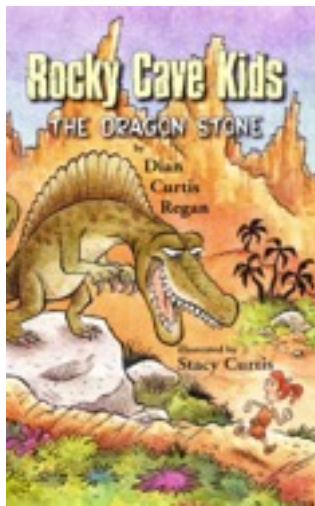


Curriculum Guide for *The Dragon Stone (Rocky Cave Kids)*

by Dian Curtis Regan

<http://www.rockycavekids.com>



"In this early chapter book with unexpected depth, Miggy experiences an ethical dilemma when she wonders if it is right to keep (the Dragon Stone's) power to herself." ~ Kirkus Review

Summary: Miggy, who lives near Rocky Creek in Triassic Forest with the rest of her Clan, finds a rare dragon stone that must be kept a secret lest it lose its magical powers.

About the Author: Dian Curtis Regan, author of over 50 books for children, reports: "I carried the idea of Rocky Cave Kids around with me for a long time. I'd wanted it to be a picture book about a cave girl and her little brother who draws on the walls of the cave.

"But sometimes story ideas grow into different formats. In this case, I discovered Miggy had a friend. And another and another. The idea outgrew a picture book format and began to take shape as a chapter book about a group of friends--and Miggy's little brother, of course, who still draws on the walls of his cave.

"Growing up, I adored books that featured a map so readers could physically follow the adventures. Therefore, I was pleased when I was asked to create one. Thank you to Stacy Curtis for taking my map and making it look so good."

Reading Connections

Before Reading: Increase background knowledge.

Make text-text connections. Tell students that *The Dragon Stone* is *fantasy* and ask them to define the word *fantasy* using a Frayer Model.

(Download Frayer Model separately by clicking on the back cover of the book at <http://diancurtisregan.com/freecurriculumguides.html>)

Then ask, "How can you tell by looking at the cover that this story is fantasy?" (Dinosaurs and people did not exist simultaneously—a fact that is noted on the book's website, <http://www.rockycavekids.com> .)

During Reading: Make Predictions

Pause throughout the reading and ask students to predict what will happen next.

After Reading: Discuss

Chapter 1: A GOOD SPOT TO SPY

- Why did Miggy's friends move during the warm months? Why didn't Miggy's family?
- How did Miggy feel when she learned that a Spinosaurus had been spotted? How would you feel if you discovered a Spinosaurus had wandered into your neighborhood?

Chapter 2: DON'T TELL

- What did Miggy think she might wish for when she found the dragon stone? What would you wish for?
- Why didn't Miggy tell Stone about the dragon stone?

Chapter 3: DANGER ON THE PATH

- Uncle Flint said this:
Lucky Once
Danger Twice
Lucky Twice
Paradise
What do you think this means?

Chapter 4: SCARY AND NOT SCARY ANIMALS

- Why did Twig shriek and Woolly run away? What did they think was happening?
- Do you think the kids will see a Spinosaurus? If so, who do you think will be the first? Why?

Chapter 5: A CLOSE CALL

- Have you ever named anything? How did you choose the name?
- What do you think happened to Miggy's pouch?

Chapter 6: FOUND AND LOST

- Why was Miggy visiting the pond at the worst time of day?
- Why was Miggy quiet when she caught up with Stone?

Chapter 7: WILLOW AND CROW

- Why does Miggy predict that all the girls in Rocky Creek will be wearing bone necklaces?
- Old Tanner makes a drum from a log and animal hide, a rain stick using a hollow stick and sunflower seeds, and a flute from a mammoth's tusk. What might you make a musical instrument from in prehistoric times?

Chapter 8: THE SECRET SEARCH

- Why does Miggy think, "Oh feathers!" when seeing the eggs in the nest?
- What do you think will happen next?

Chapter 9: SHOCK AND AWE

- What is the meaning of the word *flying* in this sentence: “Instantly two more raptors came flying through the forest”? How can you tell from the story that raptors can’t fly?

Chapter 10: TRAPPED

- What does it mean to be *prey*?
- Both Stone and Miggy have whistles. Why?

Chapter 11: A TINY, FUZZY SPIN

- Like Miggy, have you ever been distracted from your responsibilities? What happened?
- What do you think has happened to Toad?

Chapter 12: TOAD TROUBLES

- What is another name for a *snare*? A *dagger*? What does the word *detouring* mean?
- Do you think it was right for Miggy to keep the stone’s power to herself? Why or why not?

Chapter 13: THE FESTIVAL

- What are *wares*? What is a spit above a *fire*?
- At the end of the chapter, Miggy pats the stone and makes a wish. Do you think this is the same type of wish made on the dragon stone as the other two wishes? Why or why not?

Chapter 14: BONE NECKLACES

- Why do you think that Miggy is thinking about the Grannies?
- Do you think the earth shuddering was caused by a Spin? Why or why not?

Chapter 15: A STICKY SITUATION

- Why did Miggy have to choose her wishing words carefully?
- What do you think she’ll wish for in the next chapter?

Chapter 16: THE POWER OF THE STONE

- Do you think Flora knew that Miggy put her stone in the basket? Why or why not?
- Do you think Miggy made the right decision in giving her stone away?

Chapter 17: THE GRANNIES' BLESSING

- Why do you think that the Grannies gave Miggy the beaded cuff?
- Do you think Miggy will tell about the dragon stone when she shares her story? Why or why not?

