

Reading Guide for "Ali Finds Her Courage"

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Kindergarten and First 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 later?"

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?"

Hint: Where do these animals live?

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.

Say "In Australia, it is very HOT and they have many unique animals. As we read the story, try to see if you recognize the different animals on each page."

Read: Page #6 (the first page)

Ask: “Do you know what they mean when they say Ali lives in her mum’s pouch?”

Hint: If necessary – explain that a pouch is where baby kangaroos grow up. They are born very small and need to be kept warm and safe, so they live in their mother’s pouches.

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: “Let’s look at the picture, can you notice how comfortable and safe Ali looks?”

Read: Page #10

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: Pacifier, baby blanket, toddler bed, a favorite outfit, ect

Read: Page #14

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

Say: "The next couple of pages are a little bit scary so let's take a moment before we read them. I want everyone to take a deep breath with me, inhale 1, 2, 3,... exhale 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Now look around the room, remember we are safe at school and this is just a story. If you want me to stop reading so we can take another breath, just let me know. Okay, ready?"

Read: Page #16

Check in: "Is everyone feeling okay so far?"

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?"

Say: "Let's look at the animals in the picture. How do you think they are feeling?"

Possible Answers: Worried, scared, ect

Ask: "Why do you think they are feeling this way from the smoke?"

Hint: Guide them toward realizing it's a forest fire.

Say: "Let's see what the animals do to stay safe."

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: "Who do you think will run the fastest? Who do you think will run the slowest?"

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 not ideal for running.

Show: Animals to spot: Ali and mum, baby koala, bilby and a huntsman 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 handwriting is hard and you tell yourself ‘you can do it, just keep trying!’”

Read: Page #26

Say: “The animals are safe by the river because the water would put the fire out. And notice how far away the trees are? There’s not much around for the fire to burn so they are safe here.”

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.

THE END

Thanks for reading!

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