

ACTIVITIES

Before Reading

1 The title of the story is *Christmas in Prague*. Find the answers to these questions.

1 Where is Prague?

2 Was life in Prague in 1957 very different from life there in 1995? How?

2 What do people do at Christmas in Britain and many other countries? Make three sentences. Use some of the words from this list.

dinner, family, music, presents, children, holiday

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

CHRISTMAS IN PRAGUE



In a house in Oxford three people are having breakfast – Carol, her husband Jan, and his father Josef. They are talking about Prague, because Carol wants them all to go there for Christmas.

Josef was born in Prague, but he left his home city when he was a young man. He is an old man now, and he would like to see Prague again before he dies. But he is afraid. He still remembers another Christmas in Prague, many long years ago – a Christmas that changed his life for ever . . .

Cover illustration by the Senate

3 Read the back cover of the book. How much do you know now about the story? Tick one box for each sentence.

	YES	NO
1 Carol and Jan are married.	☐	☐
2 Carol's father is called Josef.	☐	☐
3 Josef is English.	☐	☐
4 Josef lived in Prague a long time ago.	☐	☐
5 Josef is afraid to go back to Prague.	☐	☐

CHRISTMAS IN PRAGUE

Do you know everything about your family – your parents, your grandparents, your brothers or sisters, your uncles or aunts? Does your family know everything about you? All families have secrets – they can be big secrets, small secrets, things to laugh about, things to cry about.

Jan lives in Oxford with his English wife Carol, and his father Josef, who is Czech. Jan was born in Prague, but he came to England with his father when he was a baby. He never knew his mother – she died soon after he was born. And he knows nothing about her because his father never talks about her. But Josef still carries a photograph of his wife in his pocket – after all these years.

Carol plays the harp in an orchestra, and the orchestra is giving some concerts in Prague at Christmas. Carol wants to go, and she wants Jan and Josef to go too. 'Prague is a wonderful place,' she says, 'for a family Christmas.'

But there are family secrets waiting for them in Prague – wonderful secrets, happy secrets, and very sad secrets . . .

4 Read the story introduction on the first page of the book. Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? Change the false sentences into true ones.

- 1 Jan was born in London.
- 2 Jan's mother lives in Oxford with her son.
- 3 Josef often talks about his wife.
- 4 Josef has a photograph of Jan's mother in his pocket.
- 5 Carol plays the guitar.
- 6 Carol wants to go to Prague for Christmas.

5 What are the family secrets in the story? Can you guess? Tick one box for each sentence.

- | | YES | NO |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Someone in the family is dead. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2 Someone in the family is alive. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3 Someone in the family is in prison. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4 Someone in the family has got a lot of money. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5 You guess! _____ | | |

STAGE

1

Christmas in Prague

Pre-reading activity

Match the words with the pictures. Drag the letters into the boxes.



- a The border guards watch day and night.
- b Jan's father came slowly into the room.
- c 'Important people are coming, so we must play well.'
- d 'I must find some presents this afternoon.'
- e 'Jan! Jan! It's me, Carol!'

- f There was a sudden noise and somebody shouted.
- g 'Who are you?', asked Carol.
- h Joseph saw Pavel and stopped suddenly.
- i 'Leave, before the Russians get you.'