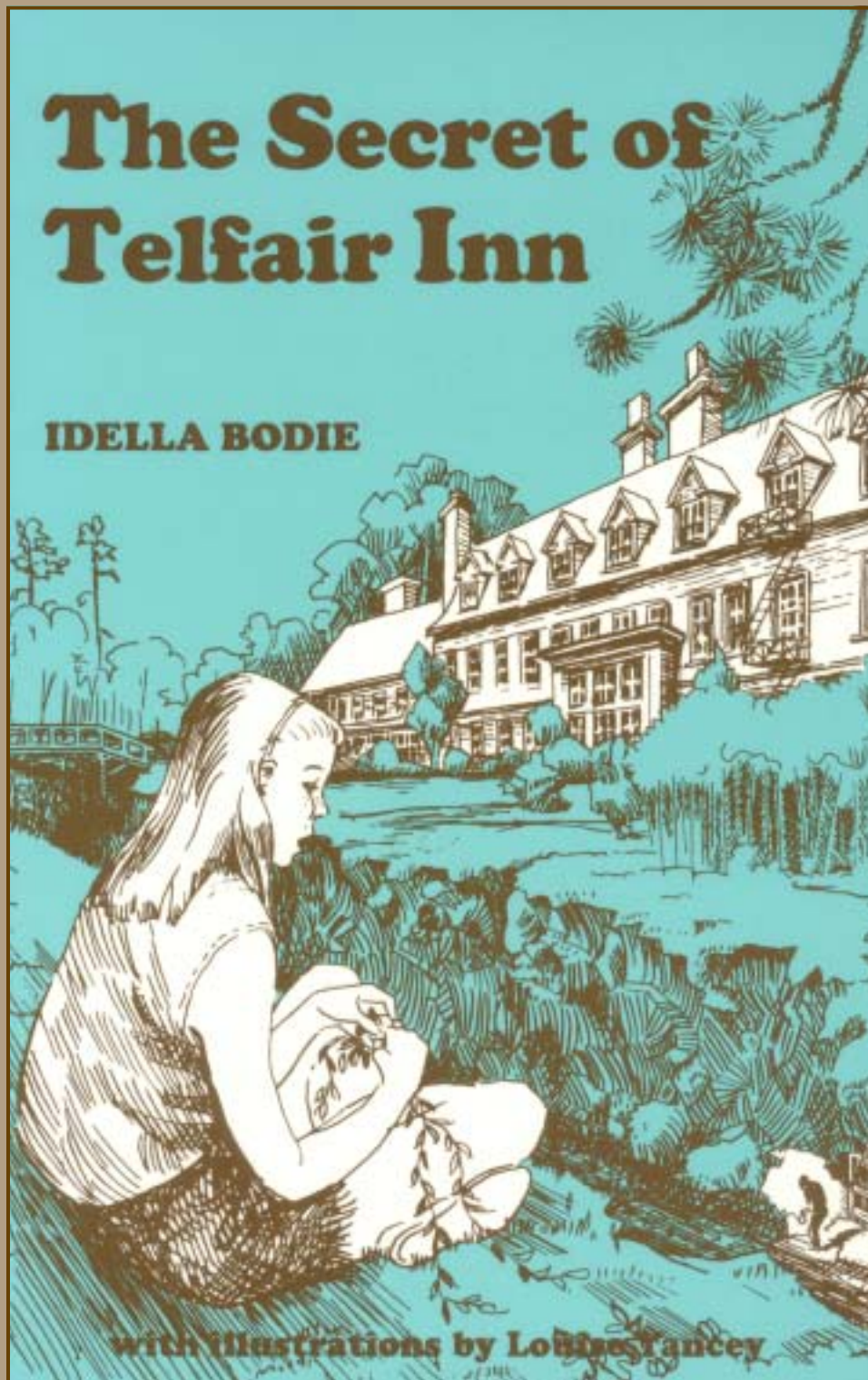


Teacher's Guide for _____



South
Carolina
Children's
Book Award
list nominee

"This is a book that will make young mystery-story buffs like history and that history-minded parents will like. It also performs the difficult feat of combining suspense with believability."—*Georgia Magazine*

