

## 1989

**Wright, Betty Ren. *The Dollhouse Murders*. Holiday House, 1983.**

### **SUMMARY:**

Twelve-year-old Amy Treloar is tired of being held responsible for her eleven-year-old sister Louann, who is a student at the Stadler School for Exceptional Children. When her Aunt Clare returns home to live temporarily in Amy's great-grandparents huge old house, Amy see this as an opportunity to escape Louann, at least for a short while.

While staying with Aunt Clare, Amy finds a magnificent dollhouse in the attic, one that is a perfect miniature of the old house. On subsequent visits to the attic, Amy finds that a wall of the dollhouse slides open and closed, the dolls move around and cry, lights turn on and off, and books fall.

Eventually the actions in the dollhouse help Aunt Clare solve the mystery of who killed her grandparents thirty years earlier.

### **QUESTIONS:**

Do you believe that, no matter what the problem is, truth will eventually be revealed?

How and why does Amy's relationship with Louann begin to change?

What would you do if you discovered something mysterious that you just couldn't explain?

Do you think Aunt Clare will be able to keep a steady job and enjoy life more when she returns to Chicago?

What changes do you think Mr. and Mrs. Treloar could make that would help Louann?

### **JOURNAL STARTERS:**

I became lost one day when...

I remember feeling responsible for...

One week (or one day) that changed my life was...

### **ACTIVITIES:**

Research the Special Olympics.

Help with Special Olympics in your community.

Research dollhouses.

Visit a dollhouse museum in person or on the internet.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 4-6

## **BOOKTALK:**

Amy is tired of being held responsible for her younger sister Louann, and when her Aunt Clare comes back to live temporarily in an old family home, Amy seizes the opportunity to stay with her aunt for a while. Amy finds a magnificent dollhouse in the attic, one that is an exact miniature replica of the family home, only this is not an ordinary dollhouse for it is shrouded in mystery. How could a wall of the dollhouse slide open and closed, and how could the dolls move around and lights turn on and off? Aunt Clare blames Amy for the changes in the dollhouse, only Amy says she is not doing anything to it. So, what is the mystery that the dolls are trying to help Aunt Clare solve?

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Bunting, Eve. *The Ghost Children*. Clarion, 1989.  
Hiser, Constance. *The Missing Doll*. Holiday House, 1983.  
Petrucha, Stefan. *The Haunted Dollhouse*. Papercutz, 2005.  
Wright, Betty Ren. *Princess for a Week*. Holiday House, 2006.

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Betty Ren Wright:** <http://www.sff.net/people/jackbyrne/BRwright.htm>  
***The Dollhouse Murders: Activity Guide:***  
<http://www.liveoakmedia.com/client/guides/98342.pdf>

## **OTHER RECOGNITION:**

Winner of a Children's Choice Award in the following states and region:  
Alabama, 1988; Iowa, 1988; Missouri, 1986; New Mexico, 1988; Pacific Northwest, 1986;  
Texas, 1986; Wyoming, 1988.

**MOVIE TIE-IN:** *The Dollhouse Murders*. Lion's Gate, 1992.  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0111144/>