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Activity Guide

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Sammy Keyes and the Hollywood Mummy

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ABOUT THE STORY

Sammy Keyes' mother seems to have gone a little crazy. She's dyed her hair, lied about her age, and is completely obsessed with getting a great part in a television series. Sammy decides she has to find out what is going on, so she hops on a bus to Hollywood. But when she arrives, hair dye and lies pale next to jewel theft and murder. Is Sammy's mother in danger?

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 know how mummies are made. Volunteers can describe the process. Then explain that the book they will read is about mummies, murder, and the cutthroat world of Hollywood.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "Why does Sammy's mother lie about her age?"
- "Why is LeBrandi murdered?"
- "Who is Hali's father?"
- "What do the girls find in Max's secret room?"
- "Why does Max believe Dominique is his wife reincarnated?"
- "How does Sammy's relationship with her mother change?" (*Compare and contrast*)
- "What causes the change in Sammy's and her mother's relationship?" (*Cause and effect*)

Vocabulary

Write these words from the book on the chalkboard. Have students use a dictionary to find the definitions. Then ask them to draw a picture illustrating each word and use the word to label the picture.

aristocrat	luminescent	hieroglyphics
sarcophagus	stagnant	obsidian

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Social Studies: Life in Ancient Egypt

Max is obsessed with ancient Egypt. Students can use encyclopedias and reference books to find out about life in that ancient culture. Divide the class into small groups and have each group research one of these questions:

- What kind of homes did Egyptians live in?
- What did Egyptians eat and drink? What did they wear?
- How were the pyramids built? Why were they built?
- Who were the rulers of ancient Egypt? What kind of power did they have?

Science: Making Mummies

Ask students to use reference books or the Internet to find out how Egyptian mummies were made. Have them write a how-to paragraph explaining the process from beginning to end. Students can illustrate their paragraphs with pictures from the Internet or from magazines.

Drama: Filming a Television Series

Sammy's mother wants a part on a television series. Many people are involved in filming a series – writers, producers, directors, actors, set designers, and so on. Have students find out about one of these jobs using reference books or the Internet. Ask them to take notes on how the job is done and what the worker needs to know. They can report to the class on the information they find.

Social Studies: Investigating Reincarnation

Many different religious and ethnic groups believe in reincarnation – that when a person dies, he or she comes back in another form. Students can investigate reincarnation by reading about it in encyclopedias and other reference books. Encourage them to take notes on what they learn and report on their findings to the rest of 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.

Egyptian Deities

Max calls on several Egyptian gods and goddesses near the end of the story: Osiris, Horus, Hathor, Sobek, Anubis, and Thoth. Students can find out about one of these gods or another Egyptian deity on the Internet. Using the keywords *Egyptian gods*, they can visit a website for details about the deities and their powers. Have them write down information about one such god or goddess and report back to the class.