A unit of study on *The Secret of Telfair Inn*

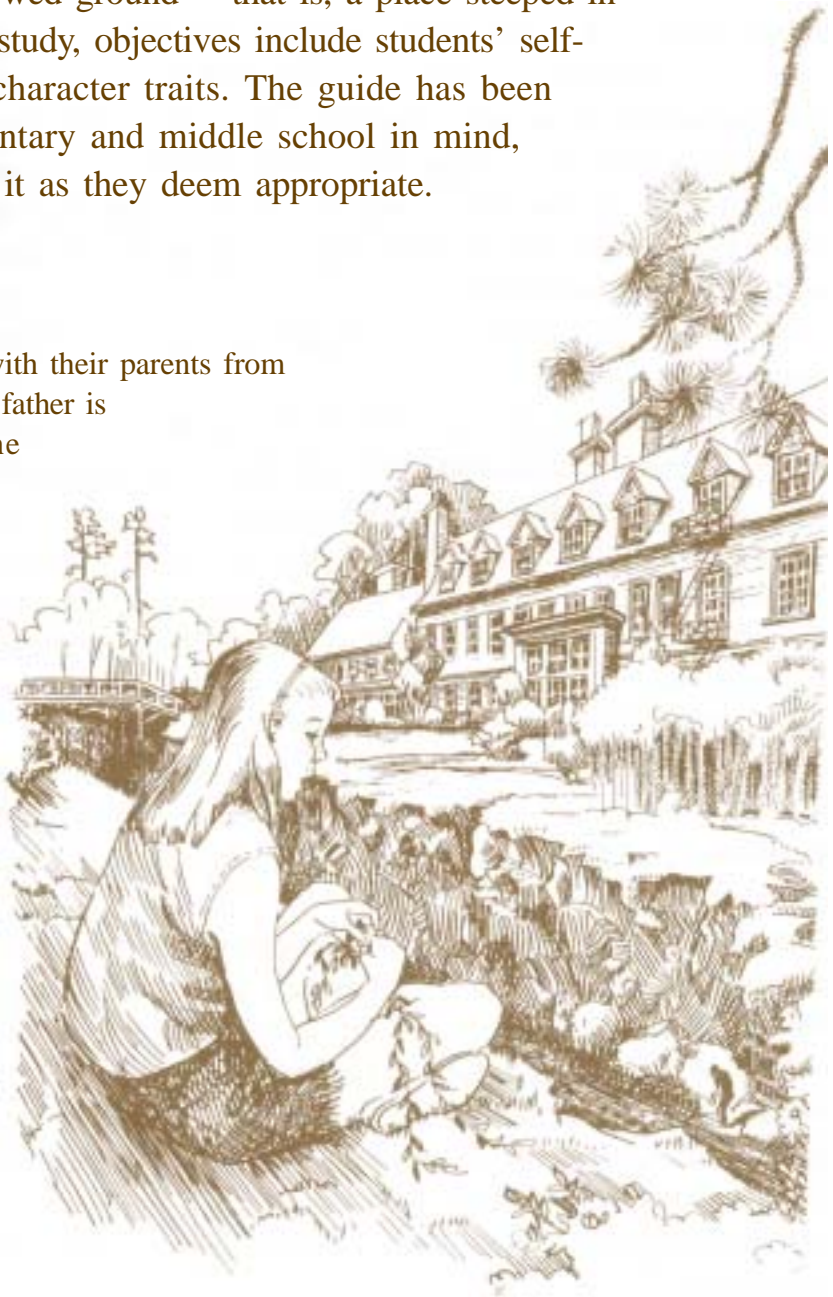
by Idella Bodie

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Secret of Telfair Inn is set in Aiken, South Carolina. Although it is fiction, the characters move over “hallowed ground”—that is, a place steeped in history. Basically a literary study, objectives include students’ self-examination of their own character traits. The guide has been designed with upper elementary and middle school in mind, however, teachers may use it as they deem appropriate.

STORY SYNOPSIS

Marcy and Phil Dunlap come with their parents from the North to Aiken, where their father is doing historical research. The family stays at Telfair Inn (patterned after the Willcox), which is in a state of dilapidation. In fact, one part of the sprawling old inn has been targeted for demolition. The antagonist, eccentric old Mr. Crowe, frightens young Marcy. It is obvious he does not want the Dunlaps, because of the children, to stay in the inn. When he chases Marcy and Phil with his cane, they decide he is trying to hide something. Mysterious things start to take place, giving Phil the idea to explore the unused part of the old inn. What they find not only surprises them but teaches a lesson in compassion.



STUDENT OBJECTIVES

1. To nurture the love of reading
2. To improve interpretative skills in reading
3. To understand the elements that make up a story
4. To focus on their own character traits
5. To help understand themselves and their actions
6. To improve writing skills
7. To improve vocabulary
8. To learn history

SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS FOR SHORT COMPOSITION AND DISCUSSION.

1. Composition.

A figure who tries to keep the main character (or characters) from getting what he wants is called an *antagonist*. The reader thinks of the antagonist as the bad guy. That is because the author has pictured him in such a way the reader will not like him.

