

From the Author's Desk:

Hello Parents and Teachers! Thank you for sharing "The Haunting of Hillside School" with your readers. It's fourth in the Cabin Creek Mystery series. I hope this discussion guide will help them reflect on the story and enjoy it on a deeper level. I've added some activities, a recipe, and behind the scenes tidbits that might be fun for them.

*Cheers,
Kristi*

Cabin Creek #4: The Haunting of Hillside School:

About this book:

It's a new school year in Cabin Creek and the cousins have a new mystery. When Claire and David look out the art room window and see a girl's pale face, they suspect it's a ghost. How else could someone look into a second floor window and just disappear? As the cousins investigate, they find other peculiar clues: piano music lilting through the halls, the aroma of pumpkin pie, and a crooked old painting that looks like the ghost's face. Is their spooky old school really a haunted house?

Illustrated by Cody Ruttly. For ages 8-12.
ISBN 9781505672206

Discussion ideas:

<> Part I: [Chapter 1-8]

1. If you could take an art, music, or dance class what type would it be?
2. Why do you think Ronald and Rex McCoy like to cause trouble?
3. Would you rather walk to an old school close to your home, or ride a bus to a modern one?

Explain.

<> Part II: [Chapter 9-16]

1. What is something you could make for a fundraiser, to help your school or to help a good cause?
2. What do you think about the title of this book?
3. When you hear the word 'haunted' what do you think? Look in a dictionary for its various definitions.

Activity suggestions:

<> Write - These can be a brief paragraph or several pages:

1. "If I played a musical instrument I would ..."
2. A poem about the wind
3. A spooky experience that turned out to have a logical explanation

<> **Draw**

1. A toy train set
2. An old schoolhouse
3. A musical instrument

<> **Make**

1. Diorama of the schoolhouse attic
2. A paper airplane

<> **Cook**

Claire's Crispy Chocolate-Butterscotch Bars -- these are delicious! As long as you don't eat too much of the batter, this will make about a dozen to share with friends.

Ingredients:

1 cup honey

1/4 cup sugar

1 1/4 cups crunchy peanut butter

1 teaspoon cinnamon or ginger -- this will add a wonderful aroma.

6 cups Rice Krispies, or any crisp rice cereal

1 bag semisweet chocolate chips (12 oz.)

1 bag butterscotch morsels (12 oz.)

1/2 cup honey-roasted peanuts, chopped

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1. Spray a 13x9" baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.

2. In a large saucepan, stir sugar & honey over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil then remove from heat. Add peanut butter and cinnamon, stirring well until gooey. Now add the cereal and stir until everything's coated (it'll be thick-ish).

3. Press this cereal mixture into the 'greased' pan.

4. Now, in a separate bowl pour in the chocolate & butterscotch chips. Microwave for 30-seconds, stir then repeat a few times (until they melt).

5. Spread this delicious gooey combo over the cereal mixture. Sprinkle the peanuts on top and let it cool. After the chocolate hardens, cut Claire's Crispy treats into squares. Party time!

<> **Read** - Cabin Creek Mysteries # 5: The Blizzard on Blue Mountain  
ISBN 9781505672268

**Behind the scenes of this story:**

When my boys were young they took piano lessons in an old brick building at a university. The upstairs hallway was long with many small rooms on either side. The wooden floors creaked. Behind each closed door students practiced an instrument -- flute, oboe, clarinet, violin, French horn -- resulting in a quiet symphony. This muffled music in an aged schoolhouse is a happy memory for me, which inspired the setting for this story.

**A secret about the author:**

I love music! For many years I studied and played the flute. I've always wished I could walk into a room, pick up a guitar and play like a folk singer.

Miss Wiggins was the name of my fourth-grade teacher and our school was on a hill overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

**Contact:** I would love to hear about your discussion. Just click the Contact button on my website, [kristianagregory.com](http://kristianagregory.com), and I'll answer you!