



The Secrets of Rookskill Castle

A Treasure Hunt for Readers and an
Event Kit for Libraries and Bookstores

This game is based on the novel
The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle
By Janet Fox (Viking)
RookskillCastle.com

Illustration © Greg Ruth

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ABOUT THE EVENT

Librarians, booksellers, and book clubs can use this Event Kit not only to engage readers with the mysterious literary and historical elements of the middle grade novel ***The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle*** by Janet Fox (Viking), but also to engage readers in using the library or bookstore as a resource. School librarians may find the kit to be a great way to introduce readers to the layout and search tools of the library at the beginning of the term. Best for ages 10-14.



“Rookskill Castle has many secrets. Some you’ll find. Some will find you.”

Something is amiss at Rookskill Castle. For 200 years, the villagers have seen children at the castle where there are no children and have heard singing but have never seen the singers. *Who are these sad children that appear and disappear, and do they need our help?*

Clever readers will work in teams to solve clues hidden within the pages of books on library and bookstore shelves. Together the readers will discover four objects that uncover the spine-chilling secrets of Rookskill Castle and a free chapter of the novel.

This kit contains a printable poster, game instructions, sample dialogue, and printable clues, charms, and other event materials!

OTHER RESOURCES

RookskillCastle.com, the book’s companion website, contains many ways to engage readers. A video puzzle unveils a chapter from the forthcoming sequel to ***The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle*** by Janet Fox (Viking). Readers can also ask Janet Fox questions and be entered to win charms. A clip from the audiobook even plays on the site!

Like this event kit? There are more free children’s literature programming kits and bi-monthly children’s book giveaways at CuriousCityDPW.com. Share your event photos, comments, and suggestions for improving upon this kit with Curious City at kirsten@curiouscity.net.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle

By Janet Fox

Published by Penguin Young Readers Group

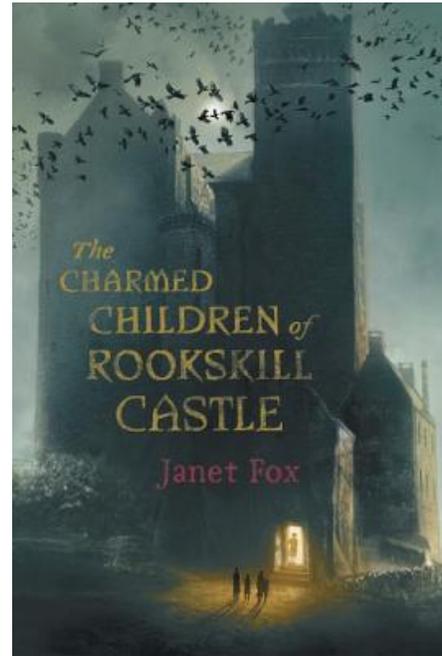
Hardcover ISBN-13: 9780451476333

Paperback ISBN-13: 9780147517135 (03/17)

Lexile: 740L

Age Range: 10 - 14 Years

“Keep calm and carry on.” That’s what Katherine Bateson’s father told her, and that’s what she’s trying to do: when her father goes off to the war, when her mother sends Kat and her brother and sister away from London to escape the incessant bombing, even when the children arrive at Rookskill Castle, an ancient, crumbling manor on the misty Scottish highlands.



But it’s hard to keep calm in the strange castle that seems haunted by ghosts or worse. What’s making those terrifying screeches and groans at night? Why do the castle’s walls seem to have a mind of their own? And why do people seem to mysteriously appear and disappear?

Kat believes she knows the answer: Lady Eleanor, who rules Rookskill Castle, is harboring a Nazi spy. But when her classmates begin to vanish, one by one, Kat must uncover the truth about what the castle actually harbors—and who Lady Eleanor really is—before it’s too late.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

- ★ “An original, clever, page-turning adventure.” —*Kirkus Reviews*, Starred review
- ★ “True-to-life protagonists... a masterful final encounter, and a satisfying denouement attest to Fox’s craftsmanship.” —*Publishers Weekly*, Starred review
- ★ “Readers will curl up and keep the lights on with this chilling page-turner.” —*Booklist*, Starred review
- ★ “This gothic middle-grade novel, set in Scotland, mixes ancient magic with World War II spycraft.” —*Shelf Awareness*, Starred review

“Fox presents readers with a wonderfully paced, exciting story with enough twists to keep the pages turning.” —*School Library Journal*

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PREPARING FOR THE ACTIVITIES

___ Locate a copy of the middle grade novel **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** by Janet Fox (Viking).

