

The Quest for the Rotten Egg

Author: Elizabeth Pulford

Illustrated by: Philip Webb

Synopsis

Sir Omelet is not happy. Ever since his sister Eggwena ran off with Count Sampson, the food at Mottle Castle has been horrible. Sir Omelet is determined to get his sister back, so he mounts his trusty steed Noodle and with his faithful servant Peabody in tow he sets off to seek the advice of Morris the Magician. Morris the Magician charges Sir Omelet one hundred gold coins for his services, plus one dragon's toenail, one empty baked bean tin, and the Rotten egg which needs to be collected that night, before the moon is full. And so begins the hilarious quest to save the Lady Eggwena. Along the way the hapless trio meet up with Toffee, a robber who actually turns out to be a princess who is unhappy with her boring life. In order to reach the Rotten Bird's home the group must journey through skull swamp, Grizzly desert, Pins and Needles Maze and Knife Falls. Each challenge is more dangerous and life-threatening than the last. Will Sir Omelet complete his mission and find Lady Eggwena, or will everyone at Mottle Castle have to eat burnt food forever?

Text Type

The Quest for the Rotten Egg is an entertaining and fast-paced children's book with broad appeal. The wonderful illustrations by Philip Webb bring the story to life and add humour to the tale of the bumbling Sir Omelet, his trusty squire Peabody and his badly behaved horse Noodle. The story includes short, named Chapters which spirit the reader along with the characters as they face various challenges. The main characters are funny and likeable - especially Peabody who earns our sympathy because he has to risk his life for his boss, who is a nit-wit. The story is set in medieval times and contains many fantasy elements which make for a lively and entertaining read. Good readers will easily be able to read the story in one sitting.

Sharing the Novel

The novel has been divided up as follows: Chapters 1-4 (pp. 6-17), Chapters 5-13 (pp.18 -40) and Chapters 14-22 (pp. 41-72).

During the shared sessions encourage students to discuss words and ideas presented in the novel and use dictionaries to clarify the meaning of any new words. Students should be able to identify important plot events and recall the order of events in the story. Encourage students to use their imaginations by having them make predictions about what will occur at each location that the characters visit during their quest. Students should discuss their ideas and opinions with others in the class and relate the story to themselves by thinking about what they would do in the same situation. Encourage students to think about the concept of a quest and the elements that are generally considered part of a quest. It is also helpful to have students compare the characters and setting in the story with their preconceived ideas about castles and nobility.

Introducing the Novel

Have students study the front cover of the novel and read the blurb.

- What is a quest? If someone is embarking on a quest, what kinds of things might they need to do?
- Who is the main character in the story? Where does he live?
- Why does he decide to embark on a quest?
- What is a "squire"?
- What is a "steed"?
- What are the group searching for?
- What do you think a Rotten bird might look like?

Study the map provided and make a list of all of the places that Sir Omelet, Peabody and Noodle will visit during their quest. What do you think the potential dangers might be at each location?

Teacher reads Chapters 1-4 (pp. 6-17) aloud to the class. Students follow along in their books.

Comprehension Chapters 1-4 (pp. 6-17)

- What do we learn about Mottle Castle from the prologue?
- Why is Sir Omelet upset?
- Who does Peabody suggest that Sir Omelet visit for advice?
- What does the word "sire" mean?

- How does Sir Omelet mount Noodle? How does Noodle react to having Sir Omelet on his back? Why doesn't Noodle use the bridge? What happens when Noodle and Sir Omelet reach the other side of the river?
- How does Sir Omelet travel after Noodle rolls him off his back?
- What does Morris the Magician say when Sir Omelet arrives at his cave? How do you think he always knows what Sir Omelet wants when he comes to visit?
- What does Morris the Magician tell Sir Omelet he has to give him before he leaves if he wants his help? What else does Sir Omelet have to give him?

Discussion

- What are your first impressions of Sir Omelet and Peabody? Would Sir Omelet be able to cope without his servant? Why/why not?
- How do we know that Peabody is use to Sir Omelet's silly antics?
- Which item that Morris the Magician requests do you think will be the hardest to get and why?
- Is Lady Eggwena really worth all of this hassle? What could Sir Omelet and Peabody do as an alternative to going on a quest?
- Predict what will happen next in the story.

Students read Chapters 5-13 (pp. 18 -40) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 5-13 (pp, 18-40)

- What does Peabody collect from the castle? Why doesn't he want to join Sir Omelet on his quest? Who does he find trying to sneak away?
- What directions does Morris the Magician give Sir Omelet?
- Where is the Rotten bird's nest?
- Why doesn't Sir Omelet like the woods?
- Describe the robber. How does Sir Omelet react when he sees the robber? Why does Peabody throw the piggy bank? What does he inadvertently do when he throws it?
- What does Sir Omelet give Peabody as a reward for saving his life?
- Why is Peabody surprised when he sees the robber? Why does the robber want to accompany them?
- How does Peabody convince Sir Omelet to let her come?
- What is the girl's name? How do you think she knows who Sir Omelet is?

- Why doesn't Peabody want Toffee to get the dragon's toenail? Why does Peabody have so much trouble retrieving it?
- Why does Peabody think that it is a good test giving Toffee the toenail? Why won't he let Sir Omelet carry it?
- What does Toffee contribute to the picnic? What happens to Peabody's piece?
- Who is Mingle Mangle? Who does she recognise Toffee as being? What is Mingle Mangle's opinion about Eggwena?
- How does Peabody feel about the fact that Toffee was the one who got them out of danger?

Discussion

- Why do you think Princess Peanut decided to become Toffee the robber?
- Describe Sir Omelet. What are his strengths and weaknesses? Is he really in charge? Why/why not?
- Why does Peabody feel competitive towards Toffee?
- Where is the group supposed to go next? What do you think will happen there?

