

## American Mystery Tours

# Who Stole Old King Cole?

### BEFORE READING

#### Set the Stage

This mystery takes place in Washington, D.C., in one of the world's most famous libraries.

Ask students to share what they know about the Library of Congress. Facts include:

- Founded in 1800, the Library is the oldest federal cultural institution in the United States.
- British soldiers burned the Library on August 24, 1814, when it was housed in the Capitol, and destroyed its collection of 3,000 volumes.
- The Library's first permanent home was opened in 1897.
- Each day, the Library adds approximately 10,000 items to its collections.
- The collections contain materials in about 470 languages.
- More than 1.6 million readers and visitors come to the Library each year.

### READING STRATEGY

#### Summarizing

A summary is an abridged account of something that's been said or written. This shortened version usually covers only important points. Good readers are able to recall and retell major

events from a story and condense them into a summary. While they read the story, ask students to think about major points they might include in a summary.

### AFTER READING

#### Talk About It

This mystery is told from the perspective of Melinda. Her sister Cathy is a tour guide and has the most at stake in the story (she could lose her job). Discuss possible reasons why many writers use members of the same family in their stories. Is there some advantage to this technique? Is it easier for readers to quickly grasp relationships when characters are related?

#### Write About It

The characters in the story are on a guided tour of the Library of Congress. Ask students to think about what goes into a tour. Possible elements include interesting facts, background information, and dates of construction. Have students choose a location in the school (or the entire school) and write out what they would say if they were leading a tour of that spot.

