

a Breakfast Serials, Inc. Story

THE BLACK SQUIRREL



story by Joseph Bruchac
illustrations by David Fadden

Teacher's Guide by
Jan McDonald
Rocky Mountain Readers

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This guide has been prepared and noted according to the Standards for the English Language Arts, sponsored by the National Council for the Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. A list of these standards can be found at the end of this guide.

About the Story

Mac is just an ordinary kid. Sure, he's Abenaki Indian and his grandmother Katherine is always telling him traditional stories. Great stories—about monster animals, Chenoo cannibal giants, Little People, and brave deeds done to protect the people. But Mac is no different from any other kid. His biggest worry is that the nearby woods he loves will soon be destroyed and there is nothing he can do—or so he thinks. To his surprise a huge Black Squirrel - a monster out of his grandmother's stories - shows up outside Mac's window followed by Wesu, one of the Little People. "It is your turn to be a hero", Wesu tells him. With the help of Wesu, a giant hawk named Keeyii, and a magic bow named Striker, Mac must defeat the forces of darkness led by the cannibal Chenoo. These creatures are out to destroy the heart of the world and only Mac can stop them. Whether he likes it or not, Mac's adventures are about to begin!

About the Author

Joseph Bruchac lives with his wife, Carol, in the Adirondack mountain foothills town of Greenfield Center, New York in the same house where his maternal grandparents raised him. Much of his writing draws on that land and his Abenaki ancestry. Although his American Indian heritage is only one part of an ethnic background that includes Slovak and English blood, those Native roots are the ones by which he has been nourished. He, his younger sister, Margaret, and his two grown sons, James and Jesse, continue to work extensively in projects involving the preservation of Abenaki culture, language and traditional native skills, including performing traditional and contemporary Abenaki music with the Dawnland Singers.

He holds a B.A. from Cornell University, an M.A. in Literature and Creative Writing from Syracuse and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the Union Institute of Ohio. His work as an educator includes eight years of directing a college program for Skidmore College inside a maximum security prison. With his wife, Carol, he is the founder and co-director of the Greenfield Review Literary Center and The Greenfield Review Press. He has edited a number of highly praised anthologies of contemporary poetry and fiction, including *Songs from this Earth on Turtle's Back*, *Breaking Silence* (winner of the American Book Award) and *Returning the Gift*.

As a professional teller of the traditional tales of the Adirondacks and the Native peoples of the Northeastern Woodlands, Joe Bruchac has performed widely in Europe and throughout the United States from Florida to Hawaii and has been featured at such events as the British Storytelling Festival and the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesboro, Tennessee. He has been a storyteller in residence for Native American organizations and schools throughout the continent, including the Institute of Alaska Native Arts and the Onondaga Nation School. He discusses Native culture and his books and does storytelling programs at dozens of elementary and secondary schools each year as a visiting author.

About the Illustrator

David Kanietakeron Fadden is a member of the Wolf Clan of the Mohawk community of Akwesasne. He shares in the operation of the Six Nations Indian Museum in the Northeastern Adirondack Mountains in Onchiota, NY. David attended and graduated from the Saranac Lake Central School where he received recognition for his art. He attended North Country Community College in Saranac Lake, NY. In conjunction with formal art training he has learned technical skills, artistic insight, and other appropriate knowledge from his parents: John Fadden, educator, illustrator and painter; and Elizabeth Eva Fadden, wood sculptor. His particular area of expertise, with respect to creating images of Native Americans, has been nurtured by learning from his paternal grandfather, Ray Fadden, designer, author, and founder of the Six Nations Indian Museum of Onchiota, New York.

Themes

Heroes, Monsters, and Magic

“In general, it could be said that our stories of monsters are a little different from those in European culture in two ways. First, most of our “monster” stories are teaching tales. The behavior of the monster is a negative example – teaching us not to be that way. The person who behaves properly, even if they are a small child, can defeat even a great monster. Then there is the theme of redemption, of changing the monster’s negative nature to its opposite. Sometimes, just as in the European tale of Beowulf, the American Indian hero or heroine slays the monster. But in many instances, the ‘monster’ in a Native American story is transformed. Rather than being purely evil, they are simply behaving in a twisted way, filled with anger and confusion. When they are made straight, they are no longer a destructive force and may end up becoming friends and allies.” – Joseph Bruchac, author.

The Environment

Saving the environment is an important theme. Mac is very concerned about preserving “the magical place everyone calls Grama Lampman’s Woods”. He has suffered many nightmares over the years in which the forest is destroyed. (In this myth, these nightmares were caused by Wesu, one of the Little People, in order to prepare him for the mighty quest which he would be called upon to take – to save these same forests that he loves so much.)

Children can make a difference

“Children are grossly underestimated.” - J.K. Rowling. In this story a young boy proves that children can make a difference. Mac, though scared and seemingly overmatched, proves that children can change the world, through perseverance and a strong value system.

Indian Lore

Abenaki - Mac, our protagonist is a western Abenaki Indian. Western Abenaki refers to the original Native American inhabitants of western Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. The eastern Abenaki people include the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Micmac, and Malecite. The word “Abenaki” is derived from “waban” meaning light or dawn and “ki” meaning earth. Abenkai is usually translated as “People of the Dawn Land.” There are thousands of Abenakis living in New England, Quebec and other parts of the United States and Canada. Like most other Native Americans, a great many of the western Abenaki retain pride in their ancestry while living quite successfully in the modern world.

Keep a list of other Indian names throughout the book:

- **Gluskabe** – the greatest hero in Abenaki stories. When Ktsi Nwaskw (Great Mystery) made the earth, Gluskabe shaped himself from the dust that fell to the ground from the Great Mystery’s hands. The first one to walk around in human shape, the hero who protected the people and shrank the black squirrels down small from their former giant size.
- **Black Squirrel** - Monster animals, often of a different color than normal, are a common motif in Native American stories. (White animals, however, are generally regarded as sacred.) In western Abenaki traditions, the hero Gluskonba or Gluskabe destroys such monsters or shrinks them smaller. In fact, the Giant Squirrel was so dangerous that it was made very small to protect the people.
- **Mteoulin**
- **Striker** - the old one, a magical weapon of a bow and arrow.

