

# A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

## CHILL by Alex Nye

Winner of the Royal Mail Awards for Scottish Children's Books 2007 (8-11 category)



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### Themes/issues addressed in this book

Friendship, moving to a new place, Scottish history, family, injustice

### Book Summary

Samuel and his mother move to a new home in the shadow of Dunadd House on bleak Sherrifmuir. When they are trapped by an unexpectedly heavy snowfall, Samuel strikes up a friendship with Fiona, one of the three Morton children who live in the big, old house. Together they begin to peel away layers of history and uncover the curse that has blighted the Morton family for hundreds of years. Who is the ghostly, weeping figure that haunts the house? How can they help her? Can they break the curse and prevent history from repeating itself? This award-winning novel entwines important events in Scotland's past with a tale of betrayal and revenge.

## BEFORE READING

### Group Activities

- Discussion: how would you feel about moving to a new place and leaving all your friends behind?
- Discussion: what does 'Jacobite' mean? Who were The Jacobites?
- Discussion: why do people go to war? How do you feel about war?

## AFTER READING

### Individual Work

- Write a paragraph on the thoughts and feelings you had when:
  - a) Samuel first sees the weeping woman (chapter 3)
  - b) Charles finds Catherine Morton's journal in Samuel's room (chapter 13)
  - c) You find out what happens to Catherine and her baby (chapter 15)
- Read through Catherine's journal again. Find as many old-fashioned words as you can, for example, 'guid'. How would you spell these words today, or what are their modern-day equivalents?
- Create a family tree for your own family. Go as far back as you can, and include dates of birth, and places of birth if you know them.

### Group Activities

- Group project: imagine your class is trapped for a couple of days by a heavy snowfall in a big, old house like Dunadd House. You have no electricity and no heating. Compile a list of things you would need to stay warm, cook some food, and make some light. Compile another list of activities you could do and games you could play to keep yourselves entertained until the snow melted. Remember you have no electricity! Nominate one person to write a report on how you spent these two days.
- Group project: using your school library and the internet, find out the following about The Battle of Sherrifmuir: Where was it? When was it? What caused it? Who was involved in it? Who won?
- Class debate: divide the class into two groups, one pro-Government, the other pro-Jacobite. Nominate a person from each group, and using all you have learned about The Battle of Sherrifmuir, allow each side the chance to put their cause forward. Decide who should win (irrespective of who did win!) and discuss why you think this is fair.

### Vocabulary

- Check you know what the following words mean:

apprehensive	cavalry	coincidence	ebony
artefact	cerulean	crimson	elation
billet	illegal	disembodied	exertion
brooding	chateau	disgruntled	extinguish

## KELPIES

### Series Summary

The award-winning Kelpies series is Scotland's favourite collection of children's fiction. Floris Books took over the list in 2001, republishing classic works by authors such as Kathleen Fidler and Allan Campbell McLean. Since then, we have continued to add to the series with a range of highly successful new Scottish novels for children. Of these, *Chill* by Alex Nye won a Royal Mail Award in 2007 and *Hox* by Annemarie Allan was nominated for a Royal Mail Award in 2008.

## CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS COVERED

### 5-14 Curriculum (Scotland)

Years: P4-P7

#### Listening:

Listening in Groups  
Listening for Information, including instructions and directions

#### Reading:

Reading for Information  
Reading to Reflect  
Awareness of Genre

#### Talking:

Talking in Groups  
Talking about Texts  
Talking about Experiences, including feelings and opinions

#### Writing:

Functional  
Imaginative

### National Curriculum (England, Wales, Northern Ireland)

Key Stage 2

#### English: Reading

Reading Strategies  
Response to Texts, including analysing and evaluating  
Reading for Information

#### National Literacy Strategy:

Text-Level Reading  
Text-Level Writing  
Vocabulary

## Vocabulary, cont'd

- Check you know what the following words mean:

grandiose  
inexplicable  
legacy

medieval  
mystified  
ominously

ostensibly  
precipice  
profound

sculptor  
sombre  
subservience

trellis  
tentatively  
vellum