**Escape Room Activity: Unlock the Secrets of The Ghostly Guardian**

**The Haunted Chronicles**

**Ages: 9-13**

**Objective:**

Students will work together to solve clues and unlock "rooms" within the haunted house to discover the truth behind the ghostly happenings. This activity reinforces reading comprehension, critical thinking, and problem-solving, all while engaging students with themes from *The Ghostly Guardian*.

**Setting the Scene:**

The students are now explorers in Lucy’s haunted house. The goal is to help Lucy and her ghostly friend, Emily, uncover the final secret of the house before they are "trapped" in the mystery forever. Each puzzle they solve unlocks the next room, revealing more clues about the house’s past and leading them closer to the final solution.

**Escape Room Setup:**

* **Rooms:** You can divide the classroom into different "rooms" representing locations in Lucy’s house: the **Attic**, the **Garden**, the **Library**, the **Bedroom**, and the **Living Room**.
* **Time Limit:** Students have **45 minutes** to complete all puzzles and unlock the final mystery of the house.
* **Materials Needed:**
  + Locked boxes or envelopes with clues inside.
  + Combination locks (optional) or pre-set digital clues (Google Forms/QR codes).
  + Puzzle sheets, clues, or props representing elements from the story.
  + Access to the book for students to reference (or excerpts if needed).

**Activity Flow:**

**Introduction (5 minutes):**

The teacher introduces the escape room scenario: "Lucy has discovered a series of strange occurrences in her new house. She and her ghostly friend Emily need your help to uncover the truth. Your team will explore different rooms of the house, solve the puzzles hidden inside, and help unlock the final mystery. You have 45 minutes before the house traps its secrets forever!"

**Puzzle 1: The Mysterious Letter (The Attic)**

Lucy found a letter in the attic that holds the first clue to the house’s secret. The letter is torn, and only part of the message is legible. Students must solve a simple cipher to decode the hidden message and find the key to unlock the next room.

* **Clue Setup:**
  + Provide students with a letter that uses a **Caesar Cipher** (shift of 3).
  + Example of cipher text: "Wklv ohwwhu frqwdlqv d wkurqn froxh."
  + When decoded, it reads: “This letter contains a hidden clue.”
  + Once decoded, the clue leads them to the **Library**.
* **Puzzle Solution:**
  + Once students decode the message, they move on to the Library for the next puzzle.

**Puzzle 2: The Haunted Bookshelf (The Library)**

The Library contains many old books, but one specific book hides the next clue. Students must solve a **book riddle** to find it.

* **Clue Setup:**
  + Present the riddle: "In a book where secrets hide, find the one with ‘ghosts’ inside."
  + Place several books (real or printed paper covers) with different titles. One of the books will be labeled *The Ghostly Tales of Wraithmoor*.
* **Puzzle Solution:**
  + Once they find the correct book, it contains a slip of paper with the next clue, leading them to the **Bedroom**.

**Puzzle 3: Footsteps in the Night (The Bedroom)**

Lucy heard strange footsteps in her bedroom, leading her to believe the ghost was nearby. The ghost, Emily, left behind a note, but the paper is water-damaged. Students must piece together the note by completing a **jigsaw puzzle** that contains part of the message.

* **Clue Setup:**
  + Provide a simple jigsaw puzzle with pieces hidden in the room.
  + When the puzzle is completed, it forms a picture of a key with the message: “Check under the bed.”
* **Puzzle Solution:**
  + After completing the puzzle, they find the next clue under the “bed,” which sends them to the **Living Room**.

**Puzzle 4: The Hidden Portrait (The Living Room)**

In the Living Room, an old portrait of Emily hides the final clue, but the picture has been scrambled. Students must unscramble the portrait and match the pieces to reveal the next lock combination or password.

* **Clue Setup:**
  + Provide an image of a portrait that has been cut into 8-10 pieces and scrambled.
  + When the portrait is put together, there is a number written on it (e.g., **1942**).
* **Puzzle Solution:**
  + This number opens a combination lock (or is the password to the next digital clue).
  + The lock opens the final clue envelope that sends them to the **Garden** for the final puzzle.

**Puzzle 5: The Forgotten Past (The Garden)**

The final clue is hidden in the garden near Emily’s grave. To unlock the secret, students must solve a **word search** that contains key terms from the book. Hidden words include: **Emily, Mystery, Ghost, Garden, Lucy, Secret, Fire, Past, Grave**.

* **Clue Setup:**
  + A large word search is provided with the hidden words related to the story.
  + The remaining unused letters, when unscrambled, form the final word: **TRUTH**.
* **Puzzle Solution:**
  + Once students complete the word search and unscramble “TRUTH,” they have unlocked the final secret of the house. The teacher can reveal the story's conclusion, congratulating them on their successful escape!

**Final Reflection (5 minutes):**

Once the escape room activity is completed, gather the students for a brief reflection session:

* How did working as a team help solve the puzzles?
* Which clues were the most challenging, and why?
* How did this activity help you understand the story of *The Ghostly Guardian* better?

**Additional Customization Ideas:**

* **Bonus Clue:** Include a secret bonus puzzle that unlocks an extra "reward" (like a class badge or prize) for completing the escape room in record time.
* **Visual Elements:** Use props like old books, lanterns, and fake cobwebs to decorate the classroom and create a haunted house atmosphere.
* **Digital Version:** If technology allows, create a digital version of the escape room using Google Forms or a similar platform, where students input answers to move through digital “locks.”