- **Keeyii** - a giant bird, a goshawk, very loyal, great warrior.
- **Wesu** - one of the magical Little People
- **Mikumwesak** or The Little People – Throughout the northeastern woodlands, among Algonquin and Iroquoian nations alike, the Little People are described as powerful beings. In fact Little People are described in the traditions of every Native American nation from ocean to ocean. They are incredibly strong, able to shrink others down to their size, and one of their jobs is to defend the world from monsters. The Iroquois Little People (the Djo-ge-oh) are said to guard the entrances to caves that lead down deep into the earth, keeping monster animals penned up where they cannot hurt the people. They may be very helpful to the people or they may play tricks on them. The Little People are also said to defend their territory from humans who trespass. Sometimes they do it by throwing stones with great accuracy or, like the Spreaders with sticks sharpened at both ends. In some Native American traditions, even talking about the Little People used to be frowned upon. It is only in the last few years that many of the tales of the Little People have begun to be openly told in the belief that the stories now, more than ever, need to be heard.
- **Kiwahkwe**- giant hairy cannibal monster
- **Magaesosis** – Mac’s Indian name

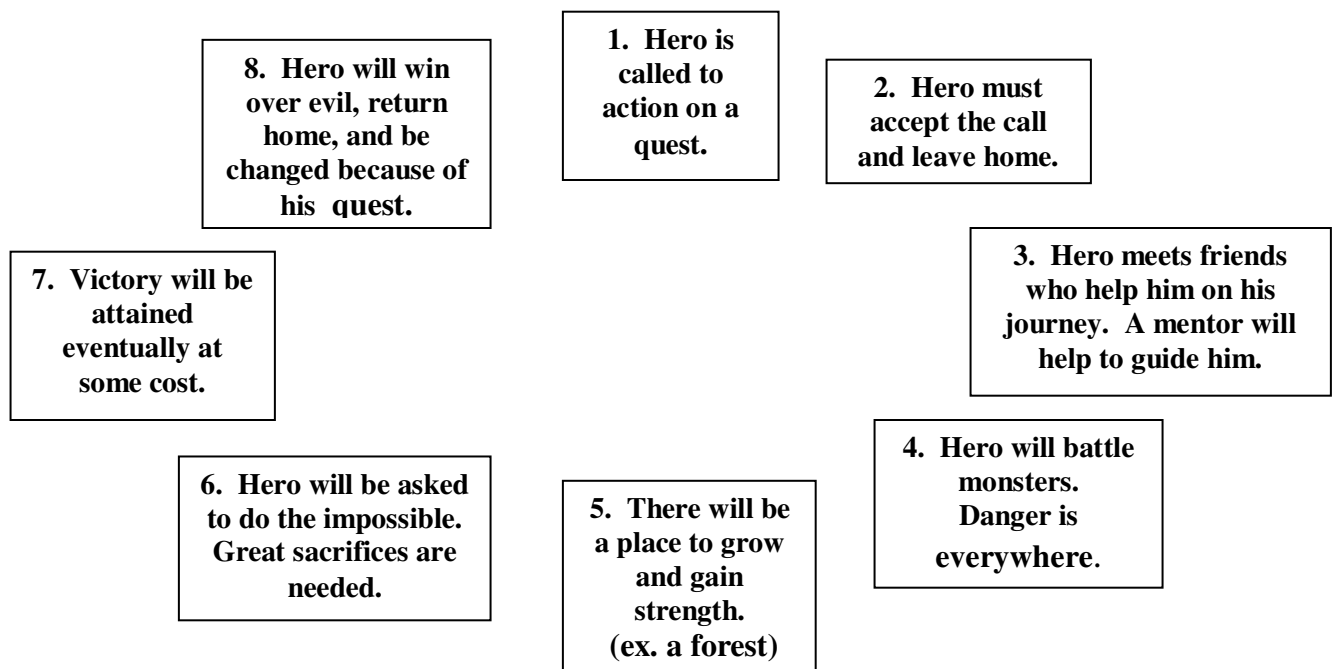
Resources

<http://www.tolatsga.org/aben.html> A site with information on the history and culture of the Abenaki.

Genre – The Hero Story

This story is a myth or hero story. The hero story or hero circle offers a perfect way to study this Native American myth. Joseph Campbell in The Power of Myth says “A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself.” Mac shows this clearly in his attempt to save the woods he so dearly loves.

Mac’s story follows the classic hero circle.



1. Have students identify the different points of the hero's journey as they read *The Black Squirrel*.
2. Be aware of the many books and movies, both new and old, which follow this pattern. It is fun to identify them and follow the hero's journey in each. Just a few include the Harry Potter books, *Star Wars*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Prydain Chronicles*, and many more.
3. Students can write their own stories that follow this pattern.
4. Are there present day heroes? What are their lives devoted to that is bigger than themselves?

Word Splash

Objectives:

- Assess prior knowledge
- Provide motivation for reading
- Set a clear purpose for reading
- Decipher vocabulary
- Allow for a variety of modes of learning

Steps:

1. Select 7-10 meaningful words or phrases from the reading selection. Be sure to include not only similar words that will indicate the subject of the selection but also some of the words and phrases that seem contradictory to the others.
2. Give each student a sheet and ask him/her to spend a little time thinking about what kind of story or article could include all of these words or phrases.
3. Ask students to form small groups of 3-5 (or you can assign them to groups). In their groups, they should decide what the story will be about. They should also create a narrative or an explanation that will include all the words or phrases.
4. Ask each group to share their narrative or explanation. As they listen, students should look for common elements.
5. Ask students to list the common elements they heard on the board (or you could list them if students have trouble doing this.)
6. Individually, students now read the selection.
7. In small groups or as a whole class, discuss the similarities and differences between the narratives they constructed prior to reading the story and the actual story. It is very important to discuss the reasons for the differences. This discussion can highlight the number of possible approaches authors have available to them when deciding to write about a particular subject. Students' constructions may be perfectly logical without being exactly the same as the story or explanation the author constructed.

Remember this activity is not about whether their predictions were "right" or "wrong" but about whether their predictions were confirmed. Students may find satisfaction in both the similarities and differences.

An advanced step: Once students have done a few of these word splashes, they could independently prepare them for themselves or each other. They should skim an article or story, selecting seven to ten words and phrases. If working independently, they could write those down in a log and then construct a story using them. If working in groups, they could prepare a word splash sheet for someone else to use before reading a selection.