___ If you list your events in newsletters and online calendars, here is some text that may help with those listings:

“Rookskill Castle has many secrets. Some you’ll find. Some will find you.”

Something is amiss at Rookskill Castle. For 200 years, the villagers have seen children at the castle where there are no children and have heard singing but have never spied the singers. At our event, clever readers will work in teams to solve clues hidden within the books on our shelves. Together they will discover four objects that uncover spine-chilling secrets and a free chapter of the novel, **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** by Janet Fox (Viking).

___ If this event is for the public, print out the event poster (page 8), add your date, time, and location, and duplicate it to advertise the event. If you prefer to adapt the poster on your computer, you can find a JPEG of the poster design on CuriousCityDPW.com. Simply search for “Rookskill” in the top right of the site and navigate to the Event Kit listing. The font on the poster is Humana Serif.

___ Familiarize yourself with the sample dialogue offered in the Event Opening Dialogue (page 9).

NOTE: The treasure hunt features four teams named for charmed children in the novel. The teams represent Tim, Rose, the twins Alice and Brigit, and John.

The kit offers printable lanyard badges for each team. Each badge features the charm associated with each of the charmed children. The charms (hung about the neck like lanyard badges) mark the team, but they also serve as a strong connection to the text. (The children in the novel are charmed or bewitched when the charm on a chain is placed around their necks.)

___ Print the Team Charms (pages 10-13). If you anticipate more than four readers on each team, print multiples.

___ Cut out the rectangles that frame the charms or cut around the shape of the charm. If you choose to cut around the charm, please keep the URL featured on the charm intact.

___ Use a hole-punch to make a hole in the top loop of the charm. Locate yarn (consider gray yarn to look like a chain) or string to thread through the hole. Tie off a length that is sufficient to place over the heads of your readers.

NOTE: Each team has a unique set of five clues that are hidden in four books. Each clue leads the

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team to the next book.

The clue sheets include a scene from the book and a request to go look for an object. Those objects are the Pen, the Thimble, the Scissors, and the Broken Heart. If you have read the novel, you know that these objects are the elements of the main character's chatelaine and the tools that ultimately save the charmed children. These objects (printed on subsequent clue sheets) will not have a strong significance during the game but will be a revelation when the reader eventually reaches the end of the novel.

We have written clues that point to books we imagine you have in your collection such as **Jane Eyre** by Charlotte Brontë. Some clues, however, lead to books that contain objects from the book like fish, cats, castles, wireless radios, and so on. These clues we have left open for you to choose a book and for you to write a related clue. You are welcome, of course, to rewrite or adapt any of the clues!

___ Visit CuriousCityDPW.com, search for "Rookskill" in the top right of the site, and navigate to the Event Kit or look in the Resource section of the Book page at RookskillCastle.com. There you will find a link to download the clues in Word. Review and edit the clues to make them reflect your collection and event goals. The list below shows how the clues are currently connected with books.

Tim Clue 1 Leads To: **The Hunchback of Notre Dame** by Victor Hugo
Tim Clue 2 Leads To: **The Silver Chair (Chronicles of Narnia)** by C.S. Lewis
Tim Clue 3 Leads To: Programmer's Choice: Book with suits of armor
Tim Clue 4 Leads To: Programmer's Choice: Book with tales of brave knights
Tim Clue 5 Leads To: Group Puzzle Solving
Group Puzzle Solving Leads To: **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** by Janet Fox
The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle Leads To: Takeaway Sheet for free chapter

Rose Clue 1 Leads To: Programmer's Choice: Book filled with fish
Rose Clue 2 Leads To: Programmer's Choice: Book with wireless radios (WWII era best)
Rose Clue 3 Leads To: Programmer's Choice: Book with castle and moat
Rose Clue 4 Leads To: **Jane Eyre** by Charlotte Brontë
Rose Clue 5 Leads To: Group Puzzle Solving
Group Puzzle Solving Leads To: **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** by Janet Fox
The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle Leads To: Takeaway sheet for free chapter