Response to literature: Journal

Suggest students choose one of the following topics for their journal entry:

1. Have you ever imagined that an object had magic powers? If so, write about your experience.
2. Where do you think dragon stones come from? Write a “scientific explanation” for the existence of dragon stones.
3. If you found the dragon stone, what would you wish for? Write a blessing that includes your wishes similar to this one by the Grannies:

*Chicken bone, secret stone
Twig on pine, grapefruit rind
Cat's claw, granny's shawl*

*Abundant rain in our domain
Streams of fishes, brimming dishes
Clan of wealth, clan of health*

*Protect our home from creatures' claws
From pointed teeth and mighty jaws*

4. Think of another story that involved wishes. Draw a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the stories.
5. Create a map of an imaginary setting. Label your map. Perhaps you'll be inspired to write your own story!

Writing Connections

Traits: *The Dragon Stone* makes an excellent mentor text. Use this story to model:

Ideas: Explode the Moment: Remind students that fine writing includes quality details -- details that help the reader experience the story. Author Dian Curtis Regan could have written: "Miggy went to the pond to find her pouch, but it wasn't there." However, the writing would not have been nearly as satisfying as chapter 8 which lets us hear the rattle of Miggy's walnut bracelet, feel the sun on our face, or taste a just-picked apple. Reread chapter 8 as an example of moving slowly to "explode the moment." Then invite students to choose sections of their own writing to slow down and share important detail.

Organization: Dialogue: Young writers love to use dialogue, but often have difficulty executing it successfully. Project a selection of dialogue from *The Dragon Stone* such as this excerpt from page 41:

"Oh my feathers!" Miggy cried.

"Did you see that?" Stone said, touching her arm. He was shaking. "They aren't going to eat us after all."

Point out the following:

1. Ms. Regan begins a new line (with indentation) whenever a new character speaks.
2. The author includes tags: "Miggy cried," and "Stone said," to help us know who is talking.
3. Dialogue isn't idle chitchat; it either tells us more about the characters (Stone was afraid) or it moves the plot forward (dinosaurs are not going to eat them).

Encourage students to remember these points when writing their own dialogue.

Word choice: Similes: Tell students that a simile helps the reader to visualize by creating a comparison using the words "like" or "as." Explore some of the similes in *The Dragon Stone*:

- *Excitement wiggled inside of Miggy like the dancing flames. (pg. 1)*
- *Her heart soared as high as the chitter birds (pg.8)*
- *Her excitement drooped like the tail of a dead squirrel (pg. 9)*

- *His face was as pale as the rocks* (pg. 12)
- *Twig sniffed the air like a wolf* (pg. 15)
- *These woods were as familiar as the inside of their family caves.* (pg. 24)
- *...lighting the inside of the cave like a basket of fireflies.* (pg. 29)
- *Miggy stood in awe as she studied the thin spine: rising like a giant leaf in the middle of the creature' back.* (pg. 65)

Conventions: Proper Nouns: Ask students to look at the words *mog* and *pog*. When are they common nouns and when are they proper nouns? Use the words in a sentence to demonstrate the difference:

Miggy and her mog walked to the pond.

“Do you want me to take care of Toad, Mog?” asked Miggy.

Remind students that proper nouns are capitalized.

Plural Possessives: Have students examine the title to chapter 17, *The Grannies' Blessing*. Discuss both the spelling of *grannies*, and the reason why the apostrophe comes after the s.

Curriculum Connections

Science and Technology

Friends in *The Dragon Stone* play “Triassic Trivia.” Invite your students to do the same. Have them research the Triassic Period and record facts to quiz one another on their knowledge. In particular, encourage them to learn more about the spinosaurus (spine lizard) and the velociraptor (swift seizer).

Or

Compare the weather lore in *The Dragon Stone* to our own weather lore. For example, in the text we learn that, according to the Grannies, if sunlight shone on the annual blessing, it was an omen

that good luck and good hunting would be with the clan for a year. Ask students to collect weather proverbs such as:

Red sky at night, sailors delight

Red sky at morning sailors take warning

No dew on the grass at night is a sign of rain

When cows are lying on the ground, the rain shall soon be coming down.

Which expressions are backed by science? What is the science behind them?

Music

In chapter 7, Old Tanner stretched hides over hollow logs to make drums, Wooly made a rain stick out of a hollow stick and sunflower seeds, and Twig played a flute carved from a mammoth's tusk. Suggest that students choose one of these instruments and research its origins. How has the instrument changed over time?

Or

Using a keyboard or xylophone, invite students to write music for the song Miggy made up:

Summer is coming to an end.

I make music with my friends.

Suggest that students record the notes after they have composed.

Art

Willow and her mother make necklaces from the nature that surrounds them. Suggest that students draw designs of jewelry or other sculpture (or actually construct pieces) from nature that's indigenous to their surroundings. If your students reside in urban neighborhoods, ask,

"What's free and available around us?" Show them images of jewelry and sculpture made from aluminum can tags, gum wrappers, plastic bottles and magazine pages.

Teaching Guide created by **Jennifer Richard Jacobson**

Jennifer received her master's in education from Harvard Graduate School of Education. She has taught preschool through sixth grade and has served as Curriculum Coordinator, Head of Studies, or Language Arts Specialist in several new England schools. As a continuing author-in-residence and educational consultant, Jennifer has worked with thousands of teachers and administrators to help students reach their highest potential. She is the author of *No More "I'm Done!" Fostering Independent Writers in the Primary Grades* as well as many books for young readers including the award-winning *Small as an Elephant*, *Winnie at her Best*, and the popular *Andy Shane* series.