about binoculars.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

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

Visiting an Aviary

Send children to visit an aviary online, using the keyword "aviary" or "National Aviary" to locate one. Encourage them to visit all the areas of the aviary. Children can choose one unusual bird to look at, and if possible, can print out a picture of the bird to share with the rest of the class.