

The Rescuers



By
Margery Sharp

A Novel Study
by Nat and Joel Reed

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About the Authors: Joel Reed has authored over 70 published novel studies and four novels. Nat Reed, a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years, served as a full-time instructor at Trent University's Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on their work and literature, please visit www.reednovelstudies.com.

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Suggestions and Expectations

Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one or two chapters of *The Rescuers* and is comprised of four distinct sections:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (page 7) as well as a **Checklist** (page 6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to:

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases... including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story... **and many others.**

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include courage and heroism, duty and responsibility, personal growth, class and privilege, the conflict of good and evil.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Identify *similes*
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *anagrams*
7. Listing compound words
8. Identifying parts of speech
9. Identify *personification*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Five W's and an H Chart
4. Create a synopsis
5. Identify the climax of the novel

Character Activities

1. Determine perspectives
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experience
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Create a journal entry
9. Opinion writing

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a movie poster
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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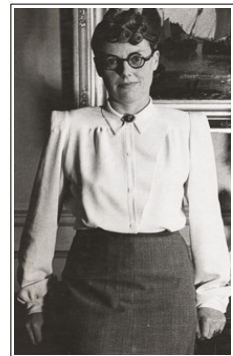
Synopsis

Bianca and Bernard, agents for The Prisoners' Aid Society of Mice, rescue prisoners and outwit villains in this enchanting story, made world-famous by the Walt Disney film. The Prisoners' Aid Society of Mice discusses the proposed rescue of a Norwegian poet from the terrible Black Castle. Miss Bianca, the pet white mouse belonging to the Ambassador's son, is sent to Norway on a mission to recruit the bravest Norwegian mouse she can find. She finds Nils, and brings him back triumphantly. Then she, Nils, and Bernard, a pantry mouse who falls in love with her, set off for the Black Castle. They set up home in a mousehole in the Chief Jailer's room, and narrowly avoid the jaws of Mamelouk the cruel Persian cat. Eventually they trick the cat and the jailer, and get into the prisoner's cell. A dramatic rescue via an underground river, and they are all free – and the Nils and Miss Bianca Medal for Bravery is struck in the mice's honour! [Courtesy of the Publisher]

Author Biography

Margery Sharp

Margery Sharp was born Clara Margery Melita Sharp in Salisbury, England and spent part of her childhood in Malta. Sharp wrote 26 novels, 14 children's stories, 4 plays, 2 mysteries and many short stories. She is best known for her series of children's books about a little white mouse named Miss Bianca and her companion, Bernard. Two Disney films have been made based on them, called *The Rescuers* and *The Rescuers Down Under*. In 1938, she married Major Geoffrey Castle, an aeronautical engineer. [Courtesy of goodreads.com]



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Student Checklist

Student Name _____

[illegible]

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Name: _____

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Chapter 1



Before you read this section:

The **protagonist** of *The Rescuers* is Miss Bianca, a sophisticated and elegant white mouse. Do you think it would be more (or less) challenging for an author to have an animal as the protagonist of a book rather than a person? Defend your answer.



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

conspicuous	capitulate	eloquence	contemplate
bung	defeatist	gallant	compatriot

1. When the battle began to go badly, the Scottish army decided to _____.
2. I'm afraid I will have to _____ for a time before making a decision.
3. Sir Lancelot was the most _____ of knights.
4. Barney tried not to be too _____, but this was difficult for a purple dinosaur.
5. Ella cheered loudly as her _____ in the games won the gold medal.
6. Someone with a _____ attitude is starting off on the wrong foot.
7. His _____ was compared to the great orators of his day.
8. A _____ is a stopper which closes the hole of a container.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One?

2. What is mentioned in the first two paragraphs as something that everyone knew about mice?

3. Describe the great task that the chairwoman proposed to the other mice.

4. What did she say would be the first step in this enterprise? Why was this necessary?

5. Why was Miss Bianca suggested for this mission?

6. What reservations were expressed regarding the chairwoman's choice?

7. Why Was Bernard chosen to fetch Miss Bianca?

Language Activities



A. Alliteration

Many authors enjoy using **alliteration** – a literary device where the author repeats the same sound at the beginning of several words. Alliteration is usually seen as a series of words beginning with the same consonant (i.e. *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers*). The following from this section also serves as an example: ... *finally a short, sturdy young mouse tramped up towards the platform*.



Using your imagination, create your own examples of **alliteration** from the following topics. Each example must contain a minimum of three words.

A piece of cheese.	
Fingernails on chalkboard.	
Your choice.	

B. The Good Old Indispensable Adverb!



An **adverb** is a part of speech defined as *a modifier (or helper) of a verb* (usually an action word). Often an adverb will end in the letters **ly** (i.e. **slowly**). Our novel features a good many creative adverbs.

1. *"Perhaps he writes free verse," she suggested cunningly.*

→ In this sentence, which verb does **cunningly** modify? _____

2. *"And did no good there," continued the old hero gravely.*

→ In this sentence, what verb does **gravely** modify? _____

3. *... back to the many poets who have written favorably of our race.*

→ In this sentence the adverb _____ modifies the verb _____

C. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in this section of *The Rescuers*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
castle		Sports footwear.
framed		Tilled the land.
rules		Attracts. (Or used by fishermen.)
seat		A direction.
seated		To calm, quiet or tranquilize.
plate		Jumped.
hears		___ and ___ alike.

