

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for Dealing with Dragons by Patricia C. Wrede

Book Information

Patricia C. Wrede, Dealing with Dragons
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Book Level: 5.5
Interest Level: MG

Bored with traditional palace life, a princess goes off to live with a group of dragons and soon becomes involved with fighting against some disreputable wizards who want to steal away the dragons' kingdom.

Award: ALA Best Book for Young Adults; SLJ Best Book; State Award

Topics: Adventure, Runaway; Fantasy/Imagination, Dragons; Fantasy/Imagination, Misc./Other; Recommended Reading, IRA/CBC Choice; Recommended Reading, NY Publ. Library Best Books for the Teen Age; Recommended Reading, YALSA Popular Paperbacks; Series, Enchanted Forest Chronicles

Main Characters

Alianora a princess, held captive by Woraus, who becomes friends with Cimorene and works with her to foil the wizards' plans

Antorell Zemenar's son, an inept wizard

Cimorene a princess bored with the traditional role of a princess

Kazul the dragon who accepts Cimorene as her princess and eventually becomes the King of Dragons

Morwen a witch and a friend of Kazul who helps Cimorene defeat the wizards

Prince Therandil a prince betrothed to Cimorene

the stone prince a prince who was partially turned to stone, and who helps Cimorene and Alianora defeat the wizards

Woraus a dragon who betrays the other dragons in a plot with the wizards

Zemenar head of the Society of Wizards

Vocabulary

crestfallen feeling shame or humiliation, dejected

jinn a genie

preposterous contrary to common sense, absurd

volunteer one who freely offers services

Synopsis

Cimorene is a princess who is bored with the traditional activities allowed to princesses. When her parents arrange for her to marry Prince Therandil, she runs away and volunteers to be a dragon's princess.

Kazul, a female dragon, accepts Cimorene's offer. Cimorene's job is to cook and clean for the dragon, sort her treasure and catalogue her library. Prince Therandil and other knights arrive to rescue Cimorene. She declines their offers and sends them home.

Cimorene meets Alianora, another captive princess. Together they work on a spell to protect them from the dragons' fire.

Through several encounters with the wizards Zemenar and Antorell, Cimorene learns that the wizards are looking for something in the dragons' territory. After meeting the stone prince in the Caves of Fire and Night, they learn that Woraus, another dragon, is plotting with the wizards. The wizards plan to help Woraus become the new King of the Dragons. Once he is king, Woraus will give the wizards the King's Crystal, a tool they can use to locate all the magic in the world.

Cimorene, Alianora, the stone prince, and Morwen foil the wizards' plan. Zemenar and Antorell are melted and Woraus turns into a toad. Kazul is crowned King of the Dragons and Cimorene stays on with her as princess for the King of Dragons.

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Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

Literary Analysis

The climax of a story occurs when the central problem is resolved. What is the climax of this story? Why do you believe this is the climax?

The climax of the story happens between pages 186 and 202. Students may argue that the main problem is between the dragons and the wizards, so the destruction of the wizards on pages 186-188 resolves the conflict. They may argue that the main problem is between Woraug and the other dragons, and it is resolved when Woraug shamefully turns into a toad on page 202. Students should support their arguments with information from the story.

Inferential Comprehension

Cimorene sent Therandil to rescue Princess Keredwel. Do you think Keredwel was pleased with this? How do you think Keredwel and Therandil would get along?

Keredwel was probably very happy to be rescued because she did not like being a dragon's princess. She might be unhappy to learn she was not Therandil's first choice, but would have accepted his rescue anyway. Keredwel and Therandil accepted their traditional roles as prince and princess, so they were probably happy with each other.

Inferential Comprehension

Cimorene and Alianora were similar in some ways and different in others. Compare and contrast these two characters. Use examples from the story to show their similarities and differences.

Similarities may include the fact that both were interested in magic and didn't enjoy the company of the other captive princesses. Differences may include Cimorene's willingness to remain a dragon's princess, while Alianora chose to marry the stone prince.

Constructing Meaning

King Tokoz was killed when Woraug put some of the dragonsbane plant in his tea. Look up "bane" in the dictionary. What does it mean, and why did the author name the plant dragonsbane?

The word bane means something destructive, a poison or killer. In the story the dragonsbane plant was poisonous to dragons.

Teachable Skills

Understanding Characterization Cimorene is not a "proper" princess for her time. *The Paper Bag Princess* by Robert Munsch is a short children's story that also features a dragon and a non-traditional princess. Read *The Paper Bag Princess* and discuss the similarities between the princesses in the two stories. Discuss how many fairy tales would be very different if the characters in them challenged their traditional roles. Have students rewrite an old fairy tale or write new fairy tales featuring characters who challenge the stereotypes.

Understanding the Author's Craft The story is told in the third-person point of view and reveals a great deal about the way Cimorene thinks. The reader doesn't really get inside other characters in the book, although we can make inferences about their ideas, viewpoints and opinions from what they say and how they act. We know Therandil is a "proper" prince. Discuss how he might view Cimorene's actions and her situation. How might he describe his experiences with her to others? Have students rewrite an episode in the book in the first-person from Therandil's point of view.

Making Predictions At the end of the story the return of the wizards is clearly predicted. Have students brainstorm how the wizards might return, what actions they might take and how Cimorene and the dragons might again defeat them. Patricia C. Wrede has written more books in *The Enchanted Forest Chronicles* series. Students may read those books to learn how the

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author chose to continue the adventures.

Responding to Literature Cimorene is very different from her sisters, and she is not the kind of princess her parents expect her to be. Children today are often compared to their siblings, or have expectations placed upon them by their parents. Have children discuss times they have been compared to their brothers and sisters, or have had ideas and opinions different from the rest of their families. How did they feel in these situations, and how did they deal with them?