

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

DRAGONFIRE by Anne Forbes



www.florisbooks.co.uk

Themes/issues addressed in this book

Magic, dragons, friendship, trust, Edinburgh, Military Tattoo, Arthur's Seat

Book Summary

When Arthur, a dragon who lives under Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh, decides to take advantage of a leaking whisky tap in his cave and use the overflowing whisky as a swimming pool, it creates all kinds of havoc for his guardians, the MacArthurs, and their young friends, Neil and Clara. But that is the least of their worries. Prince Kalman, the most powerful and devious magician in Scotland, is searching for the Sultan's Crown – one of the most magical objects in the world – but he must not find it! With Arthur's formidable presence, and Neil and Clara's ingenuity, the MacArthurs attempt to find the crown first. This fast-paced comic adventure is the first book in the 'Dragonfire' series.

BEFORE READING

Group Activities

- Discussion: what do you know about dragons? Are they real or mythical creatures? Think of some real creatures that look like dragons.
- Discussion: have you ever been to Edinburgh? Have you seen or climbed up Arthur's Seat? Have you been to the 'Festival'?
- Discussion: what is a 'sultan'? Where might you find a sultan? Where is Turkey?

AFTER READING

Individual Work

- Write a paragraph on the thoughts and feelings you had when:
 - a) Amgarad attacks Neil and Clara (chapter 2)
 - b) Archie says goodbye to Arthur (chapter 14)
 - c) Arthur comes home (chapter 24)
 - d) Amgarad is healed/renewed (chapter 29)
- In the book, when Arthur cries his tears become precious stones called firestones. Create a list of at least ten precious stones and write down what colour they are. Here's one to start you off: ruby – red.
- Draw or paint a picture of a dragon. Give it a Scottish name – you may use the Internet or a library to search for Scottish names. Find out what your chosen name means.

Group Activities

- Class activity: watch a dvd of the Edinburgh Military Tattoo for inspiration, and then have your own class 'tattoo'. Decide on a theme, and then choose something suitable to perform in front of the rest of the class. It can be a piece of music, a dance, a story, a short play, or anything you wish. It can be done individually, in couples, or in small groups. Make sure it is SAFE!
- Group activity: whisky and how it is made. Each group should choose a distillery in Scotland and using the Internet and library, find out all they can about how whisky is made and their chosen distillery. How old is it? What different kinds of whisky does it produce? How much do the bottles sell for? What is the difference between a malt whisky and a blended whisky? Where does whisky come from? What other countries make whisky in addition to Scotland? Compare the different groups' findings.
- Class activity: if you live in or near Edinburgh, arrange a visit to the Royal Mile and Holyrood Park. Look at all the buildings along the Royal Mile and see if you can identify any buildings from the story, i.e. Royal Mile Primary School, Edinburgh Castle, Holyrood Palace and so on.

Vocabulary

- Check you know what the following words mean:
adamant adversary burnished chasm

KELPIES

Series Summary

The award-winning Kelpies series is Scotland's favourite collection of children's fiction. Floris Books took over the list in 2001, republishing classic works by authors such as Kathleen Fidler and Allan Campbell McLean. Since then, we have continued to add to the series with a range of highly successful new Scottish novels for children. Of these, *Chill* by Alex Nye won a Royal Mail Award in 2007 and *Hox* by Annemarie Allan was nominated for a Royal Mail Award in 2008.

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS COVERED

5-14 Curriculum (Scotland)

Years: P4-P7

Listening:

Listening in Groups
Listening for Information, including instructions and directions

Reading:

Reading for Information
Reading to Reflect
Awareness of Genre

Talking:

Talking in Groups
Talking about Texts
Talking about Experiences, including feelings and opinions

Writing:

Functional
Imaginative

National Curriculum (England, Wales, Northern Ireland)

Key Stage 2

English: Reading

Reading Strategies
Response to Texts, including analysing and evaluating
Reading for Information

National Literacy Strategy:

Text-Level Reading
Text-Level Writing
Vocabulary

Vocabulary, cont'd

- Check you know what the following words mean:

circumspect
contingent
discrepancy
disquiet

euphoric
gimlet
haar
homage

impenetrable
intersection
intricate
involuntary

labyrinth
malevolent
mutinous
opaque

oppressive
pilfer
prominent
scoundrel

silt
talon
tentative
thwart

trepidation
unobtrusive
volatile
vulnerable