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# Activity Guide

800-788-1121

## Christina's Ghost

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### ABOUT THE STORY

Christina and her sister are supposed to stay with their grandmother while their parents are in Alaska, but when they arrive, they find their grandmother is in the hospital. Instead, Jenny stays with an aunt, and Chris goes with Uncle Ralph to a cabin in the woods. Once there, she see a strange little boy who appears and disappears without warning. Could he be a ghost? She does some research and learns that a boy and his tutor were murdered over the tutor's theft of some priceless stamps – and the murder took place in the cabin! Christina and her uncle must find a way to let the boy's ghost rest peacefully – but the ghost of the tutor is determined to stop them.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Betty Ren Wright has written several mysteries for young people, including *The Dollhouse Murders* and *Ghosts Beneath Our Feet*. She is also the author of more than 30 picture books. She lives in Kenosha, Wisconsin, with her husband.

### INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask students if they believe in ghosts. Have volunteers describe any encounters they have had or heard about. Explain that the book they will read and listen to is about a girl who encounters two ghosts – one friendly, the other not so friendly.

### READING ACTIVITIES

#### Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- “Why does Christina have to go with her uncle?”
- “How do Christina and her uncle feel about each other at first?”  
(Draw conclusions)
- “When does the boy's ghost appear to Christina?”
- “What is the tutor's ghost protecting?”
- “What happens when Christina and Uncle Ralph try to leave the house with the stamps?”
- “How have Christina's and Uncle Ralph's feelings changed toward each other by the story's end?” (Compare and contrast)

### Vocabulary

Write these cloze sentences on the chalkboard. Then have students choose one word from the box to complete each sentence.

overwhelm	gallivanting	corridor	bouquet
criticizing	foyer	glassine	perforations

- The form was easy to tear because of the tiny \_\_\_\_\_ along its edges.
- The children showed their high spirits by \_\_\_\_\_ all around the house.
- Maria brought her mother a beautiful \_\_\_\_\_ of flowers.
- Terror threatened to \_\_\_\_\_ Kim.
- “You are always \_\_\_\_\_ the way I dress”, Sarah complained.
- The hospital \_\_\_\_\_ was lined with closed doors.
- All the children left their coats in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the house.
- The picture was protected in a clear, \_\_\_\_\_ envelope.

### CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

#### Language Arts: Murder in the News

Have students use the information from the story to write one of the news articles Chris might have read about the murder. Remind them to answer the five news questions: Who? What? When? Where? and How? in their articles.

#### Drama: Act It Out

Have children work in groups to choose a scene from the story to act out. Children can write brief scripts for their scene, choose parts, rehearse, and then perform their scenes for the rest of the class.

#### Health: What Is The Gallbladder?

Christina ends up with Uncle Ralph because her grandmother has to have surgery on her gallbladder. Have students use encyclopedias to learn where the gallbladder is located and what it does. Encourage them to find out what might go wrong with a gallbladder that could lead to surgery. Students can report on what they learn to the class.

#### Language Arts: A Letter to Uncle Ralph or Christina

Christina and Uncle Ralph are friends by the end of the story. Have students imagine that they are either Christina or Uncle Ralph, writing a letter to the other. Encourage them to write about what happened at the house on the lake and to talk about how their relationship changes as a result.

### 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.

#### Early Stamps

Have students use the keywords historic U.S. postage stamps to find information about and examples of early stamps on the Internet. Ask them to choose one stamp to write about. If possible, students can print out an illustration of the stamp they have chosen. They can show the stamp to the class, explaining when it was issued and describing any special use it might have had.