

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

Marlfox

by

Brian Jacques

Book Information

Brian Jacques, Marlfox
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Interest Level: MG

When three young residents of Redwall Abbey go on a quest to recover a tapestry stolen by the Marlfoxes, their bravery removes the curse of these evil animals on a lost island.

Award: ABC (Assoc. of Booksellers for Children)
Choice Aw; Misc./Other

Topics: Behavior, Bravery; Fantasy/Imagination,
Fantasy; Mysteries, Magic; Series, Redwall

Main Characters

Beelu one of the water rats who sneaks into Redwall Abbey

Burble a watervole who helps Dann, Song, and Dippler on their quest to regain the tapestry

Cregga Badgermum the blind badger who still fights in battle for Redwall Abbey

Dannflor (Dann) Reguba a brave young squirrel who defends the Abbey and is concerned with personal honor and his father's approval

Deesum Dwopple's aunt who loves him as if he were her own son

Dippler the Guoism a young shrew who becomes the new Log a Log after his success in the quest for the tapestry

Dwopple a young mouse in the acting troupe who gets into mischief

Ellayo Swifteye Janglur's mother, who is reunited with her husband Gawjo at the end of the tale

Fenno a shrew who kills Log a Log and aids the Marlfoxes

Florian Dugglewoof Wilffachop a member of the Sensational Wandering Noonvale Companions Troupe

Gawjo Swifteye Janglur's father, who is reunited with his family after he helps Song and the others defeat the Marlfoxes

Gelltor one of the Marlfoxes who is killed by Janglur

Goody Brimm an old otter who helps the travelers reach the stream

Janglur Swifteye a brave squirrel who helps defend Redwall Abbey

Lantur the Marlfox who kills her own mother to become the Queen

Log a Log the brave Chieftain of the Guoism

Martin the Warrior the "ghost" who helps the travelers find the tapestry with his picture on it

Mighty Megraw the osprey who aids in the battle at the Marlfox island

Mokkan the Marlfox who kills Lantur to become king

Nettlebud the hedgehog maid who kills Mokkan

Old Friar Butty the old squirrel who is the recorder for Redwall Abbey

Predak, Ascrod, Vannan several members of the Marlfox family

Queen Silth the old Marlfox Queen, who is killed by her daughter, Lantur

Rimrose Swifteye Janglur's wife

Rusvul Reguba Dann's father, who learns to appreciate his son's bravery

Songbreeze (Song) Swifteye Janglur's daughter, who helps retrieve the stolen tapestry

Ullig the water rat who acts as slave captain

Vocabulary

cormorant a bird that has webbed feet and a hooked bill

miasma a poisonous atmosphere once thought to rise from swamps

osprey a fish-eating hawk

scimitar a curved sword

stalagmite a deposit of hardened minerals that usually projects upward from the floor of a cave

tunic a loose-fitting garment

Synopsis

A magical and dangerous creature known as the Marlfox has appeared in Mossflower Wood. After

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Janglur Swifteye, a heroic squirrel warrior, saves his family from two Marlfoxes, the family makes its way to Redwall Abbey to warn the other animals of the danger. On their travels, the Swifteye family meets Florian and his traveling group of actors, as well as a company of shrews. After a battle with two Marlfoxes, the three groups join together and travel to the Abbey. Redwall Abbey has been without an Abbot or Abbess, and the animals must work together to form an army that will protect the Abbey from the Marlfoxes.

As they settle into the Abbey, a Marlfox tricks Dwopple, a young mouse. He is told that the Marlfox has candy, and the young mouse goes over the protective walls only to be captured. When it is discovered that Dwopple is lost, the entire Abbey searches for him. A Marlfox comes to Redwall and offers to return the mousebabe if he and the other Marlfoxes may come into the Abbey and search for treasures. The Redwallers refuse, but they arrange to exchange sacks filled with treasures for the young mouse. Yet, when the exchange begins, the Redwallers' bags are actually filled with weapons and a battle ensues. The Redwallers are victorious, but the Marlfoxes have managed to steal a valuable tapestry that depicts Martin the Warrior. Song, Dippler, and Dann, three young adventurers from Redwall, decide to go off in search of the tapestry. Soon, it is discovered that the three are gone, but not much can be done to find them, as the Marlfoxes stand watch at the gate of the Abbey.

