

CATCH a spark!

Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



The Sixty-Eight Rooms

Written by Marianne Malone
280 pages / Grades 3-8

The Thorne Rooms are 68 intricately created miniature rooms located in the Art Institute of Chicago, designed down to every minute detail of different time periods. While on a field trip, Ruthie and Jack discover a key that allows them to shrink small enough to explore the rooms. While doing just that, they realize they weren't the first ones to do it, and that someone who had been there before them left something quite important behind!

C Context

Maps - take a virtual tour of the Thorne Rooms, easily found online, and have students create a map of the layout based on the tours and the references in the book.

Math and Scale Drawings Much of the book discusses perspective and scale. A perfect setting to make the topic alive for students.

Historical Time Periods - With a room for almost every European and America time period, there are solid visual and written details for students.

A Arts

Miniatures and dioramas as art forms, and the importance of scale. A worthwhile companion text is the book *Miniature Rooms: The Thorne Rooms at the Art Institute of Chicago*, which has beautiful photographs of each room.

Museums - curators, layout, acquisitions and security.

Historical dress/costumes - There are multiple references to clothing styles throughout, based on the rooms themselves.

T Themes

Friendship

Adversity

Insecurity

Magic - believing in the impossible

Memories

Historical past

C Create

Create a dialogue or story about a conversation you have with someone from a long-ago time period. What historical context would you need to know? How could you give them clues about the future without sharing too much?

Choose a time period and work to create a replica diorama

Do some research as to the content of the Thorne Rooms. What style room do you think is missing? Create it to scale.

H Heart Words

"Her heart had never pounded so hard and... but she had the strongest instinct not to let fear stop her."

"...artists like her create their lives rather than letting other people set the rules."

"Of course, you have to be open to these feelings for the magic to work, and not everyone is."

"I have discovered that knowledge is the only property that endows its owner with power."

"Truth is always precious. But memories are part of life - a wonderful part."

