

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

RETURN TO SULA by Lavinia Derwent



www.florisbooks.co.uk

Themes/issues addressed in this book

Identity; gifts and talents; life on a remote Scottish island; wildlife and nature

Book Summary

Magnus Macduff lives on the remote Scottish island of Sula. He is very content with his life, but he is lured away from his beloved island when he wins a painting competition and goes to the mainland. Magnus escapes back to the island at the first opportunity, followed by a new friend: a wild Duke whose ability with music matches Magnus' own skill at drawing.

This is an affectionate portrayal of everyday life away from the bustle of modern living, enlivened by some wonderful characters, including Magnus' Gran, Old Whiskers, Mr Skinnymalink the hermit and the Ferret. There are three other books in the Sula series.

BEFORE READING

Group Activities

- Group work: on a map of Scotland, find the tiny island called Sula Sgeir. What are the other nearest islands? What is this group of islands called? How far is Sula from where you live? Could this island be the Sula in the book? Why not?
- Group work: a particular tradition, which happens every September, is associated with Sula Sgeir. Use the Internet or your library to find out what it is, and write at least two paragraphs describing what goes on.
- Group work: what different types of wildlife live in the Scottish islands? List as many types of native birds and mammals as you can think of. How many of them have you ever seen?

AFTER READING

Individual Work

- Write a paragraph on the thoughts and feelings you had when
 - a) Magnus left Sula on the ferry boat
 - b) The Duke gave Magnus the photograph of his mother and father
 - c) The Ferret rips up Magnus' photograph
 - d) Magnus finds the Ferret injured on the beach
- What do the following words, found in the book, mean? Use the Internet or your library to look them up.

tammy (p. 8)	stirk (p. 69)	pibroch (p. 70)
keek (p. 93)	peerie-top (p. 95)	gean (p. 96)

Group Activities

- Group project: When the twins need a new pram and the McCallum's can't afford to buy one, Mr Skinnymalink builds one for them (chapter 8). Imagine you live on a remote island, and you need one of the following items (pick one). In your group, work out how you could build it using everyday items or scrap materials found on the island. Describe carefully what you use, and the steps of the building process.
 - a) child's tricycle
 - b) bathroom sink
 - c) lawnmower
- Discussion: there is a common proverb which says: don't hide your light under a bushel. What does this mean? Who in the book hides their light under a bushel? Why is this bad? If you were Magnus, what would you do next?

Vocabulary

- Check you know what the following words mean:

frolic	tortuous	solitude	sensitivity
jetty	tactics	reprieve	furtive
slithering	supine	guile	stamina
harmony	medley	beseeking	goaded
			stoically
			insight

Kelpies Series Summary

The award-winning Kelpies series is Scotland's favourite collection of children's fiction. Floris Books took over publication of these books in 2001. The series includes such classic novels as Kathleen Fidler's The Desperate Journey, Mollie Hunter's The Thirteenth Member, and Theresa Breslin's Simon's Challenge. Genres included in the series range from historical and folklore to detective and adventure stories.

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS COVERED

5-14 Curriculum (Scotland)

Years: P6-P7, S1-S3

Reading:

Reading for Information

Reading to Reflect

Awareness of Genre

Talking:

Talking in groups

Talking about texts

Talking about experiences, feeling and opinions

Writing:

Functional

Imaginative

National Curriculum (England, Wales, Northern Ireland)

Key Stages 2 and 3

English: Reading

Reading Strategies

Response to Texts, inc analysing and evaluating

Reading for Information

National Literacy Strategy:

Text-Level Reading

Text-Level Writing

Vocabulary