

Dragon Castle

By: Joseph Bruchac

Publisher: Dial Books for Young Readers

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Genre: Fantasy

Adventure Stories

Mystery/Suspense

Romance

Setting: Slovakian castle

SUMMARY: (must be original-not copied)

The story is told in two perspectives through the alternating chapters narrated by Prince Rashko and his ancestor Pavol. Both characters must overcome obstacles, including evil magic, a fire breathing dragon, and balancing expectations from others, to save their kingdom and family's castle. Filled with adventure, mystery, magic, and romance, Rashko and Pavol must discover their own strength to overcome their own fears and save their people.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Joseph Bruchac uses his Abenaki ancestry for inspiration in much of his writing. Throughout his career, Joseph Bruchac has written poetry, anthologies, and stories. As an author, Bruchac was greatly influenced by an interest in his Abenaki heritage. In total, Joseph Bruchac is the author of over 120 books for adults and children. For more information the author and his specific works, please visit <http://www.josephbruchac.com>

AUTHOR'S INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT:

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/joseph-bruchac-interview-transcript>

AUTHOR'S VIDEO INTERVIEW:

<http://www.scholastic.com/browse/video.jsp?pid=1640183585&bcpid=1640183585&bclid=1685978871&bctid=1688365625>

Other books written by the author:

Joseph Bruchac is the author of over 120 books for adults and children, including:

Code Talker

Crazy Horse's Vision a picture book

The First Strawberries

Keepers of the Earth

March Toward the Thunder

Pocahontas

Pushing Up the Sky a collection of plays for children

Sacajawea a historical novel

Skeleton Man

Squanto's Journey a picture book
Tell Me a Tale

For a complete list of books, visit <http://www.josephbruchac.com>

SIMILAR BOOKS/BOOKS WITH A SIMILAR THEME:

Inheritance Series by Christopher Paolini
The Last Dragon Chronicles Series by Chris d'Lacey
A Tale of Two Castles by Gail Carson Levine
Year of the Golden Dragon by B. L. Sauder

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (If question is related to a specific chapter, chapter is in parenthesis following question)

1. The author incorporates words from Rhasko's native language into the text, followed by their meaning (example on pg 14-15). How does this change the reading experience?
2. Pavol's parents sent him away to save him when they are attacked. Uncle Tomas promises to help Pavol help himself (pg 48). Initially, who do you think Uncle Tomas is and where did he come from? How does this impression change as the story progresses.
3. Pavol's parents have ruled, like their ancestors since Pavol, to "rule well and be left alone" (pg 51). How is this philosophy practical? How is it impractical? Are there any rulers in history who had similar philosophies?
4. The Dark Lord ruled Pavol's family kingdom as a brutal tyrant after he killed the royal family (pg 71). What do you think his motive was in taking the kingdom? What strategy of ruling did he use?
5. What significance does Rashko fixing the trees that Paulek cut have in the remainder of the story (pg 104-106)?
6. Jedovaty, the donkey, talks to Pavol asking why they were going towards the dragon (pg 184-188). How would you feel if you were Pavol, knowing you would soon come face to face with a dragon?
7. As Pavol and Jedovaty climb the mountain to fight the dragon, there are many changes (pg 206-216). How do the characters maintain their focus and strength? How do you think this experience will change each character?
8. Pavol captures the seventh dragon and the treasure by allowing the dragon to keep the gold, if some is shared with Pavol and his (pg 237). How does Pavol keep this promise? How do his future descendants keep this agreement?

9. Pavol confronts and defeats the Dark Lord. He does not kill him (pg 252-260) How does this decision shape the future for Pavol and his descendants. How could a different reaction have changed the ending of the novel?
10. What is foreshadowed by Pavol warning the Dark Lord there would be no mercy if he (the Dark Lord) returns (pg 260)?
11. How does Rashko gain strength in the battle against Temny and his magic? (pg 300-321)
12. The ending of the book leaves room for interpretation to the future of Rashko, Paulek, and their princesses. (pg 329) What do you think will happen to each character in the future? Was this what you expected for them at the beginning of the book? The middle of the book? Why or why not?
13. What did you know about Slovakia when you began the novel? How has this information changed after completing the novel?
14. Did the chapters changing between time periods confuse you or was it helpful in understanding the history of the characters? Why?
15. Do you think Bruchac will write a sequel? If so, what would you suggest he include?

