

Reading Guide for "Ali Finds Her Courage"

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2nd - 4th Grade

Instructions:

Whether you are a teacher or a parent, you can use this simple guide to help deepen your child's/student's understanding of this subject matter. Please keep in mind it is a guide and not meant to be an exact script. For best use, read through this first, ahead of time, so you have an idea of what to say in the moment. The discussions should be child-led but kept to a minimum so the flow of the book is maintained. I usually tell my students, when their side stories are getting too long, that: "I value what you are saying, but am worried that we are losing the flow of the book, can we talk about this more when the book is finished?" Always leave time at the end of stories to answer questions.

Let's get started:

Read the Cover: title aloud

Ask: "What is courage?"

Possible Answers: "Courage is when you are afraid of something but you do it anyway."

Ask: "Would anyone like to share a time when you felt courageous?"

Say: "Thank you for sharing, let's get back to our story now. I see on the cover some kangaroos. Does anyone have an idea where the setting of this story takes place?"

Say: "That's right, it takes place in Australia! Let's find that on the map."

Show: students where Australia is on the map and notice how near or far it is to the country you are in.

Ask: "Let's think about what we know about Australia so we can start painting a picture in our minds before we read."

Say: "As we read the story, try to see if you recognize and can name some of the unique animals that live there."

Read: Page #6 (the first page)

Say: Animals with pouches are called marsupials. They carry their babies in their pouches to keep them safe. Marsupial babies are born very small and often blind and furless. The pouch keeps them safe as they continue to grow.

Ask: "Can you think of any other marsupials?"

Hint: Koalas, opossums, Tasmanian devils, wombats, bilbies, and wallabies are the most common.

Ask: "What animals do we notice on this page?"

Show: A koala, 5 kangaroos, a bilby, and 2 wombats*

Read: Page #8

Ask: "Ali is sharing how she feels in her mum's pouch, is there anywhere that makes you feel like this?"

Possible Answers: A Parent's hug, in bed cuddling a parent or animal, somewhere that you feel safe in.

Ask: "How did the illustrator draw safety here?"

Read: Page #10

Ask: "Why do you think the hot weather is affecting how much grass is grown?"

Say: "Let's notice Ali in this picture. "

Ask: "Can you think of a time when you felt like Ali? What made you feel better that time?"

Can you think of something that might make Ali feel better right now?"

Show: Animals to spot: a wombat and a kookaburra

Read: Page #12

Say: "Ali is feeling sad because she is growing out of her mum's pouch and she doesn't feel ready yet. "

Ask: "Can you think of some things that could help her to feel better about leaving her mum's

pouch?"

Ask: "Have you ever grown out of something and not felt ready?"

Possible Answers: Baby blanket, toddler bed, a favorite outfit, certain toys, etc.

Read: Page #14

Show: Animals to spot: koala and koala baby, kookaburra, Ali and her mum

Say: "Ali is about to be in a scary situation. Sometimes it's helpful to read stories where characters face difficult situations because it can help us to know how to get through difficult situations we may face in our lives and it's comforting that we aren't the only ones going through the difficult situation. Remember we are safe at school/home and this is just a story. If you want me to stop reading so we can take a breath, just let me know. Okay, ready?"

Read: Page #16

Ask: "Okay, let's look at the picture. What do you think Ali and her mum are smelling?"

Possible Answers: Smoke

Ask: "Have you ever smelled smoke before? It kind of hurts when you breathe it in, right?"

Ask: "Where do you think the smoke is coming from?"

Possible Answers: Forest fire

Ask: "Why are forest fires so dangerous for forest animals?"

Possible Answers: Because they are losing their food sources, shelter, everything they need to survive. Animals that can't run or fly often can't escape the fire.

Ask: "What do you think these animals will do to stay safe from the forest fire?"

Read: Page #18

Say: Notice the animal's fear as they are running

Show: Animals to spot: koala mum and baby, kookaburra, echidna, bilby, wombat, and dingo.

Ask: "Which of these animals are good at running? Which don't have a body suited to running fast?"

Read: Page #20

Check-in with how everyone is feeling, if they need a deep breath, look around the room,

remember you are safe.

Ask: "Why do you think koalas are bad at running?"

Possible Answers: Their bodies are designed to be excellent tree climbers making their legs too short and their curved backs are not ideal for running.

Show: Animals to spot: Ali and mum, baby koala, bilby and a huntsman spider

Ask: "Can you spot the bilby running with the spider on his back? Why do you think he is giving him a ride?"

Possible Answers: Because he can run faster and he wants to help the spider.

Read: Page #22

Ask: "What do you think of Ali's idea to run by herself? Do you think it will work?"

Read: Page #24

Say: "Sometimes when things are hard, we have to remind ourselves why we are doing them. It can help give us the strength to keep going. Like when math is hard and you tell yourself 'you can do it, just keep trying!'"

Read: Page #26

Ask: "Why do you think the animals are safe by the river?"

Possible Answers: There are fewer trees around to catch fire, the water will put the fire out, etc.

Show: Animals to spot: 2 wombats, a koala, 3 kangaroos, a bilby

Read: Page #28

Ask: "Do you think Ali feels ready to leave her mum's pouch now?"

Possible Answers: Yes.

Ask: "What do you think made her feel ready?"

Possible Answers: By giving Marcus the pouch, Ali realized she was strong enough to run on her own and didn't need her mum's pouch anymore.

Ask: "What do you think Ali meant when she said, "Nature's heartbeat will lull her to sleep now?"

Discussion questions or writing prompts for after the story:

- What causes forest fires?
- In recent years, there have been record break forest fires in Australia, South America, California, Oregon, and Washington - What do you think is causing this?
- What might happen to the animals if they lose their habitat?
- Do you think Ali did the right thing in this situation by offering Marcus her mum's pouch?
- If you were Ali, how would you have helped Marcus? Would you have done the same as she did?
- Imagine a real life stressful situation - can you think of a way where sharing would actually help?
- What are somethings we can do to help the animals who are suffering from wildfires?

Thanks for reading!

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