Write a brief character sketch of Mr. Crowe as he was at the beginning of the story. Before you begin, brainstorm for ideas. Make notes on his appearance: his clothing, posture, walk, manner, voice, possessions, etc. Use his exact words, from a scene in the book, that show what kind of person he appears to be. (You'll want to put those words in quotations.) When you cannot think of anything else you want to write, decide on your opening sentence. It should let the reader know who the paragraph is about and give his role in the story. With your opening sentence written, decide what you will put first from your brainstorming notes, second, and so on—then, how you can group like ideas together. Save your best point of

proof for last. Then write a “clincher” (a summarizing sentence).

Volunteers could read sketches aloud with classmates telling the parts that made them **see** (*a scowl, gnarled hands, wild gray hair*) and **hear** (*voice from a cavern*). Discuss the use of imagery: the painting of pictures with words in order for the reader to *see, hear, smell, and taste*. Ask students to continue to look for sensory words and use them in their writing.

2. Discussion.

A writer usually gets into the skin of one character and shows the action through that person's eyes and heart. Nothing can happen in the story that this character does not *see* or *hear*. Whose “viewpoint” is represented in the book? Do you think that was a good choice? How might the story change if it were told from another character's viewpoint? Phil's? Mr. Crowe's?

3. Discussion.

Have you ever been on a “wild goose chase?” If so, tell about it. If not, where would you like to take one?

4. Composition.

Marcy and Phil had arguments. Do you think this is typical of siblings? Once Phil called Marcy “stupid” and on another occasion she called him a “know-it-all.” Do you think siblings sometimes say things to each other they would not say to friends? What do you think about this situation?

5. Composition and follow-up discussion.

How do you feel about Marcy and Phil hiding their actions from their parents? Do you think there are occasions when it is all right to do this? What are they? Without using any personal situations, give your opinion of how truthfulness, respect, faith, and trust affect a parent/child relationship.

6. Discussion.

See page 122. After Mr. Crowe was taken to the hospital, Marcy and Phil “got a lecture” for trespassing. Do you think they deserved more punishment? Why or why not?

7. Discussion.

Marcy and Phil, as well as others, were quick to judge Mr. Crowe. How does what happened in this book show us we must not judge too quickly?

8. Discussion on the meaning of *compassion*. Composition.

Before you begin to write, think about why compassion is such an important character trait. Using the topic sentence, “*The Secret of Telfair Inn* has many compassionate characters,” explain in a paragraph how the following characters showed compassion: Marcy, Phil, Mr. Crowe, Mr. and Mrs. Dunlap, the nurse in the hospital, and, at the end of the book, the townspeople of Aiken.

9. Discussion.

Do you think getting to know Mrs. Crowe helps you understand older adults who have Alzheimer’s disease? Phil compared Mrs. Crowe to their mother’s Aunt Clara who was in a nursing home. He said she was “senile.” That word was used to describe older people who did not think clearly before a German neurologist discovered that a brain disorder also caused failed memory in older adults.



10. Discussion.

How do you feel about duels being used to settle arguments? Do you believe a person who would refuse to accept the challenge of a duel is a coward? Can you relate dueling to anything in our lives today?

NOTE

Since this book was written over thirty years ago, many changes have taken place in Aiken. If you live in the area, you may like to talk about the changes as you read the story.

- The wooden bridge by the Willcox Inn has been replaced with a concrete one.
- The Aiken County Library was at that time in the small Dibble building on Laurens Street. Later, it moved to the building the Museum now houses. Today, it is located in the old Aiken Institute school on Whiskey Road.
- During the time this book was written, much of the Willcox Inn was in a dilapidated state. Rooms on the side near the bridge had been turned into apartments. The large ballroom at the opposite end of the building was about to be torn away. Windows were broken and a “No Trespassing” sign was propped on the end to be demolished. The area where the ballroom once stood now serves as parking for inn guests.
- The brick structure at the mouth of Coker Spring has been restored.
- Traffic in and around Aiken has noticeably increased.
- The railroad track running through the ravine is now used by freight trains.

TOPICS FOR RESEARCH

Willcox Inn
 The Best Friend
 Battle of Aiken
 Coker Spring
 William Aiken
 Captain W.W. Williams
 Alfred Dexter
 South Carolina Canal and
 Railroad Company
 Sand Bar Ferry
 Hamburg
 Henry Schultz
 Hitchcock Woods
 Aiken Country Public
 Library
 Aiken County Museum
 Hopelands Gardens



VOCABULARY

Students may like to put copies of these words and their definitions on large index cards to keep inside their books.