Alice & Brigit Clue 1 Leads To: **The Little Mermaid** by Hans Christian Andersen
Alice & Brigit Clue 2 Leads To: Programmer's Choice: Book with selkies
Alice & Brigit Clue 3 Leads To: **The Odyssey** by Homer
Alice & Brigit Clue 4 Leads To: **Alice in Wonderland** by Lewis Carroll
Alice & Brigit Clue 5 Leads To: Group Puzzle Solving
Group Puzzle Solving Leads To: **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** by Janet Fox
The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle Leads To: Takeaway Sheet for free chapter

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John Clue 1 Leads To: Programmer's Choice: Book filled with cats

John Clue 2 Leads To: Programmer's Choice: Book of ghost stories

John Clue 3 Leads To: **Peter Pan** by J.M. Barrie

John Clue 4 Leads To: **The Invention of Hugo Cabret** by Brian Selznick

John Clue 5 Leads To: Group Puzzle Solving

Group Puzzle Solving Leads To: **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** by Janet Fox

The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle Leads To: Takeaway Sheet for free chapter

___ Print one set of your completed clues. (You will not need multiples of the clues for the teams. Each team needs only one clue that they will share.)

___ Pull your featured books from your collection and put them on hold until the event. Place the clues within their respective books. Remember that the clues are staggered so that the clue is not in the book it is related to, but in the previous book. The list below should help make sure the clues are placed correctly in the books.

Place Tim Clue 1 in: Set Aside to Hand to Team at the Start

Place Tim Clue 2 in: **The Hunchback of Notre Dame** by Victor Hugo

Place Tim Clue 3 in: **The Silver Chair (Chronicles of Narnia)** by C.S. Lewis

Place Tim Clue 4 in: Programmer's Choice: Book with suits of armor

Place Tim Clue 5 in: Programmer's Choice: Book with tales of brave knights

Place Rose Clue 1 in: Set Aside to Hand to Team at the Start

Place Rose Clue 2 in: Programmer's Choice: Book filled with fish

Place Rose Clue 3 in: Programmer's Choice: Book with wireless radios (WWII era best)

Place Rose Clue 4 in: Programmer's Choice: Book with castle and moat

Place Rose Clue 5 in: **Jane Eyre** by Charlotte Brontë

Place Alice & Brigit Clue 1 in: Set Aside to Hand to Team at the Start

Place Alice & Brigit Clue 2 in: **The Little Mermaid** by Hans Christian Andersen

Place Alice & Brigit Clue 3 in: Programmer's Choice: Book with selkies

Place Alice & Brigit Clue 4 in: **The Odyssey** by Homer

Place Alice & Brigit Clue 5 in: **Alice in Wonderland** by Lewis Carroll

Place John Clue 1 in: Set Aside to Hand to Team at the Start

Place John Clue 2 in: Programmer's Choice: Book filled with cats

Place John Clue 3 in: Programmer's Choice: Book of ghost stories

Place John Clue 4 in: **Peter Pan** by J.M. Barrie

Place John Clue 5 in: **The Invention of Hugo Cabret** by Brian Selznick

NOTE: As you may have noticed, the text for Clue 5 is almost the same for each team. It tells readers to find the other teams to collaboratively solve the mystery of the Broken Heart. While the clue text is nearly the same, each has a different image. The images are each part of a heart broken in four pieces.

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When the teams come together to figure out how to solve the mystery of the broken heart, they will discover that they must cut out their piece of the broken heart and join it like a puzzle with the other teams' pieces.

How will they cut out the hearts? When your readers collect the clue with the scissors on the page, you will also have placed a pair of actual child-safe scissors in or near the book. If they read Clue 3 carefully, they will see it says to collect TWO pairs of scissors. Hopefully, they will also take those actual scissors! If not, they will adapt or go back and grab them when they see they are needed.

When the puzzle comes together, it reads, "Seek the book **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** by Janet Fox." You will have stuffed small sheets in your copy of **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** that lead readers to RookskillCastle.com for a free chapter of the book.

___ Locate four pairs of child-safe scissors for the day of the event.

___ Print and cut enough Clever Reader sheets (page 15) to place in your copy of **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** so that each anticipated participant can have one.

___ Familiarize yourself with the sample dialogue offered in the Event Opening Dialogue (page 14).

___ If you are at a library, consider how you will create a hold list for the book and how you will reward one reader with the first opportunity to check the book out.

