



# The Spirit Catchers: An Encounter with Georgia O'Keeffe (Art Encounters)

*Kathleen Kudlinski*

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Art Encounters brings the work of famous artists to life through thrilling and evocative stories that reflect the individual paintings featured. This new series of historical fiction introduces young readers to the styles, methods, techniques, and influences of great painters.

History and fiction merge in this uplifting novel about a boy whose artistic talent awaits a great mind to uncover it. A child of the Depression, Parker begins his relationship with O'Keeffe by stealing her property, notably a camera. She is prepared to let him rot in jail when she develops the photos he has taken with the stolen camera and recognizes the boy's raw ability.

Set against the backdrop of New Mexico's stark beauty, Parker's struggle to find his artistic vision clashes with O'Keeffe's fierce independence and private nature. Parker tries to connect with his surroundings through the use of a camera, while O'Keeffe uses it as an aid for finding points of view otherwise difficult to obtain.

This book is a literary interpretation of O'Keeffe's painting *Ram's Skull with Brown Leaves*, as well as an intimate look at the artist's fame, her relationship with Alfred Stieglitz, and her creative process.

## **Georgia O'Keeffe in New Mexico**

Georgia O'Keeffe's single greatest inspiration was the New Mexican desert. She went "half mad with love for the place." There O'Keeffe collected the dry, white animal bones scattered over the desert, and painted her first "bone" paintings, including *Ram's Skull with Brown Leaves*.

After 1934, she returned to New Mexico every summer, moving there permanently after the death of her husband, the art impresario Alfred Stieglitz.

When O'Keeffe visited the Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu, New Mexico, she knew immediately that she wanted to live there. Later, she bought and restored an abandoned hacienda nearby. Although failing eyesight forced her to stop painting with oil in the 70's, she continued to use pencil and watercolor. Active long into her later years, O'Keeffe died in 1986 at the age of 98.

- For readers ages 12 and up
- The first book in the new Art Encounters series
- The story is based around O'Keeffe's painting *Ram's Skull with Brown Leaves* (Roswell Museum and Art Center, Roswell, NM)
- Georgia O'Keeffe is one of the top five most studied artists in American schools

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