Word Splash for Chapter 1 of The Black Squirrel

GRAMA LAMPMAN'S WOODS

hypnotized

won every archery tournament

special town meeting

bad dreams

giant bulldozers

magical place

overgrown rodent

signed the petition

dead concrete



1. The Black Squirrel

Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

bulldozers	“Giant <u>bulldozers</u> had been rumbling through the forest.” (<i>earth moving machine</i>)
imagination	“...his <u>imagination</u> used to run wild...” (<i>ideas, creativity</i>)
frequent	“...the bad dreams had become less <u>frequent</u> .” (<i>usual, recurring</i>)
archery	“Mac won every <u>archery</u> tournament for his age group.” (<i>bow and arrow</i>)
petition	“...kids in the Redstone School had signed the <u>petition</u> ...” (<i>appeal, request</i>)
hypnotized	“It was as if he were <u>hypnotized</u> .” (<i>spellbound, charmed</i>)
chisels	“Its teeth were big and sharp as <u>chisels</u> .” (<i>tools that cut and gouge</i>)
rodent	“He was about to be breakfast for an overgrown <u>rodent</u> .” (<i>rat family member</i>)

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. What are Mac's fears?
2. Describe or draw his dreams. Are they real?
3. What is Mac's special skill? How do you know that he is good at it?
4. Using the petition as your source, decide what Mac values?
5. How does the petition connect to the special meeting?
6. In Indian legend, what is the black squirrel? Describe its power.
7. Is this just another of Mac's dreams? Can Mac save himself? How?

The Newspaper Connection

1. Joseph Bruchac uses italics to focus attention on what the text is saying. Why does he do this? What does a newspaper do to attract a reader's attention to their text? Find as many different examples as you can and post them in the classroom.

2.
**The Voice
in the
Tree**



Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

paralyzed	“He no longer felt <u>paralyzed</u> .” (<i>disabled, unmoving</i>)
advice	“...words of <u>advice</u> repeated themselves in his mind.” (<i>guidance, warning</i>)
cautiously	“He leaned out the window <u>cautiously</u> .” (<i>with great care</i>)
whirlwind	“...as if a <u>whirlwind</u> ..suddenly swept through...” (<i>windstorm</i>)

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. What advice helps Mac out of the clutches of the black squirrel?
2. What evidence is there that this is a dream? Or is it real?
3. Who is Mac having a conversation with in the tree outside his window?
4. What was the first test Mac passed? What could the second be? What do you think this is about?
5. Describe the whirlwind.
6. What does it mean to be dressed in “the old way?”

The Newspaper Connection

1. Mac remembers Grandmother Kateri’s words of advice, “If you are ever in real trouble, take a deep breath and shout!” Make a class list of advice that students often receive from adults. Create an advice column for your classroom and use student letters to write answers just like Dear Abby or Ann Landers. Use the newspaper as your guide.

3.
Two Things



Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

guardians	“The Little People are the <u>guardians</u> of nature.” (<i>caretakers</i>)
entrusted	“...others are <u>entrusted</u> with the responsibility of guarding powerful places.” (<i>charged with</i>)
suspicious	“Mac said in a <u>suspicious</u> voice.” (<i>doubtful, questioning</i>)
destruction	“...save your world from <u>destruction</u> .” (<i>ruin, devastation</i>)
accidentally	“...he <u>accidentally</u> bumped against something...” (<i>by chance</i>)
rafters	
wigwam	“...up in the <u>rafters</u> of a <u>wigwam</u> ...” (<i>beams, frame</i>) (<i>Native American structure</i>)
disobedient	“...feet that were as <u>disobedient</u> as his hands...” (<i>defiant</i>)
teetering	“He was <u>teetering</u> on the windowsill...” (<i>wobbling</i>)

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. What are the responsibilities and powers of the Little People?
2. What are Wesu’s two jobs?
3. Why is Mac chosen “to do something wonderful?”
4. How could a young boy save the world from destruction?
5. Describe the compound bow that falls into Mac’s grasp. Where do you think it got its name?
6. What do you think is driving Mac to leave his room?

The Newspaper Connection

1. Make a character map or web. What qualities has Mac shown so far and give examples to support your ideas?
2. Chose a person in the news in a high profile position. From the news article, make a character map for this real person. Are the qualities evident positive or negative or both?
3. Who acts as “the guardian of nature” in your community, state, nation? Find proof in the newspaper.

4.
Falling



Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

midair	“...less likely to fall off in <u>midair</u> .” (<i>in the middle of flight</i>)
quillwork	“...designs made of porcupine <u>quillwork</u> ...” (<i>using the quills for decoration</i>)
parachute	“The great bird spread its wings like a <u>parachute</u> .” (<i>cloth used to ease the descent to earth</i>)
amusement	“He looked down at Mac with a great deal of <u>amusement</u> .” (<i>fun</i>)

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. How is Mac saved when he jumped out of his third story window?
2. How would Mac describe this experience on Keeyii?
3. What is Mac’s first clue that the size of things has changed for him?
4. How would you feel to be in Mac’s moccasins right now? Predict how you think Mac will feel.

The Newspaper Connection

1. Mac’s point of view changes drastically when he is shrunk to the size of a rabbit. Talk about point of view and how it changes the story. Chose a news article in which there is more than one side to the story. How could the story be seen differently from each of these perspectives?
2. What problems and/or advantages could you foresee for someone this size? What does our culture say about size? What does size mean? Find support for your ideas in the newspaper. In what areas of life does height or size matter?

5.
**Knee High to
 a
 Woodchuck**



Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

obvious
 perspective
 whimper
 blackmail
 reassured

“I thought that was pretty obvious.” (*clear, evident*)
 “...who was no longer so little from Mac’s perspective.” (*viewpoint*)
 “He changed his voice to a tearful whimper.” (*cry*)
 “That’s blackmail,” Mac said. “It’s not fair.” (*the act of forcing a person to do or pay something especially by a threat to reveal a secret*)
 “Feeling it in his arms reassured him.” (*took away his worry*)

