

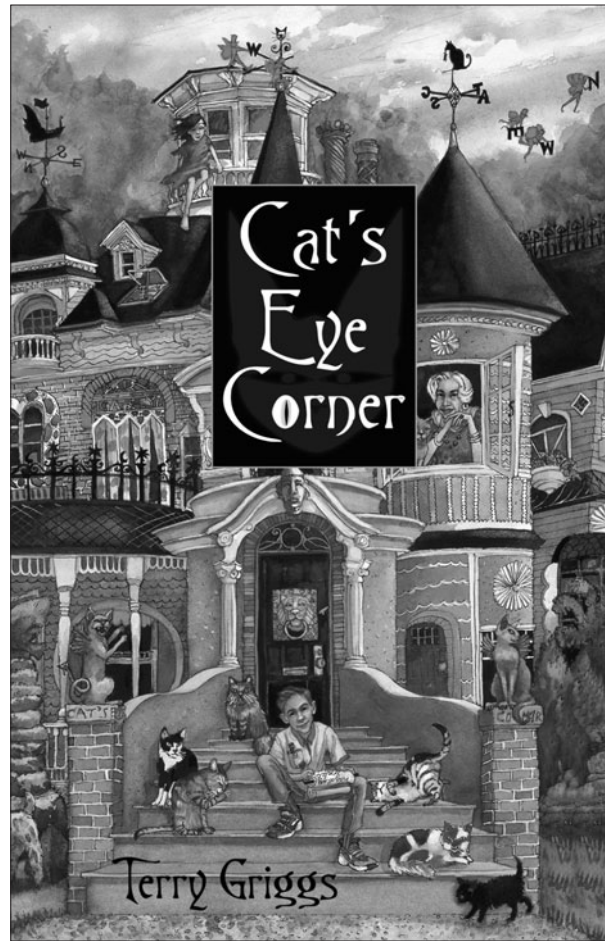
Cat's Eye Corner

by Terry Griggs

AGES 8 AND UP • GRADE LEVEL 4 TO 8

ABOUT THE BOOK

When Olivier visits his grandfather, retired to Cat's Eye Corner with Sylvia de Whosit of Whatsit, a reported witch, the situation calls for a little spying. In this mansion of shifting rooms and talking shrubbery he discovers a list of powerful talismans to be collected on a scavenger hunt for a fantastical book buried in Nevermore Lake. En route he bumps into the So-So Gang, a talking pen named Murray Schaeffer, teenaged oracles Holy Moley and Holy Hannah, a swarm of French flies, a bogus magician named Mr. Mirific, a fire breathing dog and a girl named Linnet who controls the wind. But strangest of all are the Inklings, word fairies tinkering with the language so that nothings is what it seems. *Cat's Eye Corner* was a Canadian Children's Book Centre choice and Mr. Christie Silver Book Award recipient.



1-55192-350-5 • \$12.95 CDN/\$7.95 US • 163 PP
YOUNG ADULT FICTION



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Terry Griggs is the author of *The Lusty Man* and *Quickening*, nominated for the Governor General's Award. She has also published a number of stories in magazines and anthologies. *Cat's Eye Corner* is her first novel for children. She lives in Providence Bay on Manitoulin Island, Ontario with her husband and son.



BEFORE THE BOOK • Words You Need to Know

inkling	devious	articulate	doily	brindled	mediocrity
prerequisite	unquenched	sozzled	overwrought	perilously	curlicues
scavenger	soporific	renovators	ornate	gambolling	contemptuous
hale	indelible	parlour	succinct	suffused	fedora

• Activities

1. Make a list of fantasy novels, movies or television shows you have enjoyed. Choose your favourite and be prepared to explain to the class why it was the one you enjoyed the most.
2. Read the picture book *Jumanji* by Chris Van Allsburg. Imagine you were actually inside a board game of your choice. Write a short story that deals with some of the things that might happen.

EXPLORING THE BOOK • Chapter Questions and Activities

CHAPTERS ONE AND TWO

1. Why were Olivier's parents concerned about him spending his summer holidays with his grandfather?
2. Choose one of the locked doors described on pages six and seven and describe what the room behind it might look like.
3. What are Olivier's feelings about his step-step-gramma?

CHAPTERS THREE AND FOUR

1. Olivier starts out thinking that the scavenger hunt will be easy, what makes him change his mind?
2. What are "typographical expletives" and why did the pen write them?
3. The pen doesn't understand knock-knock jokes. Write out your favourite knock-knock joke. How would you explain to the pen what makes it funny?
4. What kind of beverage is Chinese calligraphic or Indian black?

