

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

GRIMM by Mike Nicholson



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Themes/issues addressed in this book

Conscience, friendship, overcoming disability, gossip, advertising, judging people

Book Summary

Being an eleven-year-old advertising whiz is not all it's cracked up to be! When Rory McKenna's re-branding skills are requested by Granville Grimm, owner of the sinister Hotel Grimm, Rory hopes that he won't be the latest in a long line of the Hotel's unfortunate victims. Together with his friend Bonnie, and his old Grandad, Rory attempts to give Hotel Grimm a new image. Facing an uphill struggle in the form of the gossipy and superstitious townsfolk of Aberfinty, the team have their work cut out for them. However, allies are found in the strangest of places in this humorous adventure story.

BEFORE READING

Group Activities

- Discussion: what is advertising? Where might you see advertising? What is it used for? What is a slogan?
- Discussion: do you know anybody who uses a wheelchair? Why might they use one? How do you think you would manage if you had to use a wheelchair?
- Discussion: what does the phrase 'you shouldn't judge a book by its cover' mean?

AFTER READING

Individual Work

- Write a paragraph on the thoughts and feelings you had when:
 - a) Rory takes credit for the Zizz slogan (ch. 3)
 - b) Bonnie dislikes Rory's idea to market Hotel Grimm as a 'freakshow' (ch. 13)
 - c) Grandad gives the townsfolk a telling off (ch. 28)
- Choose an old building close to where you live and look at the stonework, particularly at the top and sides of the building. Is it as fancy as the stonework that Grandad and the other stone masons might have carved for Hotel Grimm? Go to your local library and try to find out as much about that building as possible, particularly the fancy stonework. How old is the building? What is/was it used for? Write a report on what you have found out.
- Throughout the book, there are little poems about how awful Hotel Grimm is. Write another poem about Hotel Grimm, but this time write about how great it is. Try to write about ten lines. Your poem does not have to rhyme.

Group Activities

- Class discussion: Do you think Rory should have owned up to the Zizz cola slogan not being his? Why? Why not? Why do you think it was difficult for him to own up until the very end? Do you think he had a guilty conscience?
- Group project: create your own advertising campaign. First of all create a new product. Then decide
 - a) What it is going to be called
 - b) What it is going to look like – how you are going to package it
 - c) What its Unique Selling Point is
 - d) What kind of people are going to buy it
 - e) How much it is going to cost to buy
 - f) Where you are going to sell it
 - g) Where you are going to advertise it
 - h) Finally, create a slogan for it

Vocabulary, see overleaf

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

- Check you know what the following words mean:

adjacent

candelabra

dilapidated

inscription

notorious

sceptical

turret

amass

catastrophe

flummoxed

insightful

obliterate

significance

voluminous

anonymity

chandelier

gait

interrogation

pinnacle

subterranean

bemused

clarification

gargoyle

leer

poltergeist

superstition

cacophony

consecutive

imminent

mural

precariously

trudge