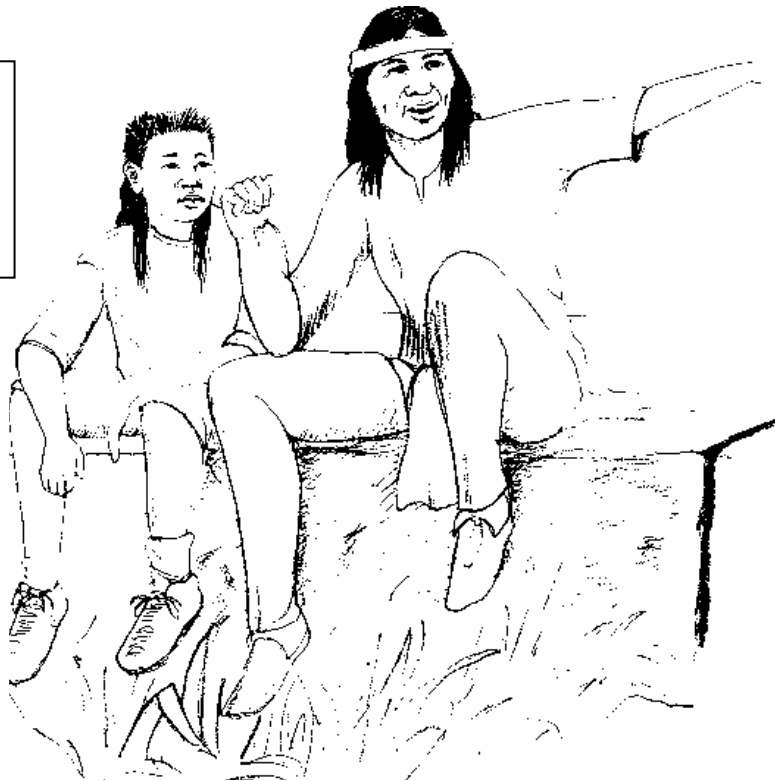
Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. How does Mac react to being changed in size by Wesu?
2. Explain how and why Mac was shrunk.
3. How can Mac get big again?
4. What is it Wesu expects of Mac? How can Mac make a difference at this size?
5. How would you react to being Mac’s size forever? How do you predict Mac will react?

The Newspaper Connection

1. How important is size in our society? Ask students to share their perspectives on what society values as far as size? height? weight? Is it different for boys and girls? Are there right and wrong notions to our culture’s ideas? Write an editorial expressing your views.
2. Create the song that Wesu sang to reduce Mac in size. Use words cut from the newspaper to create this ballad in newsprint.
3. Wesu admits to Mac (Eagle Boy) that he is right, “It isn’t fair.” Is life fair? Use news articles to support your position.

6.
**Wesu's
Story**



Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

clenched
thoughtless
pollution

global warming
diseases
threat

“Mac clenched his fists tight around the bow.” (*clamped*)

“...the foolish things that thoughtless humans are doing.” (*careless, reckless*)

“...they did talk about things like pollution, global warming, diseases and the threat to the earth.” (*contamination*) (*worldwide temperature changes*) (*illnesses*) (*dangers*)

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. Wesu tells Mac a story of long ago. Retell the story in your own words.
2. How have the monsters awakened and regained their strength?
3. What is global warming? How is it connected to the other “Monsters?”
4. Mac asks a good question. “What could one little kid do that would make any difference?” Do you think it is possible?
5. Predict what could be the arguments for and against Plot 999.

The Newspaper Connection

1. Symbolism is an important literary element in this story. This would be a perfect time to discuss this element and be aware of how it is used throughout the story. How does a newspaper make use of symbolism?
2. Start a school club called “Keepers and Guardians of the Earth.” Find ideas in the news for ways that students can extend their work to the community.
3. Pollution, disease, and global warming are threats to the earth mentioned in this chapter. Are these threats today. What efforts has man made to solve these problems? Use the news to find information from around the globe.

7.
**The
 Little
 People**



Vocabulary/In Context/Definition

gesture

“He made a circling gesture with his right hand.” (*signal*)

intent

“He didn’t like the intent look on Wesu’s face.” (*fixed, firm*)

uncomplimentary

“Wesu would not be happy if he said something uncomplimentary.”
 (*unflattering, unkind*)

lured

“Why had he been lured out of his room...” (*drawn, enticed*)

prickling

“...the hairs were prickling on the back of his neck.” (*tingling*)

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. What three things does Mac choose to tell about the Little People?
2. What might have happened if he had said the wrong thing?
3. Mac seems to be constantly tested by Wesu. Can you think of a reason why?
4. What is the Meeting Tree and what will happen there?
5. Predict what the danger is at the end of this chapter.

The Newspaper Connection

1. Create a newspaper ad for Tall Tree Estates featuring Plot 999. How would the development company sell this area to the community? Use news ads for your models.
2. The Meeting Tree from this chapter could be a model for classrooms where problems are aired and solutions discussed. Is there a central place in your community for such activities? Does the news have a section for local problems? Discuss such problems in your town and their possible solutions.



8. The Kiwahkwe



Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

razor-taloned	“...as a <u>razor-taloned</u> hand swept at them.” (<i>sharp clawed</i>)
gouged	“The sharp clawed hand <u>gouged</u> a handful of earth.” (<i>scooped</i>)
grazed	“The razor claws only <u>grazed</u> the tail.” (<i>skimmed, brushed</i>)
prey	“When its <u>prey</u> was out of reach it would scream.” (<i>victim</i>)
focused	“...sharp and <u>focused</u> as a beam of light...” (<i>concentrated</i>)

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. Describe the owner of the “hairy foot.”
2. How are Mac and Wesu saved from the Kiwahkwe?
3. Explain the purpose of the earplugs.
4. When Mac says “everything went black”, what happened?
5. What questions do you have at the end of this chapter?

The Newspaper Connection

1. Kiwahkwe’s screams are deadly. Could this be noise pollution? How has noise changed our world? Is this a good thing or not? Look through the newspaper for people, places, or things that may add to this type of pollution. What can be done?

9.
The
Meeting
Tree



Vocabulary/In Context/Definition

weaved
explored
thrust
perceive

“Back and forth the great bird weaved...” (*looped, twisted*)
 “...he and his friends had explored every inch.” (*hunted, searched*)
 “Didn’t it thrust up high enough to be visible?” (*push*)
 “...he was seeing as the eagle that can perceive an ant from a mile up...”
 (*observe, see*)

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. Who or what is the Great Mystery?
2. What is the importance of the Meeting Tree?
3. Wesu shows Mac the past, the present, and the future – the whole circle. Describe what he sees.
4. Would you want to know the future?
5. How can things be different if you see through the heart, not the head?
6. As Mac continues to look, what is happening in Grama Lampman’s woods?
7. Is this view that Mac sees real? Are they giant squirrels or men?

The Newspaper Connection

1. The future may seem a long way off. How does each student see his/her future? What do they hope to become and accomplish? Are they optimistic about the future?
2. What does the future hold for this nation? The world? Use the newspaper for ideas on what the future may present for us all. What things are taking place now that may make our future safer? What could threaten our future?