Students read Chapters 14-22 (pp. 41-72) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 14-22 (41-72)

- Why does Peabody begin to distrust Toffee?
- Who are the Grizzlies? What do they do?
- What suggestion does Toffee come up with to help them find an empty baked bean tin?
- Why doesn't Toffee want to be a Princess?
- Why won't just any baked bean tin do? Who finds the perfect tin? How does he feel about his find?
- What does the group have to pass on the way to steal the rotten egg?
- How does Sir Omelet know where the caves are? How does he react to having to walk?
- What injuries does the group sustain on their way past the caves?
- Where do they find Noodle? How does Sir Omelet convince him not to run away? How do Toffee and Peabody get Sir Omelet back up on the horse?
- What is the last leg of the dangerous quest? Why is this leg so dangerous?

- What suggestion does Sir Omelet come up with regarding Toffee? Why do you think Peabody is determined to get Eggwena back?
- How does Peabody mark where they have been?
- Why is Noodle happy to contribute despite the pain?
- Describe the mountain that the nest sits on. Why does this make Peabody nervous?
- What does the fact that Peabody is willing to accompany Toffee part of the way up to the bird's nest suggest about his character?
- Why does Sir Omelet scream? Why doesn't Peabody run away when he sees the trouble his master is in? What motivates him to act?
- How do Peabody and Toffee convince Noodle to accompany them up the mountain?
- How does Noodle get Peabody to the top of the mountain?
- Where does Peabody land?
- How does Peabody steal the egg from the Rotten bird? Why is it so important that the egg does not get damaged? How do Peabody and Sir Omelet get the egg down the mountain?
- Why is Noodle in a sulk when Peabody and Sir Omelet arrive at the bottom of the mountain with the egg? What does Peabody say that makes him feel better? Why is it important that Peabody get Noodle on side before they leave?
- When does the group have to arrive back at Morris the Magician's cave?
- Who has been looking for Toffee?
- How does Sir Omelet crack the egg? What comes out of the egg once it is cracked?
- Why does Peabody decide that his days at Mottle Castle are finished?
- What plan does Toffee come up with to make money? Why is Peabody so interested in this plan?
- Who takes charge when the group arrives back at the castle? How does she convince everyone to follow her instructions?
- What does Toffee love doing? Why isn't she allowed to do it at home?
- Why is Peabody glad that Sir Omelet cracked the egg?

Discussion

- What qualities and characteristics should a hero have? Is there a hero in the story? If so, who is it and why are they a hero?
- What qualifies an adventure as a quest?

Activities

Board Game - Design a board game based on *The Quest for the Rotten Egg*. Use the map provided at the start of the story to help you design your board. For every positive event that occurs reward the player, for every negative event penalise the player.

Figurative language - The author of the story uses some wonderful figurative language to create imagery in the story. Identify the examples below (simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia or alliteration) and then explain what image they create in your mind.

Example	Language Feature	Imagery Created
Burnt toast. Black hamburgers. Boiled Beans.		
TWANG!		
Sir Omelet whizzed through the air like a cannonball.		
Noodle turned into some sort of racing monster, steam and fireworks pouring from his nostrils.		
Shot off down the hill like a burning bullet.		
He jingled like a tin bell on Noodle's back.		
Water poured from his armour like jet fountains.		
Skull Swamp		
The deadly stink coming from the skulls' snapping mouths.		
Trust her to be the bright light bulb.		
His new sneakers looked like lumps of charred flesh.		
CRASH!		
Noodle pawed the ground,		

flattened his ears and took off, like a balloon losing air.		
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Writing - Write an alternative ending for the story.

Character Web - Complete a character web for Peabody. Draw 6 boxes in a circle on your page. On the inside of the boxes draw four circles. In the boxes write things that Peabody does, then think about words that describe Peabody's actions. Write one word in each circle. For example: exciting. Draw a line to join up each box with its matching circle.

Static Image - Design an alternative front cover for *The Quest for the Rotten Egg*. The front cover needs the book's title, and the name of the author(s) and illustrator. Include an exciting illustration about the book. Write the name of the book long ways on the spine. The back cover needs a summary of the story to encourage the reader.

Poster - Design a poster advertising the book for *The Quest for the Rotten Egg*. Include a brief summary about the book and illustrations that show the settings and events in the story.

Writing - Imagine that you are a witch or wizard and you want to cast a spell. Write an original spell using figurative language to create imagery. Present your spell attractively.

Plot - Design a story board that shows 10 important events from the story in the order that they occur. Under each illustration write a brief explanation.

Drama - Choose an exciting section from the book and write a script for it. Remember to include a cast of characters and stage directions. Practise your play and present it to the class.

Book Report - Complete a book report on *The Quest for the Rotten Egg* that follows the format set out below:

<p>Character Study</p> <p>Name of Character Describe Character's personality</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 80px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	<p>Title:</p> <p>Author:</p> <p>What type of story is it? (circle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Newspaper article ✓ Autobiography ✓ Non-fiction ✓ Essay ✓ Poetry ✓ Comic ✓ Adventure ✓ Fiction ✓ Humorous ✓ Play ✓ Mystery ✓ Science Fiction
<p>New or Interesting Words</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Word: Meaning: 2. Word: Meaning: 3. Word: Meaning: 4. Word: Meaning: 5. Word: Meaning: 	<p>Plot</p> <p>The story begins when...</p> <p>The problem is...</p> <p>The next thing that happens is...</p> <p>The problem is solved when...</p>
<p>Setting</p> <p>Draw the main place (s) where the story takes place.</p>	<p>Theme</p> <p>The author(s) of this story are trying to teach us that....</p> <p>Review</p> <p>I would/would not recommend <i>The Quest for the Rotten Egg</i> to others because...</p>