CHAPTERS FIVE AND SIX

1. Draw a picture of the game board Olivier discovers and the single playing piece on it.
2. What do you think Olivier might have seen if he'd looked inside the carved wooden box beside the game board?
3. How is Olivier able to understand what the cats are saying?

CHAPTERS SEVEN AND EIGHT

1. Why does the green man think Olivier might be a pair of twins or maybe royalty?
2. What frightens the green man?
3. Who or what is Dirk Smith?

CHAPTERS NINE AND TEN

1. How did the So-So gang torture the cats?
2. Why didn't the So-So gang know what had happened when the cats and Olivier were whisked away?
3. What is Linnet's special talent?
4. What did the woodwose do?

CHAPTERS ELEVEN AND TWELVE

1. Describe the high way that Linnet takes Olivier along.
2. What does brain coral do?
3. Who is Fathom?
4. Make a three column chart 14 lines long. The first two columns should each be wide enough to write a single word or a short phrase, the third column should be the width of the rest of the page. In the first column, list of each of the scavenger hunt objects Oliver has found so far. In the second column, list the special power of each item. Leave the third column blank for now.

CHAPTERS THIRTEEN AND THIRTEEN (AGAIN)

1. Draw a picture of Hodgepodge Lodge.
2. Create a reader's theatre presentation of the meeting with Mr. Mirific from the middle of page 89 to the end of the chapter. You will need six readers, one each to read the words of Mr. Mirific, Olivier, Linnet, Fathom, and Sputum and one as the narrator to read everything else.
3. Why is Olivier so delighted with Ashley?
4. How does Olivier know the Inklings are in the treasure box Linnet found?

CHAPTERS FOURTEEN AND FIFTEEN

1. What are the numerical equivalents for the Roman numerals, M, X, IV?
2. Why was Wen tied up?
3. Add the doit and its special power to your list of scavenger hunt items.
4. What would the ironic meaning of wise be in the Wise Guys original job description?

CHAPTERS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN

1. What does the Oracle tell Olivier he must do?
2. In the third column of the chart you made earlier write how each item helped Olivier in his final quest.

BEYOND THE BOOK • Activities

1. Draw a detailed portrait of the woodwoose and write his official name below the picture.
2. With a partner create a scavenger hunt list of eight items. Exchange your list with another pair. See which team can find their list first.
3. Research the development of writing pens and create a timeline beginning with the quill pen and ending with pens that can write in space without the use of gravity to make the ink flow.
4. Try writing with a fountain pen or nib pen and ink. Use a Venn diagram to compare this with writing with a ballpoint or felt tip pen. Draw two overlapping circles. In one circle write words to describe the fountain pen, in the other write words to describe the ballpoint. Where the circles overlap write words that describe both.
5. Imagine you have been given the job of creating a brand new board game. The game is called Spindlebone and is played with game pieces. Describe the rules of play for this new game.



3. Linnet, Fathom, Hannah and Moley are also magical helpers. Add each of them to the chart.

CHAPTERS EIGHTEEN AND NINETEEN

1. What attacks Olivier in the ship's cabin?
2. Why does the So-So Gang run away?
3. Why does Olivier guess there's a mirror in the lock on the book?
4. Add the new information to your chart of the scavenger hunt. On the last two lines, add Dirk Smith and the book.

CHAPTER TWENTY

1. The hagoday was the first item on the list and is the last one to be found. What does it look like and what does it do? Now you can complete your chart.
2. Why is Gramps locked in his room?
3. What is Gramps' next project?



• Curriculum Extensions

SCIENCE *Endangered Species* • Create a poster about the northern leopard frog. Include pictures, a description of habitat and life cycle and reasons why the population is in decline.

SOCIAL STUDIES *Ancient Greece* • Write a report on the history and mythology of the Oracle at Delphi.

LANGUAGE ARTS *Fantasy Stories* • Read one of the novels that Mr. Mirific was burning (p. 100). Create a book jacket with a story summary and brief author information to encourage other students to read this novel.

Poetry • Research one of the following poets represented by the cats and prepare a brief biography. Bliss Carmen, Emily Dickinson, T. S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, Edgar Allan Poe, Gertrude Stein, Delmore Schwartz.

MUSIC *Canadian Composers* • Present a biography of Canadian composer R. Murray Schaeffer to the class. Play an example of his music.

Unusual Instruments • Create a poster showing an oud, an ocarina and a sistrum. Explain the history of each instrument, how it is played and what it sounds like.



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Cat's Eye Corner Teacher's Guide (1-55192-610-5) and other learning resources for Raincoast titles are also available at www.raincoast.com. Many of these activities are inspired by the Reading 44 document published by the North Vancouver School District. Raincoast Books grants teachers permission to photocopy this guide for classroom use.

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