DAY OF THE EVENT

___ Place your sixteen books with clues inside of them on their proper shelves.

___ Place Clue 1 for each team, the Team Charms and your copy of **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** at the event's starting point.

___ Place actual scissors in or near the book that holds Clue 4.

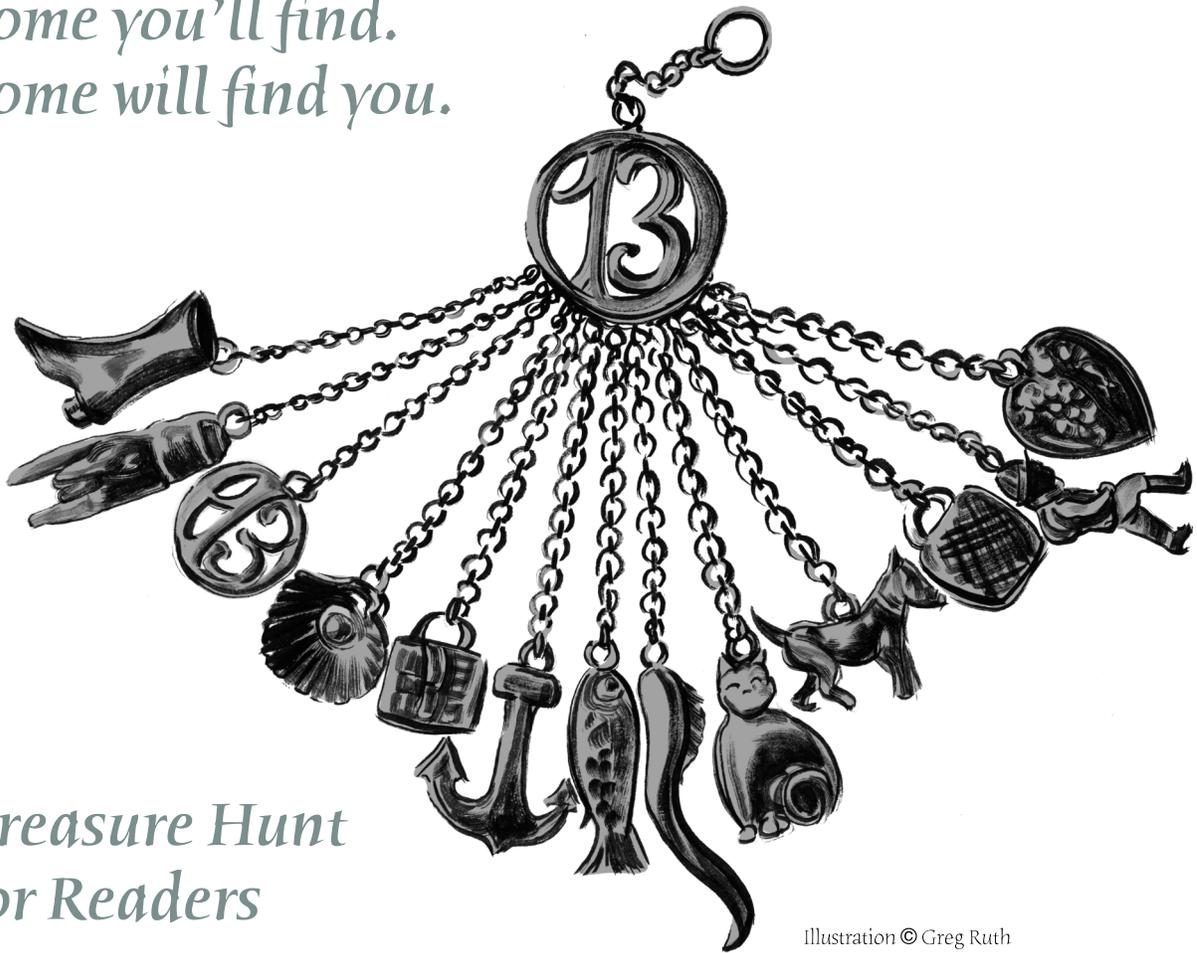
___ Introduce the event to readers using the Event Opening Dialogue. Choose the teams then or as readers arrive at the event.

___ Be on hand to offer hints and search options for readers who become stuck.

___ Place your copy of **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** stuffed with Clever Reader sheets on the shelf or where you want readers ultimately to find it.