<i>Page #</i>	<i>Vocabulary Word</i>	<i>Definition</i>
5	maze	puzzlelike paths
6	veranda	porch
7	massive	large and heavy
8	petrified	paralyzed with fear; like stone
10	bulbous	shaped like a bulb
12	elaborate	fancy; elegant
13	eccentric	odd; unusual
19	pacified	made calm
19	inevitable	certain to happen
24	silhouette	outlined; dark against light
34	morale	courage
52	haphazardly	not planned
57	verify	prove to be true
59	aristocracy	upper class citizens (generally refers to society's wealthy)
60	condone	to pardon or forgive
60	barbarism	savage behavior
62	rendezvous	meeting place
64	maneuvered	planned moves
70	reverie	daydream
73	envisioned	pictured in one's mind
80	bewildered	confused
81	senile	loss of memory
100	excursion	a short trip
112	sedation	state of calm from medicine
117	obstinate	stubborn
117	gait	a way of walking

Special Activities

Arrangements for school classes to tour Aiken and the sites in this book can be made through the Aiken Chamber of Commerce. Phone: 1-803-641-1111.

Further Reading

Students may be interested to know that the same young people, Marcy and Phil Dunlap, appear in Idella Bodie's book *Mystery of Edisto Island*, set at Edisto Beach.

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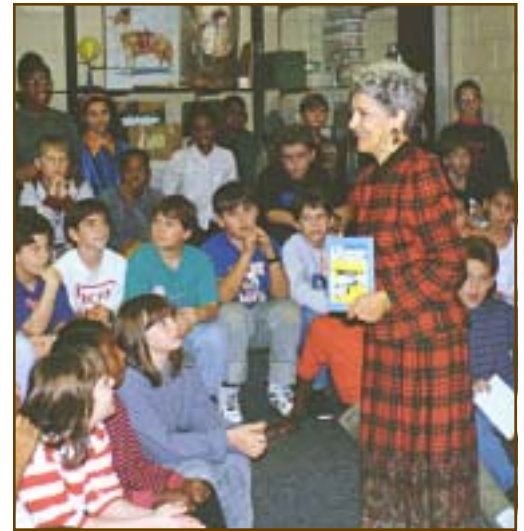
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About the Author

“I grew up on a farm near the small town of Ridge Spring, South Carolina. Years during the 1930s etched indelible memories of the Great Depression in my mind. I have gathered many of those memories, as well as ones from World War II, to show ‘the way things were then.’

“My mother’s gift for storytelling and her host of friends and relatives fed me words to use with my imaginary friends. Soaking in sights, sounds, and smells of my young world gave me a ‘writer’s eye’ and left me with a burning desire to record my world. Pencil and paper were magical tools.”

–Idella Bodie



Other Books by Idella Bodie



CAROLINA GIRL
A WRITER'S BEGINNING



GHOST IN THE CAPITOL *



GHOST TALES FOR RETELLING



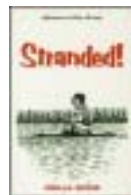
A HUNT FOR LIFE'S EXTRAS:
THE STORY OF ARCHIBALD RUTLEDGE



THE MYSTERY OF EDISTO ISLAND



THE MYSTERY OF THE PIRATE'S
TREASURE *



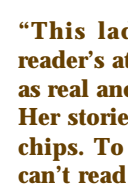
SACRED VISION
• Teacher's guide available.



SOUTH CAROLINA WOMEN



STRANDED!



TROUBLE AT STAR FORT
• Activities guide available.

WHOPPER
• Creative writing guide available.

* South Carolina Book Award list
nominees

“This lady knows how to get and keep a reader’s attention. . . . Her young characters are as real and believable as the kids next door. . . . Her stories are as crisp as a new bag of potato chips. To paraphrase the commercial, ‘Betcha can’t read just one!’”—Marietta Daily Journal

To purchase copies of Idella Bodie's books,
contact your local bookstore or visit these web sites:

**www.thereadingsource.com or
www.sandlapperpublishing.com.**

HEROES AND HEROINES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



THE MAN WHO LOVED THE FLAG
• William Jasper



THE SECRET MESSAGE
• Emily Geiger



THE REVOLUTIONARY SWAMP FOX
• Francis Marion



THE FIGHTING GAMECOCK
• Thomas Sumter



SPUNKY REVOLUTIONARY WAR
HEROINE
• Laodicea “Dicey” Langston



THE COURAGEOUS PATRIOT
• Rebecca Motte



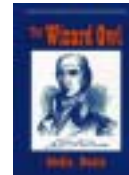
QUAKER COMMANDER
• Nathanael Greene



BRAVE BLACK PATRIOTS



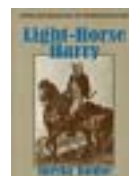
THE OLD WAGONER
• Daniel Morgan



THE WIZARD OWL
• Andrew Pickens



HEROINES OF THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION



LIGHT-HORSE HARRY
• Henry Lee

TEACHER'S GUIDE
• Free with classroom sets of the series.

Honors Received: **Outstanding Patriot Award** from The Cambridge Chapter of the South Carolina Chapter of The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution and **Certificate of Award for Excellence in Community Service** from the South Carolina Chapter of The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.