10.

Destruction

Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

perch	“Wesu had turned around from his <u>perch</u> on Keeyii’s shoulders...” (<i>seat</i>)
vision	“...the <u>vision</u> before Mac changed.” (<i>illusion</i>)
fine	“...the Development Company will have to pay a <u>fine</u> .” (<i>penalty payment</i>)
unconscious	“...now he lies <u>unconscious</u> in our big lodge...” (<i>senseless</i>)
ivory	“...Striker was <u>shaped out of ivory</u> .” (<i>hard whalebone or elephant tusk</i>)
obsidian	“The arrows...were razor-sharp and chipped from <u>obsidian</u> .” (<i>black rock</i>)

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. Grandmother Kateri told Mac many stories. What is her creation story?
2. How is Tall Tree Estates breaking the law?
3. What are the Black Ones and what is the only thing that can stop them?
4. How can the riddle be solved – four arrows and a dozen black squirrels? Brainstorm some solutions.
5. Is Mac up to the task? Can he do this?

The Newspaper Connection

1. Mac remembers Grandmother Kateri’s creation story. Other creation stories can be found in Virginia Hamilton’s book, *In the Beginning*, which could be shared with the class.
2. It might be interesting to bring in a piece of obsidian for students to feel and see. A little research on what Native Americans used for their arrowheads might prove interesting.

11.
Striker's Song



Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

mocking	“His voice was <u>mocking</u> .” (<i>ridiculing</i>)
leverage	“...how to get just the right <u>leverage</u> ...” (<i>hold, lift</i>)
resistance	“...it offered almost no <u>resistance</u> .” (<i>hindrance</i>)
plucked	“He... <u>plucked</u> the bowstring gently.” (<i>picked, pulled</i>)
thrummed	“Striker’s deep thrilling song <u>thrummed</u> through his bones.” (<i>pulsed</i>)
sarcastic	“His voice was still <u>sarcastic</u> .” (<i>cutting, bitter</i>)
mischievous	“A big smile spread over Wesu’s <u>mischievous</u> face.” (<i>naughty</i>)

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. What is Mac feeling at the beginning of this chapter?
2. What is the bet between Mac and Wesu? Why do you think Wesu makes this bet? Why does Wesu mock him?
3. How does Mac show himself to be an accomplished archer?
4. What are the powers and the beauty of Striker?
5. Predict what will happen as the black-tipped missile/arrow returns to Mac.

The Newspaper Connection

1. What would be your answer to Wesu’s question? What is it you want most? Find a news article from another country or culture. Identify in the story what this group wants most. Is it different from your wishes?
2. Mac will use arrows to fight the problems he faces. What “weapons” do we have to fight greed, selfishness, and hatred? Can you find examples of these “weapons” in the news?

12. Decision



Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

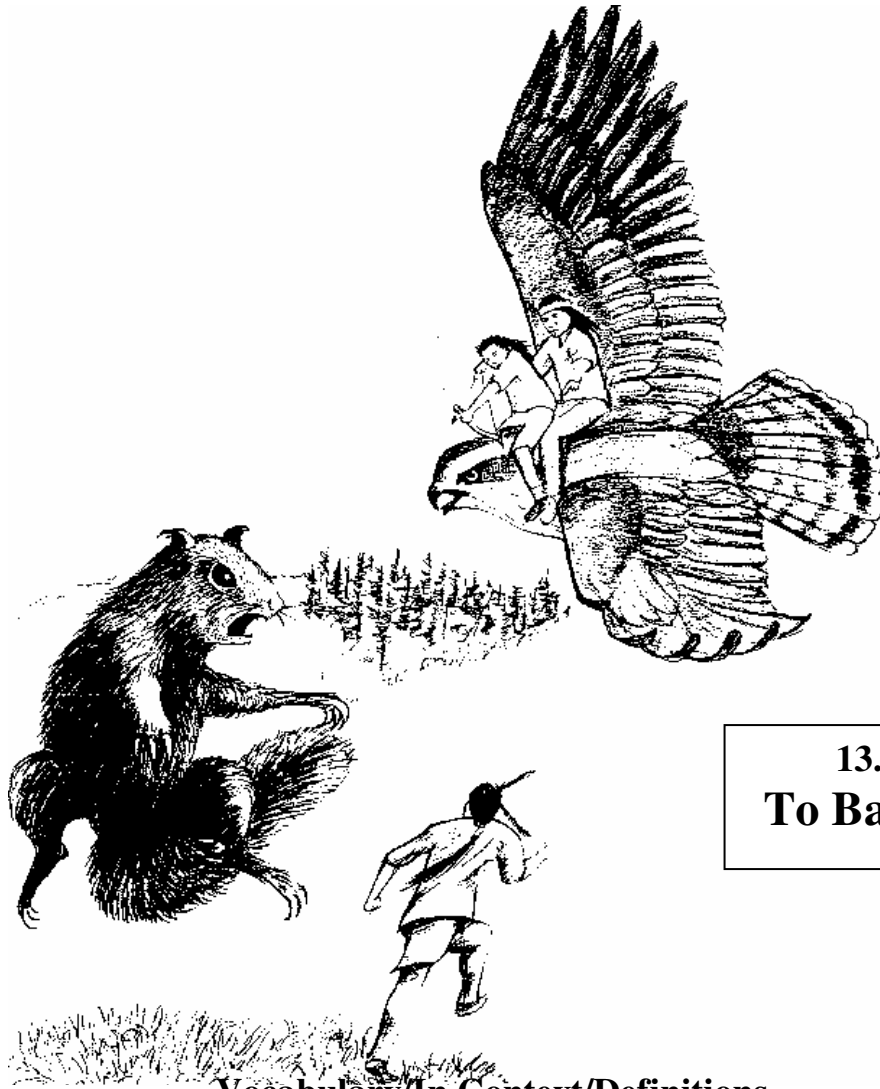
realization	“Mac paused as his voice filled with wonder and sudden <u>realization</u> .” <i>(awareness, insight)</i>
determined	“He looked firm, <u>determined</u> .” <i>(resolved, decided)</i>
reflection	“His <u>reflection</u> made him look like...” <i>(image)</i>
guarantee	“Of course, there’s no <u>guarantee</u> of that.” <i>(promise, pledge)</i>
encountered	“To be an ordinary kid who only <u>encountered</u> cartoon monsters...” <i>(met)</i>
threatened	“...not the real ones that <u>threatened</u> to destroy everything he loved.” <i>(menaced)</i>
difference	“...you really might be able to make a <u>difference</u> .” <i>(positive change)</i>

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. What does Mac suddenly realize about Striker’s arrows?
2. Describe the arrowhead.
3. Mac sees his reflection in the arrowhead. He looks firm and determined. Is this the definition of a hero? What do these qualities mean?
4. Is it hard to do the right thing?
5. What do you think Mac will choose? What would you do if you were Mac?