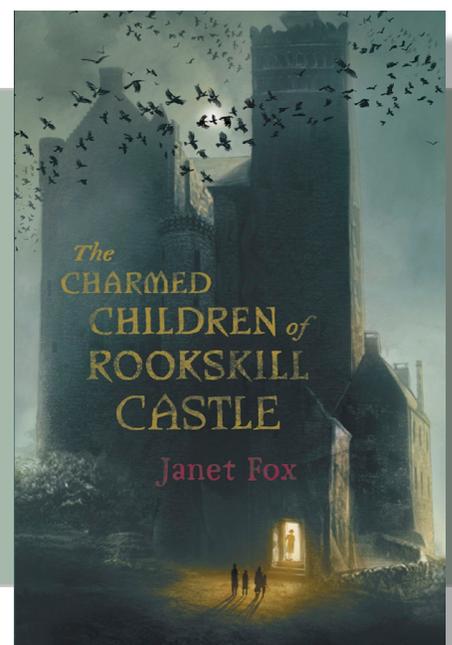
___ Close the event with Event Closing Dialogue. Applaud your readers and yourself!

*Rookskill Castle has many secrets.
Some you'll find.
Some will find you.*



*Treasure Hunt
for Readers
Ages 10-14*

Illustration © Greg Ruth



Event Opening Dialogue

*They say that Rookskill Castle has many secrets.
Some you'll find.
Some will find you.*

As this story opens, [show the book] we know some things about Rookskill Castle.

We know that for 200 years, the villagers have seen children at the castle where there are no children and have heard singing but have never seen the singers.

We know that five village children - Tim, Rose, the twins Alice & Brigit, and John - have accepted a charm on a chain from a beautiful woman and hung the charm around their necks.

We know that as this book opens, the Lady of Rookskill Castle has just opened a school, and seven children have arrived to attend. We do not know if these new children are in danger at Rookskill Castle, but we suspect they may be. You will hear the names of these children as you solve the clues in today's game.

We soon know that the five village children - Tim, Rose, the twins Alice & Brigit, and John - are somehow trapped or charmed, and that we that must help save them.

How can we help save them?

You will need to find four objects: a Pen, a Thimble, Scissors, and a Broken Heart. Pictures of those objects are hidden in this room. You will have to be very clever to find them. And I know that you are very clever.

I am going to divide you into teams. One team will help Tim, one team will help Rose, one team will help the twins Alice & Brigit, and one team will help John. [hand out charms]

You are now wearing the charms of the five village children, the charmed children of Rookskill Castle.

I am going to hand each team their first clue to find the first object, the Pen. The clue will lead you to a book or a collection of books. Within that book there will be another clue. You will know it is your clue when you find the paper with your charm on it. You can use the catalog, [your term?] and if you get stuck, you can ask me for a hint.

In the end, you will all need to work together to uncover the final secret to the Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle.

Ready? Here is your first clue. Pick one member of your team to read it aloud to the others. Good luck.

TEAM CHARM: Tim



This game is based on the novel **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** by Janet Fox (Viking).
Explore more at RookskillCastle.com. Illustrations © Greg Ruth.

TEAM CHARM: Rose



This game is based on the novel **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** by Janet Fox (Viking).
Explore more at RookskillCastle.com. Illustrations © Greg Ruth.

TEAM CHARM: Alice and Brigit



This game is based on the novel **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** by Janet Fox (Viking).
Explore more at RookskillCastle.com. Illustrations © Greg Ruth.

TEAM CHARM: John



RookskillCastle.com



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Event Closing Dialogue

You have been very clever. You have found the Pen, the Thimble, the Scissors, and the Broken Heart.

By mending the Broken Heart, you have been given a key to enter Rookskill Castle (or at the very least, the key to RookskillCastle.com).

All of the objects you found today seem very common. Maybe they're common, and maybe they're not. You will only know if you read **The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** by Janet Fox.

I hope that today you have also discovered that you yourself have the capacity to solve great mysteries and that books will always help you to do so.

*Rookskill Castle has many secrets.
Some you'll find.
Some will find you.*

Clever Reader,
You have found the heart of
The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle
by Janet Fox (Viking).



You have also found the key to open
RookskillCastle.com

Seek the heart there and enter the code
1863. And never stop seeking answers.

Clever Reader,
You have found the heart of
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