

THE AUTHORS SHOW – Authors of Children's books

Author: Cindy C. Murray

The Adventures of Sophie and Scottie chapter book series is packed full of action and adventure. I wrote this rated “G” series to help promote literacy for readers’ ages 7 to 12. I’m proud of this award-winning series and the positive feedback from readers keeps me writing!

The following is an excerpt from the first book in the three-book series:

Sophie and Scottie’s Adventures of the Monarch Mystery

Scottie ripped the bright-colored paper off the box in seconds. As the paper fell to the ground, Scottie began to open the box and pull out something wrapped in bright orange tissue paper.

“What is it? What is it?” Sophie asked excitedly.

Scottie unwrapped the tissue paper and held the object in her hand. It was a picture frame, big enough to hold an 8 inch by 10 inch picture.

“Let me see, let me see,” ordered Sophie. She took the frame from Scottie’s hands and held it in both of hers. “Wow, it’s beautiful. It looks like the frame is made out of hundreds of tiny mirrored jewels or crystals.”

“Oh, big deal!” Scottie said in a disappointed voice. “I thought she would send us something a little more exciting or weird, like those rain boxes.”

Well, that’s not very nice,” Sophie replied. “And look,” she continued in a higher voice, “the frame seems to change color as you come near it, kind of like those silly mood rings Ma talked about wearing when she was a little girl.”

“Yeah, right,” Scottie said sarcastically.

“I mean it, Scottie. Look at the color it’s changed to since I’ve been holding it.”

The frame changed from a silvery clear color when it was in the box to a deep blue tone, and now in Sophie’s hands it was a bright canary yellow.

“I think it’s happy next to me,” Sophie said with a smile.

“Oh, puleeze,” Scottie replied. “I think you’re losing it!”

“Okay, then, let’s see what color it becomes now,” Sophie said in a rather snooty voice as she handed the frame to Scottie.

Scottie held the frame and the crystals immediately changed back to silver and then to a deep, dark ebony. It startled her so much that she dropped the frame, which luckily landed on her bed.

Scottie then said in a hesitant voice, “Okay, maybe this frame is different.”

“Auntie Jill never sends anything that’s ordinary,” Sophie observed. “In fact, look at the frame. She’s already put a picture in it.”

“Well, now, that is weird too,” Scottie said as she picked up the frame off of her bed.

This time, Scottie was curious and really looked at the frame more closely. It had what looked like a diamond-shaped piece of glass centered perfectly on the top part of the frame. As she held it, the frame began to change to an ocean blue. Both girls also took a closer look at the photograph in the frame.

“The picture looks like the ranch house,” Sophie described. “It has arches in the front and a large three-tiered fountain like ours. But it’s next to a road that passes in front of it.”

“And it can’t be from around here,” Scottie observed.

“Look at the plants around the house. The area looks like a forest with some tropical plants.”

“Wait, I see a small sign on the house at the top of the stairs behind the fountain. It says Rancho de La Joya. I don’t think this is a house, Scottie. I think it’s a hotel. I guess Auntie Jill took this picture somewhere in Mexico or South America.”

“But where is Auntie Jill?” Scottie asked. “Why would she send us a picture of a hotel that looks like our ranch house in a forest without her in it?”

"I don't know," Sophie answered. "Maybe she took the picture because of the similarity to our house and the hotel."

Sophie then picked up the frame and turned it over. "Look, there's a note attached to the back of the frame." Sophie read:

Please do not remove this photograph until I send another one for you to replace it. You will understand why very soon.

Love, Auntie Jill

Sophie looked at Scottie and asked, "Is this gift weird enough for you now?"

"Oh, yes! This is more like our auntie!"

"This frame is so pretty and a little big, so let's put it on the table facing the door. That way everyone can see it as they come into our room," Sophie suggested.

"There, it looks great right here." As she set the frame down, it turned a deep red.

"Oh, my gosh!" Scottie blurted out. "We'd better clean up and get ready for dinner. Then we can show Ma and Pa the frame."

Just as the girls stepped into their own closets, Sophie heard something near their bedroom door. She poked her head out of her closet to see what the noise was. Where the table stood, she noticed the frame had moved. In fact, it was now turned around on the side of the table closest to them and it was facing them!

"Scottie, did you move the picture?" Sophie called out.

"No," Scottie replied, "my arms can't reach that far!"

How weird, Sophie thought as she walked back into her closet to put on some clean clothes. As she walked out, she noticed that the picture was now on the wood floor in front of the table.

“Scottie,” Sophie called out again, “we must’ve had some kind of earthquake because the frame is on the floor.”

“What?” Scottie asked as she walked out of her closet, now clothed in a clean outfit.

Scottie looked at Sophie, who was staring at the table without a frame on it.

Sophie then looked at Scottie and said in a hushed voice while pointing at the floor, “Scarlet, look!”

Scottie looked at the picture and both girls watched as the frame began to glow. It was as if a light bulb had turned on within the frame. It turned from deep red to hues of glowing yellow, green, blue, and then orange.

“It reminds me of a flame in a fireplace,” Scottie said as she walked toward the frame to pick it up.

“Wait!” Sophie ordered as she caught Scottie’s arm to stop her.

Both girls continued to stare at the frame.

“Oh, wow,” said Scottie, “I think my eyes are playing tricks on me, but the frame looks bigger.”

“It is bigger,” Sophie agreed in an excited voice.

“This is no ordinary frame. And look, the picture is growing too!”