The Newspaper Connection

1. How would you evaluate your town? Are there open spaces and forests and natural sights or does it feel like “the whole world is being covered with smoke and concrete?”
2. Invite in a city planner to talk to the class. How are communities planned? How is growth and nature balanced by those in power? Write a news article of this talk and submit it to your local newspaper.
3. Mac mentions “cartoon monsters” in this chapter. Draw the action in this chapter as a cartoon strip or an editorial cartoon.



**13.
To Battle**

Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

smug	“He sounded <u>smug</u> as he asked the question.” (<i>self important</i>)
exhausts	“...with smoke chugging out of their <u>exhausts</u> .” (<i>where fumes pass out of</i>)
surveying	“...leaving saws, <u>surveying</u> instruments...” (<i>inspection, measurement</i>)
grim	“...the little stone throwers fought the Black Ones in a <u>grim</u> battle.” (<i>dreadful</i>)
ignition	“Wesu hopped off and turned off the <u>ignition</u> switch.” (<i>starter, key</i>)

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. Wesu says Mac’s decision has been in the planning for four years. Explain.
2. The Stone Throwers are stopping the men with the bulldozers but the problem is not solved. Explain.
3. What happens when Mac’s arrows strike the black squirrels? Is the battle won?
4. What do the black squirrels represent? What do they symbolize?
5. Wesu says “The worst one hasn’t shown himself yet.” Predict. What will happen next?

The Newspaper Connection

1. Can you compare this battle to other hero stories such as the battles in the Harry Potter stories, Wizard of Oz, The Hobbit, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, Star Wars, etc. Is this part of the hero circle?
2. This chapter tells the story of the battle of two sides – good and evil, perhaps. Using a news story, identify the conflict and the sides. Can you identify good and evil in the news?



**14.
The
Worst
One**

Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

twang	“...the <u>twang</u> of the bowstring...” (<i>smacking sound</i>)
crimson	“It went from shiny black to <u>crimson</u> ...” (<i>deep red</i>)
protruding	“...it grabbed the arrow shaft <u>protruding</u> from its furry chest.” (<i>sticking out</i>)
hurled	“...it broke it in half and <u>hurled</u> it aside.” (<i>heaved</i>)
gnats	“...they bothered the creature no more than a cloud of <u>gnats</u> .” (<i>insects</i>)
strangled	“Wesu shouted in a <u>strangled</u> voice...” (<i>choked</i>)

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. Why do you think Wesu and the goshawk leave Mac to fight the Kiwahkwe alone?
2. Describe the transformation of the arrow that Mac aims at Kiwahkwe’s heart.
3. How do the arrows affect the Kiwahkwe? What is different from the other black squirrels?
4. Mac says the Kiwahkwe’s eyes have changed. They look more like human eyes. Can you explain this change?
5. What is Kiwahkwe’s greatest weapon? What is Mac’s?
6. How do Wesu and Keeyii prove themselves heroes? Can they live through the attack from the Kiwahkwe?
7. Can Mac save the day? Does he have what it will take?

The Newspaper Connection

1. Can the old maple tree be replaced? Find ads in the paper for people that may help.
2. In this chapter, the creature’s eyes were filled with greed and anger. Then they change to human eyes. Human eyes can tell an entire story. Find a photograph in the news and identify the emotion present in the eyes in the picture.

Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

penetrated	“...as it struck it <u>penetrated</u> the monster’s heart.” (<i>pierced</i>)
coasted	“They <u>coasted</u> above the woods...” (<i>drifted, floated</i>)
impact	“...but just at the moment of <u>impact</u> ...” (<i>contact, collision</i>)
chamber	“...they carried Wesu to a <u>chamber</u> ...” (<i>room, apartment</i>)

15. The Monster’s Heart



Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. Explain how the Kiwahkwe changes with the final arrow.
2. Why is the man apologizing?
3. All that is left of the Kiwahkwe is a small, white shape. What is it? Why do the little people stop Mac from touching it?
4. How does the setting change at the end of this chapter?
5. Can the magic of the Little People save Wesu or is his life a sacrifice that must be made to conquer evil?

The Newspaper Connection

1. The author writes about the “heart of ice that is held in the chest of those who are swallowed by their own anger and hunger.” Looking through this week’s newspaper, can you identify people or groups whose hearts may be frozen.
2. Prepare an obituary or death notice for Wesu. Use the news as a model. Include his history, his accomplishments, and the cause of death – everything you know about him.

16. The Last Arrow



Vocabulary/In Context/Definitions

exhaustion	“Mac felt a wave of <u>exhaustion</u> pass over him.” (<i>extreme tiredness</i>)
victims	“...leading him to the next of the Kiwahkwe’s <u>victims</u> .” (<i>casualties</i>)
revived	“By the time he <u>revived</u> the last...” (<i>restored</i>)
regretful	“Mac recognized that face, those sad, <u>regretful</u> eyes.” (<i>sorry</i>)
Conservancy	“...he’s deeding the whole forest to the Nature <u>Conservancy</u> .” (<i>a group to preserve and protect</i>)
incised	“Shapes had been <u>incised</u> into the bark.” (<i>carved</i>)

Question/Predict/Evaluate

1. What is the power of the golden arrow?
2. Mac fears sleeping just one night with the Little People. Why? How is time different for the Little People?
3. What things are different when Mac wakes up?
4. What does Grandmother Kateri mean when she says that Mac “talked tall?”
5. What is a Nature Conservancy?
6. Was this all a dream? What is the meaning of the birch bark message?
7. What did Mac accomplish? Is he a hero?
8. If our hero circle is true, Mac returns changed. What changes do you see in Mac physically, mentally, and emotionally?

The Newspaper Connection

1. The Sunday paper declares “Development Fails to Develop.” Write the story that followed, the real story. Use the newspaper for your model. Write a lead which includes the who, what, where, when, why, and how. Then go into greater detail in the rest of your article.

