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Activity Guide

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Mary Moon is Missing

ABOUT THE STORY

Minnie is a detective, always looking for a mystery to solve. And now she's found one: the prize-winning pigeon Mary Moon is missing, and the Pigeon Prize Race is coming up. With her cat Max, and her friend Cash, Minnie sets out to solve the mystery. Thieves, engagement parties, and a shipwreck interfere with her plans. Will Minnie find Mary Moon?

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 Newberry Honor title *Lily's Crossing*. She has three children and four grandchildren and claims that her favorite foods are baked potatoes and chocolate candies.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Lynne Cravath has illustrated several other children's books, including *The Little Flower Girl*, *Over the River and Through the Woods*, and another Minnie and Max mystery, *Kidnap at the Catfish Café*, available as a Live Oak Mysteries audiobook.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children if they have ever solved a mystery in which something was missing. Have them tell what clues they used and how they found the missing item. Then explain that the book they will read is about a young detective and her search for a missing pigeon.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "What does Minnie find in the ocean?"
- "What does Tough Teresa do to Minnie?"
- "How does Minnie capture Mischief?"
- "What happens to Minnie and Cash on Much Island?"
- "What actually happens to Mary Moon?"
- "What kind of person so you think Minnie is, based on what she does in the story?" (*Draw conclusions*)
- "Were you surprised at the mystery's solution? Why or why not?" (*Analyze*)

Vocabulary

Write these words and their definitions on the chalkboard. Have children copy them and draw lines matching each word to its definition.

beige	spotlessly clean
kidnapped	small bottles
immaculate	light tan
chandelier	stolen; removed bodily
pathetic	fancy light
vials	pitiable; ridiculous

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Science: Homing Pigeons

Have children work in small groups to find out more about homing pigeons and their habits. Provide encyclopedias or nonfiction books for them to use, or encourage them to do research on the Internet. Groups can write up brief reports and present them to the rest of the class.

Art: Pigeon Race Poster

Ask children to make posters to advertise the Pigeon Prize Race that Mary Moon is supposed to win. Encourage them to include information about when and where the race will take place and to describe the prizes offered in their posters.

Language Arts: Plot Chart

To be sure that children understand the complicated plot of *Mary Moon Is Missing*, have them fill in a plot chart like the one below.

Characters Setting Problem Complication Solution

Health: Water Safety

Minnie breaks some of the rules of water safety when she heads off to Muck Island with Cash. Have children work together to think of rules for being safe in, on, and around the water. The group can create a water safety poster with rules for safe behavior.

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.

Listening to the Author

Using the keywords *Patricia Reilly Giff*, children can locate the publisher's Website that includes a recording by the author. Have them listen to her words of advice about being a writer.