As the three travelers make their way to the island of the Marlfoxes, the foebeasts are attempting to burn down the Abbey. The Marlfoxes are once again outsmarted by the Redwallers, and the Abbey is saved for the second time. However, the Marlfoxes discover that their brother, Mokkan, has fled with the prized tapestry. Meanwhile, Lantur, one of the Marlfoxes, plots to kill her mother, Queen Silth. Lantur has been convincing her mother that the White Ghost has been terrorizing her. Eventually Lantur kills her mother and crowns herself Queen. However, at her ceremony, Mokkan throws Lantur into the lake and becomes king.

After many adventures, the three Redwall travelers complete their quest and retrieve the tapestry. Yet, when Dann tries to free the slaves of the Marlfox island, a battle ensues. A slave kills Mokkan, the last Marlfox to survive the battles with Redwall and the wrath of siblings, and the inhabitants of the island are free. The travelers return to Redwall Abbey and are greeted by their families. Redwall is restored to its former glory. Dippler is named the new Log a Log for his heroism. Song is named the new Abbess of Redwall Abbey, and Dann is named the Champion of Redwall. Under Song's authority, the first order of business for the Abbey is a huge feast.

Open-Ended Questions

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

Initial Understanding

Throughout the novel, the reader learns that most of the animals believe the Marlfoxes to be magical. How do the Marlfoxes keep this myth alive?

The Marlfoxes use several methods to make others believe they are magical. For instance, they use disguises and camouflage. The Marlfoxes also utilize potions that cause smoke, so it appears as if they come out of nowhere.

Literary Analysis

In our society, we use words like nobody and everybody. In the story, the animals use similar words such as nobeast and everybeast. Why do you think the author included this detail?

The author probably used such phrases to convince the reader that these animals have a society much like our own. The animals have many human qualities, and these phrases help the reader to better understand their social structure.

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Inferential Comprehension

Lantur is able to trick her mother, the Queen, rather easily. Why do you think this is the case?

Lantur is obviously quite accustomed to using trickery. She fools other animals into believing Marlfoxes are magic. Lantur's ability to lie and pretend has been perfected from years of practice, and her mother is often fooled by it. For example, she terrorizes her mother by pretending she is the White Ghost, and her mother is deceived.

Constructing Meaning

According to Song, Burble and Goody Brimm enjoy their life of solitude and would not be comfortable living at Redwall Abbey. Consider what a life of solitude might hold. Do you think you could live a life of solitude as Burble and Goody Brimm do? Why or why not?

The answers to this question will vary. Some students will feel that a life alone would be too lonely and would rather enjoy spending time with family and friends. However, some students may feel that a solitary life would suit them because they enjoy being by themselves.

each student or a small group of students. The students should create a presentation for the rest of the class about their animal, that includes pictures, details about the animal's life span, eating habits, social structure, etc.

Recognizing Setting This novel includes many interesting locations. Ask your students to choose their favorite location from the novel. Then ask them to draw a picture of that location. Some possible locations could include Redwall Abbey, the island of Marlfoxes, or any of the locations that Song, Dann, and Dippler travel through on their quest.

Teachable Skills

Understanding Characterization The animal characters in *Marlfox* have some human traits. List selected characters and have students find passages that show characters' traits. Together, list traits and ask students to determine if these qualities accurately and fairly represent each animal. Discuss students' perceptions.

Deriving Word or Phrase Meaning There are rhyming poems used at key points throughout the novel. Ask your students to choose an integral scene in this novel. Then have them write a rhyming poem that describes or adds background information to the scene.

Recognizing Details *Marlfox* is a novel that includes many different animals. Ask your students to make a list of all the different animals included in this novel. Then assign an animal to