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Activity Guide

800-788-1121

Kidnap at the Catfish Café

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ABOUT THE STORY

Minnie is a detective, but she doesn't have a case to solve – until Max the cat comes strolling into her life. Suddenly, there are many mysteries for Minnie: where did Max come from? Who owns the beautiful amber ring Minnie found? Who took Cash's fishing gear? Who kidnapped the missing Misha? With help from her brother Orlando and her new friend Cash, as well as the detective Kitty the Klutz, Minnie is determined to find all the answers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Patricia Reilly Giff was born in Brooklyn and worked as a reading teacher for twenty years. She is the author of more than sixty books, including the Newbery Honor title *Lily's Crossing*. She has three children and four grandchildren and claims that her favorite foods are baked potatoes and chocolate candies.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children if they have ever found something valuable. Have them explain what they did with the item, or how they found the owner. Then explain that the book they will read is about a girl detective who finds something valuable and has to solve the mystery of where it came from.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- “What does Minnie find?”
- “Who does the Klutz turn out to be?”
- “Who is the everything snatcher? Why did he steal everything?”
- “Where does Max really come from?”
- “Did you figure out any of the mysteries before Minnie did? If so, how did you do it?” (Make predictions)
- “What kind of person is Minnie? Why do you think so?” (Analyze)

Vocabulary

Write these words on the chalkboard. Have children draw a picture to illustrate each word and write a brief definition under the picture. Children can exchange their pictures and check each other's definitions.

curlicues thermometer decoy
bracelets cruiser

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Social Studies: Finding the Baltic

Many of the people in Minnie's town, Sharkfin Bay, come from around the Baltic Sea. Ask children to work in pairs, using an encyclopedia or other reference book to locate the Baltic Sea. Pairs can draw a map showing the Baltic and the countries that surround it.

Science: Local Fish

Have children choose one of these kinds of fish mentioned in the book and write a brief report on it. They should find out where the fish is found, what it eats, and any other important information. Children can report on what they have learned to the class.

sardine porgy mackerel catfish
bluefish anchovy

Health: Russian Food

At the end of the book, the characters eat Russian food such as piroshki, borscht, and blinchiki. Have children look in cookbooks for Russian recipes. Each child can copy a recipe that appeals to him or her, and you can collect the recipes in a class Russian cookbook.

Science: Learning About Amber

Have children work in small groups to find out about how amber is formed and where it is found. Encourage them to find photographs of amber, especially of amber with trapped insects or other animals inside. Ask groups to report on their findings to the class.

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.

Meet the Author

Have children use the keywords *Patricia Reilly Giff* to find websites on the Internet that tell more about the author. Ask them to find out about one of Ms. Giff's books that they might enjoy reading and to report on it to the rest of the group.