

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

ESCAPE FROM LOCH LEVEN by Mollie Hunter



www.florisbooks.co.uk

Themes/issues addressed in this book

Mary Queen of Scots; Scottish culture and politics in the sixteenth century

Book Summary

It is 1567. Will is sixteen and is page to (and illegitimate son of) Sir William Douglas, Keeper of the Castle of Lochleven. He is bored, taking pleasure from gambling and secret trips across the water to Kinross. One dark night, a prisoner is brought to the castle: Mary, Queen of Scots, who has been betrayed by the rebellious Scottish lords. The most beautiful woman in Europe, Will is instantly smitten with 24-year-old Mary, and starts to plan her escape. However, the Douglas family are set on their kinsman, the Earl of Moray, taking the throne in Mary's place. Will must be careful not to reveal his true loyalties in this exciting historical story.

BEFORE READING

Group Activities

- Discussion: what do you know about Mary Queen of Scots? What did she look like and what did she wear?
- Discussion: what do you know about the historical setting of this book? What was Mary's relationship to the Queen of England? Why did Queen Elizabeth feel threatened by her?

AFTER READING

Individual Work

- List five different customs from the sixteenth century that are mentioned in the book and, for each one, say how it is different to contemporary practices.

Group Activities

- Discussion: which character is the hero of the story? Why?
- Class visit: if you are in or near Fife, take the class on a trip to the ruined castle at Loch Leven (there is a regular boat from Kinross). If not, get the children to research the history of the castle on the internet (good places to start are:
www.fife.50megs.com/loch-leven-castle.htm
www.rampantscotland.com/visit/blvisitlochleven.htm)
- There are three 'family trees' at the start of the book (p. 7-9). In groups, work out where they overlap and, on a large sheet of paper, combine them into one big family tree. Highlight the people who actually appear in the book and say what their role is in the story.

Vocabulary

- Check you know what the following words mean:
 - anxiety
 - expressive
 - baffled
 - cowering
 - explode
 - opponent
 - intricate
 - respectable
 - summoned
 - muffled
 - exhausted
 - yielded
 - masquerade

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