III. AFTER READING

Extending the story

1. If you could sleep and wake up and a certain amount of time had passed, would you? What age would you choose to be? What changes might you wake up to?
2. Using a brown paper bag from the supermarket to simulate birch bark, create the piece of birch bark that was left on Mac's front door and draw the pictures that represent Mac's finest hour. (Rough up the bag to make it appear worn.)
3. Using another bag, students could draw a scene from their own life illustrating their proudest moment.
4. Write Mac's petition which he presented for the special town meeting.
5. Turn Mac's legendary dream into a real life meeting. Write it as a play for students to act out. How would he have addressed the contractors and the public and persuaded them that his cause was just?
6. What role could students take in their community that would tie into Mac's cause? It might be connected to the environment, perhaps to beautify or to preserve, or to simply maintain the cleanliness of their school or classroom. How can we make each other aware of what is true and beautiful and good and what needs to be preserved?
7. Would you change the title of the story? Why do you think the author chose The Black Squirrel as his title? Brainstorm some other possible titles for this story.
8. Think of possible "what if" statements that could change the story? How would the story have changed? Some examples:
 - What if Mac's string on Striker had snapped?
 - What if Wesu had been killed in the battle?
 - What if Mac had chosen to return home?
 - What if Mac had suddenly returned to normal size?
9. Make a story map of The Black Squirrel. Outline the characters, setting, problems, events and resolution. Then write a one page summary of this story. Be clear and precise. What are the main ideas and themes?
10. Mac is able to make a difference in his community even though he is only a young boy. Using the newspaper, find examples of kids making a difference in your community, state, or around the world.
11. Who are the heroes of today? Using the newspaper, have students find heroes from different walks of life – business, sports, government, entertainment, etc. Put pictures together in a collage and explain what qualities of a hero each displays.
12. With the year 2008 being a presidential election year, candidates will begin to throw their hat in the ring. Students can use the newspaper to research a candidate's stand on the environment. How does each candidate hope to make a difference if they are elected president?
13. Joseph Bruchac said "Everybody has stories; everybody has culture. Everybody has ancestors. Finding your own stories is something I strongly believe in." Talk to family members and come up with your own story idea based on your culture or ancestors. What happened in your family that could create a great story? Write it.
14. Joseph Bruchac plays guitar and the Native American flue and drum. He also writes music. Create a song that contains the hero story of Mac.
15. Wesu says to Mac, "Well done, Eagle Boy! We will meet again." Create a story of that next meeting. How can Mac make a difference again for something larger than himself?

The Black Squirrel Word Search

Can you find these 19 nouns from the story?

I I E B P W I G W A M Q W G C Y B D R G
N M D F T E N V D Z Y K N H B B U I E F
S Q A C E T T S D L T I I R F N L S B R
H N X G I D Q I Q Y M C V H O K L E M Q
S L A C I D E S T R U C T I O N D A A P
R T U I R N E D A I E M T H T I O S H N
N I N A D C A W P X O U A R T K Z E C E
Y C G E I R L T H Z L N G N F Q E S Z T
Q D D V D A A A I L V D P C B E R R R U
L P D E B O U U O O P G Q V X V S X K H
I A R O F S R P G S N F P W Y I A U N C
G V L E T B L A C K M A I L Q R Q N R A
J G M I Y T R N B G V J U T C S Z R D R
K K O W G H D N I W L R I H W F B X S A
C N P I W T K O G I P N E D R Y W H A P
V L Y D L V E J D E L R C X G C M P V U
S L E S I H C M T F Y J X E B R Y O M A
Z F L P I L E H P T E P B Q E C J H M R
Q Y O P K B Y F I F F Q R R J R M X I G
N P X V A O U F F M W M E G U L I A X X

ADVICE
ARCHERY
BLACKMAIL
BULLDOZERS
CHAMBER
CHISELS
DESTRUCTION
DISEASES
EXHAUSTION
GLOBALWARMING
GUARDIANS
IMAGINATION
PARACHUTE
PETITION
POLLUTION
PREY
RODENTS
WHIRLWIND
WIGWAM

Who Said It?

Identify these quotes from the story. Who said it and why was it important in the story?

1. "If you are ever in real trouble, take a deep breath and shout!"
2. "Show yourself! Right now or I'm going to shut this window and go back to bed so I can wake up and get away from this crazy dream."
3. "Open your eyes. Look close. It should be much easier to look close now!"
4. "That's blackmail. It's not fair."
5. "JUMP!"
6. "Quick, in your ears."
7. "There's more to see. The way it is now. The way it will be unless you do what has to be done."
8. "If I can string this bow, you'll give me whatever I want most?"
9. "Perhaps you just want to go home and be an ordinary human being again. Right?"
10. "Shoot for the heart!"
11. "What have I done. I'm...I'm sorry."

ANSWERS TO QUESTION/PREDICT/EVALUATE

Chapter 1

1. Mac fears his dreams and he worries about losing all the people and things he loves.
2. Answers will vary.
3. Mac is good at archery and has won every tournament for his age group.
4. Mac values the woodland called Grama Lampman's Woods and Old Maple.
5. Mac will probably turn his petition in at the special town meeting.

Chapter 2

1. Grandma Kateri said if you are ever in trouble to take a deep breath and shout.
2. AWV.
3. A man dressed in the old way no bigger than a chipmunk.
4. The first test was the black squirrel. AWV
5. The whirlwind was a rainbow of light, a burst of birdsong, and the smell of sweet grass and ripe berries all rolled into one.
6. To be dressed in deerskin and moccasins.