D. Research ~ Norway

The country of Norway plays quite a significant role in the coming pages. Norway is a most fascinating nation and is known as both *the land of the midnight sun* and *home to the northern lights*. It was once home to the feared vikings and is presently home to the world's longest road tunnel. Using resources in your school library or on the Internet, research three additional facts about Norway and record them below.



1	
2	
3	

E. Caviar Words

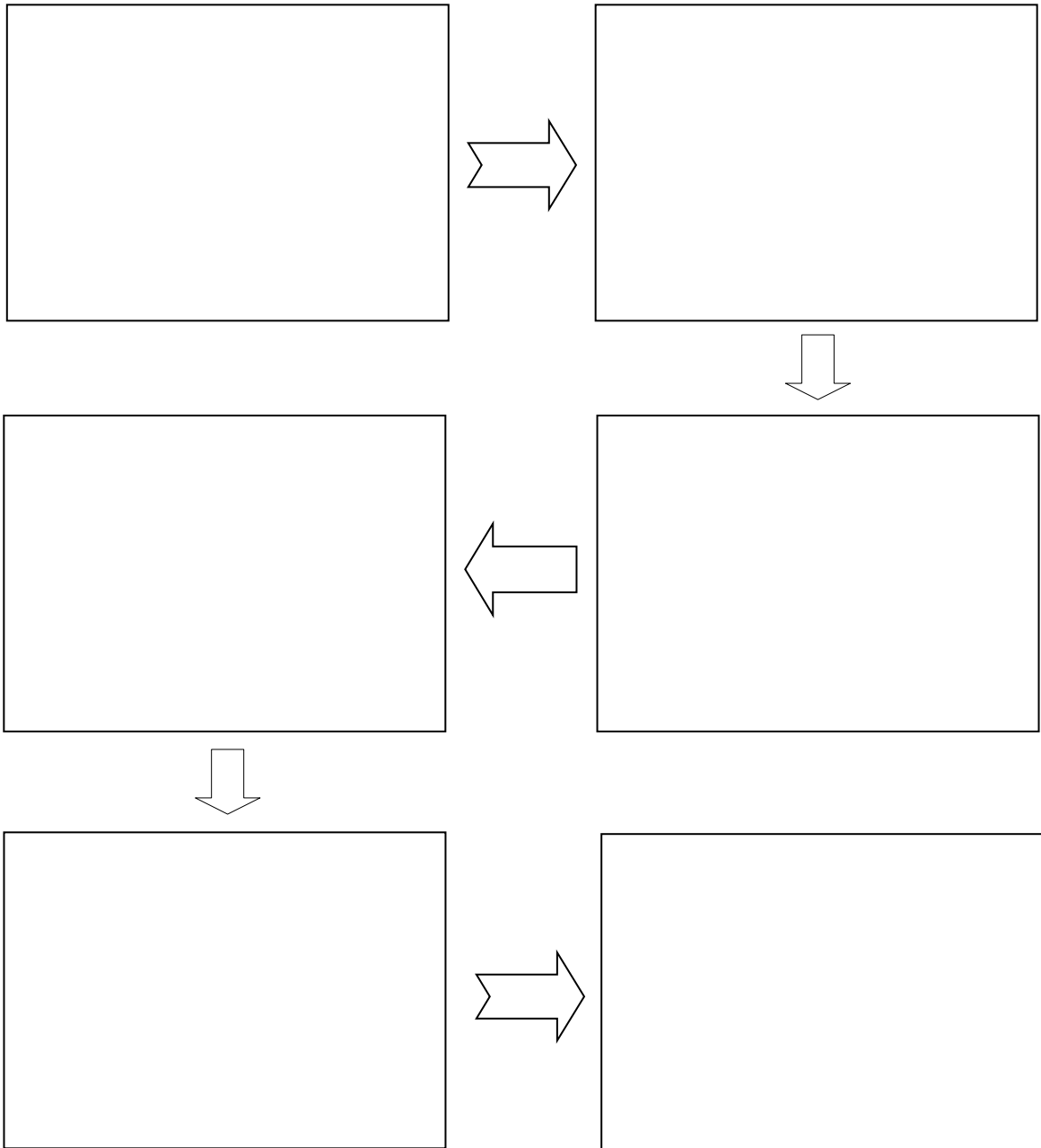
The author of this novel is noted for her use of elegant, tasteful words. Someone once stated that some words have the sound of **caviar** (rich and elegant) and others are more are common (**peanut butter** words). With a colleague come up with 6 examples of each type of word. You may use any chapter of the novel to find these words.



Caviar Words	Peanut Butter Words

F. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in this section. In each of the six boxes below list the six events that you have chosen, describing what happened and telling why you consider this to be an essential part of the story.



Extension Activity



A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words

Use the three boxes to describe and illustrate the beginning, middle and end of this section.



Beginning Picture:	Beginning:
Middle Picture	Middle:
Concluding Picture:	Concluding: