



The Mystery of the

# Crystal Castle

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BAVARIA • GERMANY

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by Carole Marsh

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First Edition

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# 30 Years Ago . . .

As a mother and an author, one of the fondest periods of my life was when I decided to write mystery books for children. At this time (1979), kids were pretty much glued to the TV, something parents and teachers complained about the same way they do about web surfing and blogging today.

I decided to set each mystery in a real place—a place kids could go and visit for themselves after reading the book. And I also used real children as characters. Usually a couple of my own children served as characters, and I had no trouble recruiting kids from the book's location to also be characters.

Also, I wanted all the kids—boys and girls of all ages—to participate in solving the mystery. And, I wanted kids to learn something as they read. Something about the history of the location. And I wanted the stories to be funny. That formula of real+scary+smart+fun served me well.

I love getting letters from teachers and parents who say they read the book with their class or child, then visited the historic site and saw all the places in the mystery for themselves. What's so great about that? What's great is that you and your children have an experience that bonds you together forever. Something you shared. Something you both cared about at the time. Something that crossed all age levels—a good story, a good scare, a good laugh!

30 years later,

*Carole Marsh*



Hey, kids! As you see—here we are ready to embark on another of our exciting Carole Marsh Mystery adventures! You know, in "real life," I keep very close tabs on Christina, Grant, and their friends when we travel. However, in the mystery books, they always seem to slip away from Papa and me so that they can try to solve the mystery on their own!

I hope you will go to [www.carolemarshmysteries.com](http://www.carolemarshmysteries.com) and apply to be a character in a future mystery book! Well, the *Mystery Girl* is all tuned up and ready for "take-off!"

Gotta go... Papa says so! Wonder what I've forgotten his time?

Happy "Armchair Travel" Reading,

Mimi

# About the Characters



**Christina**, age 10: Mysterious things really do happen to her! Hobbies: soccer, Girl Scouts, anything crafty, hanging out with Mimi, and going on new adventures.



**Grant**, age 7: Always manages to fall off boats, back into cactuses, and find strange clues—even in real life! Hobbies: camping, baseball, computer games, math, and hanging out with Papa.



**Mimi** is Carole Marsh, children's book author and creator of Carole Marsh Mysteries, Around the World in 80 Mysteries, Three Amigos Mysteries, Baby's First Mysteries, and many others.



**Papa** is Bob Longmeyer, the author's real-life husband, who really does wear a tuxedo, cowboy boots and hat, fly an airplane, captain a boat, speak in a booming voice, and laugh a lot!

Travel around the world with Christina and Grant as they visit famous places in 80 countries, and experience the mysterious happenings that always seem to follow them!



# Books in This Series

**#1 The Mystery at Big Ben  
(London, England)**

**#2 The Mystery at the Eiffel Tower  
(Paris, France)**

**#3 The Mystery at the Roman Colosseum  
(Rome, Italy)**

**#4 The Mystery of the Ancient Pyramid  
(Cairo, Egypt)**

**#5 The Mystery on the Great Wall of China  
(Beijing, China)**

**#6 The Mystery on the Great Barrier Reef  
(Australia)**

**#7 The Mystery at Mt. Fuji  
(Tokyo, Japan)**

**#8 The Mystery in the Amazon Rainforest  
(South America)**

**#9 The Mystery at Dracula's Castle  
(South America)**

**#10 The Curse of the Acropolis  
(Athens, Greece)**

**#11 The Mystery of the Crystal Castle  
(Bavaria, Germany)**

**#12 The Mystery in Icy Antarctica  
(Antarctica)**

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# We're Going to Germany!

“We’re going to Germany!” Grant shouted, standing over Christina’s bed and shaking her awake.

“Now?” Christina asked, sitting up groggily. Seeing her brother, she sighed, plopped back down, and pulled the covers over her head. “Go away, Grant.”

“ERRRRRRR!” Grant grunted, as he tugged on Christina’s fuzzy pink blanket, bringing his sister’s feet to the edge of the bed.

Christina clutched the blanket and started to giggle. “Stop it, Grant,” she ordered, yanking back and gritting her teeth. Grant glimpsed the silver flash of her braces.



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“Hurry up—ERRRRR—” Grant said, as he tugged again, “and get up!”

Christina sat up, brushing her long, brown hair out of her eyes. “Cut it out, will you?”

“Hurry up and come downstairs!” Grant pleaded. “Mimi and Papa are talking about all the neat stuff we’re going to see in Germany, but said they wouldn’t finish making their plans until you got out of bed.” He turned his back on his sister and heaved the blanket over his shoulder, pulling as hard as he could. “So I’m here to make—sure—you do!” he grunted.

***BOP!***

Grant’s tugging was met with a pillow to the back of the head. His curly blond hair fanned out wildly from the static electricity. He whirled around to find Christina standing on the bed, laughing at him.

“EEEYAAAAA!” Grant shouted, swinging the pillow back at her.



*We're Going to Germany!*

POOF!

**WHACK!**

Soon, a full-blown pillow fight was underway. The kids spilled out into the hallway, squealing with laughter.

“What’s going on up there?” Papa’s thunderous voice boomed from the bottom of the stairs.

Christina and Grant froze. “Nothing, Papa,” Christina shouted.

Papa wasn’t buying it. “Oh, really?” he asked. “You two get down here. NOW!” he bellowed. The kids could hear his brown cowboy boots clomping across the shiny hardwood floor.

Papa met them at the doorway to the kitchen and held out his hand to stop them. “Whoa, whoa, whoa, what have we here, a cattle stampede?”

“Morning, Papa,” Christina said, greeting him with a quick kiss on the cheek.



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“Morning, Papa,” Grant said, sliding on his socks past them and landing in his favorite chair.

“You let that child eat WAYYY too much sugar,” Christina joked. She took her seat at the table where Grant was already gobbling down his mound of cereal.

“So, what’s this about going to Germany?” Christina asked, as she spooned juicy, red strawberries on her cereal.

Mimi set her red coffee cup on the table and joined them. “Well,” she began, “I called a friend of mine about an idea I had to write a mystery in Germany. His name is Frederick Haag, and he is the administrator to a wonderful German castle. He has invited us to visit him and his castle! We’re going to see the Bavarian Alps!”

“Elves?” Grant cried. “They have elves in Germany?”

“Elves?” Christina asked. “Where did you come up with elves?”

“Mimi said we are going to see the Bavarian Elves,” Grant replied, looking to his grandmother for confirmation.



## *We're Going to Germany!*

Mimi ruffled his blonde curls. “No, Grant,” she explained. “The Bavarian *Alps* are the mountains in that part of Germany. We’re going to Neuschwanstein (noy-shvan-shtine) Castle, or as I like to call it, ‘Crystal Castle’,” she added, her eyes twinkling. “I call it that because it just sparkles in the sunlight like crystal.”

“Crystal Castle is sure easier to say,” Grant said.

Christina loved having a grandmother who wrote children’s mysteries. During their school vacations, she and Grant often traveled with Mimi and Papa as Mimi did research for her mystery books. Mimi and Papa spent so much time traveling that Mimi had bought Papa a special present—a little red and white airplane he named *Mystery Girl*. Now, Papa was known as the “cowboy pilot”!

The family huddled at the table for the rest of the morning, studying brochures and planning what they wanted to do in Germany. Everyone agreed that Crystal Castle would be first on their list!

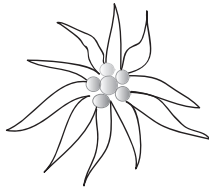
While the kids finished breakfast, Mimi told them all about Germany. She rested her elbows on the table and held her coffee mug in both hands while she reminisced.



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“Bavaria is located in southern Germany, and is the largest of the 16 states in the Federal Republic of Germany,” Mimi explained, biting into a piece of wheat toast. “Munich is the capital. Just imagine, you two! Germany is home to such historic figures as the famous scientist Albert Einstein, composers like Ludwig van Beethoven and Sebastian Bach, and the Brothers Grimm, who gave us fairy tales like ‘Sleeping Beauty’ and ‘Hansel and Gretel’.”

Mimi closed her eyes, picturing her memories of Germany. “Ah, but wait until you see Crystal Castle. It’s just the most magnificent castle nestled among lush forests, green meadows and the towering alpine mountains.” She opened her blue eyes and slid her sparkly, red reading glasses down her nose as she peered at the children. “I know you are just going to love it!”



The next morning was a blur of packing and last minute details. Papa looked at all the brightly colored suitcases stacked in a neat row waiting to be



## *We're Going to Germany!*

loaded onto the plane. He swept his Stetson hat from his head and wiped the sweat off his forehead with his yellow bandana.

“Are you women packing for a trip or planning to stay in Germany permanently?” he asked Mimi.

“Very funny, dear,” Mimi said, patting his cheek as she tossed another suitcase on the pile. “I never know which pair of shoes I might need!”

Papa felt outnumbered until he saw his grandson approaching. “Come on, Grant. The men will take care of stowing the valuables,” he said. Grant grinned and grunted as he helped Papa lift the suitcases into the cargo compartment.

“Everyone remember to buckle up,” Mimi directed, as she fastened her seatbelt and settled in for the long trip.

Christina watched the airport hangar grow smaller and smaller as the *Mystery Girl* eased into the sky. Takeoff was her favorite part of flying. She thought about what adventures lie ahead in Germany. She couldn't wait to get there! *She also wondered, would there be a mystery at Crystal Castle?*





# A Taste of Germany

When the plane landed in Germany, Grant and Christina scrambled to their feet. “Come on, Mimi! Come on, Papa!” Grant cried. “I want to see the castle!”

The family marched down the long passenger bridge leading into the Munich Airport. Grant rushed past Mimi and Papa, weaving in and out of the crowd of people who had merged onto the bridge from other flights.

“Slow down, Grant!” Papa warned his eager grandson. “We don’t want to lose you before we even set foot on German soil!”

“Wow!” Grant shouted the minute they entered the main terminal. “Is this a carnival?” Smiling



## *The Mystery of the Crystal Castle*

men, women, and children dressed in orange and green handed out flyers for Oktoberfest. Lively accordion music filled the air. Food vendors dotted the walkways, surrounded by tantalizing aromas. Christina stopped for a sample of Black Forest cake, while Grant grabbed a warm, chewy, soft pretzel.

“Mmmmm,” Grant murmured. “What’s all the fuss about?” he asked Mimi.

“It’s Oktoberfest in Germany,” Mimi said. “It’s a huge festival that lasts for about two weeks. There’s fabulous food, music, shows, concerts, and even amusement park rides.”

“Wow!” cried Grant, as they passed a red-faced, round man balancing three plates in the air. “I want to go! Can we go? Please?”

“I think we can work it in,” Mimi replied, with a wink.

Grant now had a question for Papa. “Papa,” he asked, “why are those men wearing shorts with suspenders? Don’t they know it’s cold in Germany?”

Papa chuckled, glancing at a group of dancers wearing chocolate-brown shorts, knee-high white socks with black dress shoes, and long-sleeved white

## *A Taste of Germany*

shirts with striped suspenders. Their outfits were topped off with green hats, each sporting a fluffy white feather.

“Those shorts are called *lederhosen* (*leh-der-hohsen*),” Papa explained. “They are traditional dress in Germany.”

“Do you have to wear them to go to Oktoberfest?” Grant asked, looking worried. “Those socks look really strange with dress shoes.”

“All the men have to wear them to Oktoberfest,” Christina said, holding in a smile.

“I don’t think I want to go now,” Grant said, eyeing a boy about his own age dressed in *lederhose* with green embroidery around the edges.

“It’s okay,” Mimi reassured him. “Christina is just teasing you. You can wear your jeans!” Christina giggled as Grant glared at her.

After all the commotion, Papa said he needed to rest for a few minutes, so they stopped at a small café. Papa ordered German sausage and *sauerkraut* (*sow-er-krowt*).

“Sour sprouts!” cried Grant. “Why do you want to eat sour brussel sprouts?”



## The Mystery of the Crystal Castle

Mimi laughed. “Grant,” she said, “*sauerkraut* is cabbage, like cole slaw, but it has a sour taste. It’s one of Papa’s favorite German dishes.”

Christina and Grant ordered their food from the *kindermenu* (*kin-dahr-men-yoo*), which was similar to a child’s menu back home. Looking behind the cash register, Christina noticed a shelf covered in tall drinking mugs. Each mug had unique decorations.

“Look, Mimi,” Christina said, “those mugs look like someone molded German scenes on them and then painted them. They’re so beautiful!”

Christina stopped the waitress walking by their table. “Can you tell me about those mugs?” she asked.

“Those are called tankards, or beer *steins* (*shtines*),” the waitress replied. “During the Middle Ages, there was a



## *A Taste of Germany*

terrible sickness called the bubonic plague, or 'Black Death.' Millions of people died. To help stop the plague from spreading, a law was passed requiring that all food and drink must be covered. The tankard was created during that time. You probably can't see it from here, but there is a tab on the handle so you can open the top with just one hand."

"Wow!" Grant exclaimed. "Maybe I can get one to hold my lemonade!"





# Don't Throw That Away!

Papa stood up when he finished his meal, patting his full stomach. “Come on, kids, it’s time to go,” he said. “Pick up your trash while I walk Mimi to the ladies’ room.”

As Grant watched them walk away, he turned to say something to Christina. Instead of words, a huge sneeze came out of his mouth.

**“AH-AH-AH-CHOOO!”**

“*Gesundheit* (geh-soont-hyt),” a woman remarked, nodding and smiling at Grant as she passed by.



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“Huh?” Grant said, as he spun around. “What did she say—Jason Hewitt? Who’s that?” he mumbled. But the woman was gone, so he took one last quick sip of his drink, gathered his trash, and picked up his tray. He shoved his chair back just as a man walked behind it. The man jumped back, trying to avoid the collision. Too late!

**WHAM!**

**Crash!**

Grant’s chair collided with the man’s tray, sending it flying through the air and crashing to the floor. The remains of his coffee splattered across the room.

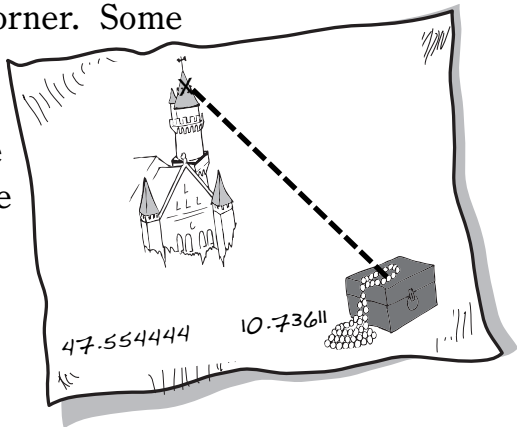
Christina immediately began to dab at the spilled coffee with a wad of napkins.

## *Don't Throw That Away!*

Grant dropped to the floor and crawled under the table, picking up french fries as he went. He found what was left of his sandwich, and scooped up some napkins, paper cups, and a folded piece of paper.

Holding an armload of debris, Grant rose to his knees. "I'm really sorry, sir," he began. But as he looked around, he realized the man was gone. Seeing that Christina had finished cleaning up the table, he shrugged, and skipped to the trash bin. As he started to dump everything in, he spotted the folded paper. He unfolded it.

On the paper was a drawing of a stone castle tower. Dotted lines led to an X near the top of the tower. A small box and a coil of rope or beads were drawn in the corner. Some mysterious numbers were jotted on the bottom of the drawing.



## *The Mystery of the Crystal Castle*

Christina approached Grant and tossed the coffee-soaked napkins into the trash bin. “Boy, little brother,” she said, “you sure know how to make friends quick!” She wiped her hands against one another. “What a mess!”

“Never mind that,” Grant said, holding out the piece of paper. “Look at this!”

“This looks like a map,” Christina said. She pointed at the numbers. “I wonder what those mean.”

“I don’t know,” Grant replied, waving the paper, “but we’re already on to a new mystery and we haven’t even left the airport!” He stopped and looked toward the doorway. “Did you get a good look at the man I bumped into?” he asked.

“Not really,” Christina replied. “I just caught a glimpse of him before you showered him with coffee, but he was an older man with a thick black mustache.” She saw Mimi and Papa returning from the restrooms. “Oh, there’s Mimi and Papa,” she remarked. “Let’s look at that map again later.”

“Okay,” Grant said, and he slipped the map into his pocket.



*Don't Throw That Away!*

Papa was more than ready to step outside into the fresh air. "Let's get out of here," he suggested, "and go see Germany!"

The curb outside the airport was lined with cream-colored taxis. Mimi spotted a man holding a sign for their hotel, the Little Bavaria Inn. "Yooo hooo!" she called, waving her handkerchief at the man. "Here we are!"

The porters wheeled their luggage brigade in front of the waiting taxi van, where the driver presented Mimi with a bouquet of fragrant red and yellow flowers. "Thank you!" exclaimed Mimi. "How did you know I love anything red?"

As soon as their luggage was loaded, the family stepped into the van. *As it sped away from the airport, no one saw the man with the black mustache get into the taxi behind them.*

