The Zoo at the Edge of the World

AUTHOR: Eric Kahn Gale
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GENRE: Fantasy
LEXILE: 680L

SUMMARY:
Marlin is the son of a world-famous explorer, Ronan Rackham. Rackham built a resort for the wealthy on the edge of the British Guiana jungle, and Marlin and his brother helped tend the animals there. Marlin has trouble communicating with people because he stutters, but he has no problem talking to the animals in the zoo. One day, a jaguar is captured and added to the zoo’s collection of animals. He gives Marlin an amazing gift that will change his life forever.

BOOKTALK:
If you could have any superpower, what would you ask for? Would you want to fly or be invisible? The main character in The Zoo at the Edge of the World is named Marlin. He works at his father’s zoo, helping to take care of animals, and he has trouble talking to people because he stutters. What do you think he would want his superpower to be?

A jaguar captured and placed in a cage at the zoo gives Marlin the gift of talking to animals. Why do you think the jaguar would give Marlin this gift? If you were Marlin, what would you do with your new superpower? Read The Zoo at the Edge of the World to find out what Marlin does with his gift of speaking to animals.

AUTHOR’S NAME: Eric Kahn Gale

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Other books written by the author
The Bully Book

CHALLENGING WORDS

demeanor [p.16]: noun 1. conduct, behavior; 2. appearance

earshot [p.26]: noun the range at which a sound can be heard

petrified [p. 40]: adjective to be so frightened that one is unable to move

menacing [p.59]: adjective dangerous or threatening

enchanted [p. 104]: adjective under a magical spell

rabble [p. 122]: noun a disorderly crowd, a mob
**excursion** [p. 141]: noun a trip or an outing to some place

**nonplussed** [p. 153]: adjective [a person] surprised or confused so much he doesn’t know how to act

**remorse** [p. 182]: noun deep regret or guilt for a wrong committed

**brandishing** [p. 224]: verb waving something (especially a weapon) as a threat or in anger or excitement

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**
1. How does Marlin’s stuttering affect his relationships with other people? With animals?
2. What is the importance of the Paw? What do the Rackham brothers have to do to have ownership of the Paw? How does it create animosity between the brothers?
3. What gift did the Jaguar give Marlin? How does Marlin use that gift to help the zoo animals?
4. Ronan Rackham is called “Conqueror and Protector of the Jungle” in his book. Is this a good title for him? Why or why not?
5. Who is your favorite animal in *The Zoo at the Edge of the World*? What do you like about that animal?
6. If you could write a few more chapters at the end of *Zoo at the Edge of the World*, where do you think Marlin would be living? What has happened to Olivia and to the other characters?

**ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:**

**Language Arts:**

- Have your students pick out an animal from a book that they would like to research. The students should collect several sources and write an informational paper on that animal. When writing their papers, students should include this information:
  - Habitat: Describe the habitat of the animal.
  - Predators: What threatens this animal?
  - Diet: What does your animal eat? (Herbivore/Carnivore/Omnivore)
  - Lifespan: How long does this animal live on average?
  - Breeding: How many babies does the animal have? Does the animal take care of its offspring? How often does the animal have babies (procreate)?
  - Threats: Does anything threaten your animal? Is its habitat disappearing? Is it endangered?
  - Description: Describe the animal. What does this animal look like? Does it have camouflage?
  - Location: Where do these animals live?
  - Weight: How much does this animal weigh as an adult?
  - Three Interesting Facts: Information about your animal that is unique and
interesting to you.

(Questions from

**Language Arts Standard 6.W.3.2.** Write informative compositions on a variety of topics.

**Science Core Standard 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.3.3:**
Describe that all organisms, including humans, are part of complex systems found in all biomes (i.e., freshwater, marine, forest, desert, grassland and tundra).

- Have students pick a character and write down some possibilities for what that character might be doing after *The Zoo at the Edge of the World* ends. Turn those ideas into short stories.

**Language Arts 6.W.3.3** Write narrative compositions in a variety of forms.

**Social Studies:**

- Great Britain is mostly a Temperate Deciduous Forest. The British people that visited the “Zoo at the Edge of the World” were fascinated by the many different animals found in the rainforest in British Guiana. Study rainforests and their characteristics. Study Temperate Deciduous Forests and their characteristics. Have students create a poster of either habitat, with information on climate, location of biomes, and plant life recorded.

**Social Studies: Standard 6.3.8** Identify major biomes of Europe and the Americas and explain how these are influenced by climate.

**Science Core Standard 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.3.3**
Describe that all organisms, including humans, are part of complex systems found in all biomes (i.e., freshwater, marine, forest, desert, grassland and tundra).

**RELATED INTERNET SITES:**

NASA Earth Observatory: Biomes
http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Experiments/Biome/index.php
Good site for researching rainforests and other biomes.

Kids Do Ecology, NCEAS: World Biomes
http://kids.nceas.ucsb.edu/biomes/index.html
Information on different biomes, including the rainforest.

National Geographic Animals
http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/
Use the search button to find information on the animals found in the story.

San Diego Zoo Animals
http://animals.sandiegozoo.org/
Nice presentation on different animals and easy to search. Animals can also be found searching under “habitats.”

CIA World Factbook: Guyana
For information on the country of Guyana

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