LITERARY LINKS or ACTIVITIES:

The Tapestry

A tapestry is a “heavy cloth woven with rich, often varicolored designs or scenes, usually hung on walls for decoration”. (Free Dictionary) In the book, the tapestry with shifting patterns holds secrets and tells the story in itself. What did you imagine the tapestry looked like?

1. Do an image search online for “tapestry” to gain a sense of what the tapestry in *Dragon Castle* could have looked like.
2. Go back into the book and reread passages about the tapestry.
3. Create an image of the tapestry. Include a note on what part of the story is being told and a note on the size/dimensions of the tapestry.

Language Arts (List activity and Common Core Standards Grades 6-8 addressed by each):

8.RI.3 Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g. through comparisons, analogies, or categories). *How does the author make comparisons between Rashko and Pavol throughout the story?*

8.RI.4/8.RL.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to

other texts. *Rashko's uncle, Jozef, commonly answers questions with stories, sayings or gestures. How do these stories contribute to the story? (Examples of the stories or sayings include:*

What do these foreshadow cesta being cesta (pg 45)

Let your teeth hold back your tongue (pg 76)

Why climb the tree when the apple is about to fall into your hand? (pg 87)
one must take slow steps on unfamiliar ground because it might prove to be a bog (pg 93)

There is no way to uncut a tree (pg 105)

It is better to believe the truth than to investigate it (pg 146)

Social Studies (List activity and Common Core Standards Grades 6-8 addressed by each):

8.RH.4 Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, casually). *How does the author use the combination of stories from Pavol and Rashko to develop the story? Is this method successful?*

Challenging Words (pronunciation, spelling, defining) (include chapter and/or page #):

cerulean (pg 1)

perusing (pg 2)

lissome (pg 2)

dismissive (pg 2)

parapet (pg 5)

aesthetic (pg 5)

principalities (pg 6)

calamity (pg 6)

besiegers (pg 7)

transient (pg 9)

supercilious (pg 12)

belies (pg 12)

foppish (pg 12)

imperious (pg 13)

emblazoned (pg 13)

palfrey (pg 13)

noisome (pg 17)

inexorable (pg 17)

unctuous (pg 19)

brooch (pg 17)

guileless (pg 20)

florid (pg 21)

diffident (pg 21)

obliterated (pg 24)

effulgence (pg 26)

glamoured (pg 28)

diadem (pg 31)

mastiff (pg 43)
insignias (pg 45)
formidable (pg 47)
deferential (pg 48)
baronies (pg 51)
embrasures (pg 54)
portcullis (pg 54)
mercenaries (pg 55)
formidable (pg 56)
gauntlet (pg 58)
vulpine (pg 58)
magnanimous (pg 58)
majordomo, (pg 62)
subserviently (pg 62)
contemptuous (pg 64)
décolletage (pg 65)
enigmatic (pg 75)
duplicitous (pg 76)
reticent (pg 88)
brandished (pg 88)
obtuseness (pg 91)
retinue (pg 91)
infatuation (pg 92)
cogitate (pg 108)
imminent (pg 127)
demise (pg 127)
behemoth (pg 131)
benevolent (pg 141)
enigmatic (pg 142)
charismatic (pg 149)
appurtenances (pg 151)
reticent (pg 160)
magnanimity (pg 161)
repast (pg 162)
surreptitiousness (pg 163)
errant (pg 165)
eldritch (pg 165)
innumerable (pg 165)
inexorably (pg 165)
impaled (pg 165)
aforementioned (pg 166)
prosaic (pg 166)
reverential (pg 168)
avaricious (pg 171)
ducal (pg 172)
incessant (pg 178)

interminable (pg 178)
indolent (pg 179)
recalcitrant (pg 179)
intrepid (pg 181)
jovial (pg 182)
leonine (pg 193)
transmogrified (pg 208)
palpable (pg 215)
emanate (pg 215)
piqued (pg 219)
surreptitiously (pg 226)
omniscient (pg 239)
interminable (pg 242)
sardonic (pg 267)
avaricious (pg 267)
nonchalantly (pg 274)
phalanx (pg 281)
dais (pg 285)
precipice (pg 296)
infinitesimally (pg 298)
coalesce (pg 303)
parry (pg 309)
riposte (pg 309)
fulmination (pg 311)
redolent (pg 317)
veracity (pg 330)
Slovak Vocabulary List included at the conclusion of the novel (pg 336-338)

Battle of the Book Questions available through the link on the Young Hoosier Book Award webpage.