

# The Knife

by Pauline Cartwright

illustrated by Nina Price

## Book Summary

George likes visiting with his grandma because she's always doing interesting things. When he decides that the tiny pocketknife in Grandma's treasure box is just what he needs for a project, he slips it quietly into his pocket. Very soon he wishes he hadn't.

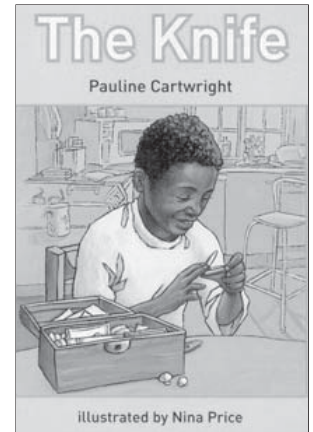
## Features of the Book

- Ten short chapters
- George's internal dialogue and reasoning
- The issues discussed – truth, lies, stealing
- Descriptive language – *sharp and slender; a curling pattern; a long string of lies; a metallic gleam*
- The use of adverbs – *frantically, miserably*

## Purpose

*The Knife* can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** making predictions from text and illustrations;
- S** relating ideas and events in the text to students' own experiences;
- S** analyzing characters' feelings and actions;
- S** putting forward an argument;
- S** discussing the author's intention;
- S** comparing texts by the same author;
- S** reviewing the use of adverbs.



## The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Making predictions from text and illustrations
- S** Relating ideas and events in the text to students' own experiences
- S** Analyzing characters' feelings and actions
- S** Putting forward an argument
- S** Discussing the author's intention

## Introducing the text

Ask the students whether they have ever done something that they felt uncomfortable about.

- *How did you feel? What did you do about the feeling?*
- *Has anyone ever taken something that belonged to you? How did you feel about that?*

Encourage the students to discuss the issues involved with taking something without asking.

Look at the illustration on the cover and discuss the box and the object in the boy's hand. Refer to the title.

- *What kind of knife is that? What would you use it for?*
- *Who might it belong to?*

Read the blurb on the back cover together and ask whether this suggests anything about what might happen in the book.

- *What has the boy done? How is he feeling about that?*
- *What do you think he'll do now?*

## Reading and discussing the text

Read page 3 together.

- What do you think George wants to do with the knife?
- What can you tell about the characters from the illustration? (Grandma looks as if she is remembering something; George looks anxious to hold the knife.)
- Look at the last two sentences. What do the three dots at the end of the first sentence mean? (Grandma has stopped in mid-sentence as if she's remembered something.)

Ask the students to read chapters 1 and 2 independently. As they read, they could think about the following questions:

- How has the author described the knife? Which words has she used? (last paragraph on page 7)

List the words that the students supply and discuss them.

- Look at the illustrations of the knife. Would you use these words to describe it?

Reread the last sentence of chapter 2.

- What do you think might happen?
- What do you think about what George has done?
- What should he have done? Why do you think this?

The students can now read the rest of the story independently.

- As you read, think about the consequences of George taking the knife.

When the students have finished reading, you could discuss how one thing leads to another and how taking the knife has many consequences for George. Discuss this in terms of George's feelings and Grandma's reaction when she finds out.

- Why do you think the author wrote this story?
- Can you learn anything from reading a story like this?



## Revisiting the Text

The suggested activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson if appropriate or could be taken as a mini-lesson at a later time.

### **S** Comparing texts by the same author

Ask the students whether they have read any other stories by Pauline Cartwright. You could suggest that they read her Orbit grade 4 title *Beware!* and compare the messages in the stories. Both deal with children questioning their motives for doing things and dealing with the consequences of their actions.

They could also look at the author's grade 3 science fiction titles *Escape!* and *Strange Creatures* and discuss whether there are any similarities between these books and the story mentioned above.


### **S** Reviewing the use of adverbs

Use the events in the text to introduce or review the use of adverbs. Ask the students to find an example of a verb in the story, for example, A sound made George stand up (page 12).

- Does the sentence tell you how George stood up?
- Could you suggest a word? (suddenly, quickly, noisily, slowly)

Look at the students' suggestions and ask them whether they notice anything about the way these words are spelled (they all have -ly endings). Explain that these words are called adverbs and that they describe how, when, or where things are done.

- Look on pages thirteen and fourteen and find an example of an adverb on each page. (frantically, quickly, easily)
- Can you see how each word tells you something about the way an action is done?

 Ask the students to choose five verbs from chapter 5 and to suggest an adverb for each one based on the context of the action. They can use the blackline master on page 69 to record their work.