Chapter 3

1. The Little People look out for humans and are the guardians of nature. Some took care of food and medicine plans, others guarded powerful places. They had special powers that humans didn't and they seldom let humans see them.
2. His two jobs are to follow the Black One and to tell Mac he has been chosen for something wonderful.
3. AWV
4. AWV
5. The compound bow is old, made long ago by some Indian craftsman. It is wrapped in smoky smelling leather. It was smooth and looked like it was made of ivory or horn with a strong bowstring. It also had four flint-tipped arrows.
6. AWV

Chapter 4

1. A great bird, Keeyii, dives past him and he is grabbed by the shoulders and settled on its back.
2. Mac finds it exciting. He could feel the hot skin, the heartbeat thumping of the bird below him. He "felt so alive he thought he was going to shout or cry.
3. Mac thinks that Wesu has gotten big because he grabbed him and put him on the bird; Wesu is tall and broad shouldered to Mac now. His first clue that he is smaller is when he sees hanging far above him a bird feeder.
4. AWV

Chapter 5

1. Mac is angry. He has liked the idea of being tall and is not happy with his shrunken size.
2. Striker has pulled him out the window. The only way Keeyii could have caught Mac is if he was little – Keeyii's size. So Wesu sang him down to save his life.
3. The only way for Mac to get big again is if he does what Wesu tells him.
4. AWV 5. AWV

Chapter 6

1. Long ago in the days of Gluskabe, the first one to walk in human shape, there were monsters. Gluskabe changed the monsters – but not all of them. Some hid and waited for the right time – when Gluskabe was not around. They slept for years and now they are awakening.
2. The monsters are awakening because of the foolish things human beings do – like cutting down all the forests.
3. Global warming is a recent weather condition where average temperatures are rising. This could be a grave environmental threat.
4. AWV 5. AWV

Chapter 7

1. 1. Little people don't like people to see them unless they want to be seen. 2. There are different nations of Little People; some live in streams and have thin faces, others live in cliffs and throw stones when people get too close. 3. One of their main jobs it to take care of things in the natural world.
2. AWV
3. AWV
4. The Meeting Tree could be where Mac will finally be told what this whole adventure is about.
5. AWV

Chapter 8

1. The hairy foot is attached to a hairy creature about 10 feet tall with huge red eyes and razor taloned hands.

2. Keeyii save them again.
3. The earplugs save them for when Kiwahkwe's prey is out of reach it screams, a scream so terrible it kills whoever hears it.
4. Despite the earplugs Kiwahkwe's scream does strike Mac – like the sound of a jet plane tearing through him. He has probably lost consciousness.

Chapter 9

1. AWV - God.
2. The Meeting Tree is a pine tree taller than any pine Mac had ever seen before. It is also considered the heart of the world. "As long as this meeting tree stands, as long as the memory of how it was lives in even one heart, this will never be gone."
3. Past or How it could be again– the forest is lush and endless, humans are happily and carefully using the land. He sees a bike, fields of corn, people picking berries, corn growing
Future – there is black smoke, forest is gone on Plot 999, grey earth and dead concrete.
4. AWV
5. AWV
6. The destruction continues and is headed to the Meeting Tree. The building site has grown, not a single tree is standing.
7. AWV

Chapter 10

1. "In that story, the Creator first made people out of stone. But those stone people were giants who crushed everything under their feet. So the Creator broke them up and returned them to the earth. Then new people were made from the trees...the trees had given birth to the people."
2. The Development Company has started cutting trees even though they can't cut trees unless the Town Board approves it at the special meeting for that night.
3. Black Ones are the forces of evil – greed. They can only be stopped by the arrows of Striker.
4. AWV 5. AWV

Chapter 11

1. Mac probably feels hopeless and overwhelmed – asked to do the impossible.
2. Mac and Wesu bet that if Mac can string the bow and shoot one arrow, Wesu will give Mac whatever he wants most – to be normal size again and to have things be just the way they were before he looked out his window that morning. Wesu makes the bet as a challenge to Mac to rise to the occasion – to prove to Mac that he can do anything. Wesu mocks him to egg him on, to accept the challenge.
3. Mac handles the bow easily. "He'd been able to string bows that even some grown men had a hard time stringing."
4. Striker sings a deep and strong note "as the growl of a mother bear about to defend her cubs. The bow makes him feel strong and almost holds him as much as he is holding it. The sound thrums through his bones.
5. AWV

Chapter 12

1. The arrows return to him after he lets them fly. The arrow flips in mid-air and lands in his hand.
2. The stone arrowhead glistens in the sun. It obsidian was glossy, it glowed and gave back the light of the sun unlike the dark fur of the black squirrels that absorbed and smothered the light. This is a symbolic difference. Mac can see his reflection in the obsidian arrowhead.
3. AWV 4. AWV 5. AWV

Chapter 13

1. Wesu caused Mac his bad dreams over the years to set up this choice that Mac makes to save the forest.
2. The black squirrels are ready to attack the Stone Throwers.
3. When the arrow strikes, the black squirrels disappear leaving nothing but a whirling cloud of dust that blows away in the wind.
4. AWV 5. AWV

Chapter 14

1. AWV
2. The arrow grew larger – to the size of a real arrow before Wesu shrank them all. It also changed color from "shining black to crimson, glowing red as molten lava".
3. When the arrow strikes the Kiwahkwe, a puff of steam exits the monster's mouth, its knees buckle but it doesn't fall. It grabs the arrow from its chest and breaks it in half – so the arrow does not return to Mac.
4. AWV (The symbols and the realities seem to be merging together. Kids may have a hard time making sense of this.)
5. The Kiwahkwe's best weapon is his scream. Mac's best weapon ? – AWV

6. Wesu and Keeyii dive at the Kiwahkwe to attack. The Kiwahkwe drops the stone shielding his heart and Wesu forces the stick he is carrying into the Kiwahkwe's mouth to prevent him from screaming and killing all who hear it.
7. AWV

Chapter 15

1. The last arrow strikes the Kiwahkwe in the chest and he falls and changes into a man Mac had seen on TV.
2. The man seems to realize the damage and harm he has done and the laws he has broken and apologizes for what he has done.
3. The white shape is made of ice and looks just like the monster, Kiwahkwe. The Little People stop Mac from touching it. He must use the 4th arrow to touch it and melt this ice representing anger and greed in evil men's hearts.
4. The goshawk carries Wesu and Mac on its wings towards a cliff face where they find themselves in a huge cave of the Little People.
5. AWV

Chapter 16

1. The arrow brings Wesu and the others hurt in battle back to life.
2. Grandmother Kateri's story said if you sleep in the home of the Little People you wake up and 100 years have passed.
3. Mac wakes up home in his own bed, he is big again – even bigger having grown 4 inches.
4. Mac talked tall – he talked as someone who earned his listeners respect, he changed people's hearts with his talk.
5. A nature conservancy is a group set up to protect and defend the forest.
6. AWV
7. Mac is able to change the heart of the developer and causes him to deed the whole forest to the nature conservancy.
AWV
8. AWV

NATIONAL STANDARDS

This teacher's guide has been prepared and noted according to the STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, sponsored by National Council for the Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. Source: <http://www.ncte.org>

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics.)
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, and people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

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