



The Book of Learning

E.R. Murray | ISBN: 978 1 78117 362 6 | €9.99 | 352 Pages

The exciting adventures of Ebony Smart, a twelve-year-old girl who discovers she is part of a special tribe of reincarnated people – and a terrible curse. Ebony has just one week to break the curse or die; if she fails, the future of her family, and her people, is at risk – does she have what it takes to succeed?

ENGLISH

Pg10: Creative: A simile is a comparison using the words like as or than. Have a look at the following simile on Page 10 of *The Book of Learning*: Ebony's grief 'ricocheted into the pristine corridors where it rattled like a ball bearing.' Discuss: What is being compared here? Why is this effective? Which of the senses does it evoke? Make some of your own similes using sound.

Pg11: Diary writing: Imagine that you are in Ebony's situation, her grandpa has just died. Discuss/brainstorm: How would you have reacted? What emotions are expressed? What would you write in your diary? Then, write your diary entry.

Pg11: Creative: "...hair flooded his face with thick black curls, like seaweed trapped at the shore." What poetic technique is being used here? What two things are being compared? What comparison word is being used? How does this differ from the previous simile? What sense is being evoked to compare?

Pg26: Descriptive: Describe how Ebony Smart felt waiting outside 23

Mercury Lane for the first time. List some of the emotions.

Pg26: Comparison: Contrast Ebony's feelings about living at home vs living in the city. What words are used to describe the settings to show you her feelings towards home and towards her new home?

Pg26: Graphic Novel: Using this chapter as your inspiration, create a graphic novel version of Ebony's first visit to Dublin.

Pg45: Acronyms: Do you know what DNA stands for? Can you name some other very common acronyms?

Pg117: Media Studies: 'Mysterious Murder in Mercury Lane.' Discuss what makes a good headline – consider alliteration as an effective technique. Read out other sections/stories and ask students to come up with possible headlines.

Pg224: Functional Writing: Ebony receives a postcard from Old Joe. Using old postcards, imagine what a person visiting that place might

have been doing during their holiday. In character, write a postcard home describing your holiday.

Pg291: Creative: Imagine you are Ebony: how do you feel as the hand grabs yours and you see Cedric the shark coming towards you? Use the five senses to convey your emotions.

Pg342, Pg349: Prediction: The story ends with all the different versions of Ebony coming together. The last line seems to suggest they have disappeared for good: do you think we will meet them again in the next two books of the trilogy and why?

General: Comparison: Comparing to other texts you've read. What's similar, different, does it remind you of anything or do the characters remind you of any others? Texts can include plays, novels, movies, poetry.

General: Discussion: Give judgements on main characters, do you think they made the right choices etc., give judgements on key scenes and favourite scenes.

READING PROGRAM

NOTES FOR TEACHERS



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General: Imagery: In what scenes is strong imagery used and how does it help the reader to picture and feel the scene? How does it aid the reader's imagination?

IRISH

Pg26: Irish County Names: Find the origin of county names: e.g. Dublin = Dubh Linn = Black Pool.

Pg272: Islands of Ireland: Gallows Island is a fictional name but Roaring Water Bay in West Cork has lots of islands situated in its waters. With the help of your Atlas, locate some of the Irish names of islands in that area.

SCIENCE

Pg5: Nature: There are lots of wooded areas included in The Book of Learning: Investigate different trees around your school grounds and take leaf rubbings.

Pg12: Speed: Investigate how speed is measured and see how fast you can run.

Pg69: Nature: The head of a Marlin was mounted on the wall in Uncle Cornelius's study; research the different types of fish found in the Atlantic off the coast of Ireland.

Pg148: Blood Pressure: Different methods are used to tell if somebody is lying, such as a change in blood pressure. Record your heartbeat at rest and after exercise to see if it changes.

Pg233: Nature: Research the role that Natural History Museums

played in understanding the natural world. Visit the museum and locate the species mentioned in the book.

GEOGRAPHY

Pg7: Map Work: Find Swaziland on your Atlas and research its landscape. What would you like to visit if you went there? Design a tourism poster enticing people to visit!

Pg26: Irish County Names: Find the origin of county names: e.g. Dublin = Dubh Linn = Black Pool.

Pg102: Map Work: Work with a partner to create your own treasure hunt! Hide some clues, draw your own treasure map and then swap with another team – will you be able to follow the clues?

Pg103: Map Work: Locate St Stephen's Green on a map. Research one of Dublin's most famous parks.

Pg110: Buildings: National Library of Ireland: Research one of Ireland's oldest libraries.

Pg217: Map Work: Locate The Botanic Gardens on a map. Research one of Dublin's most famous parks.

HISTORY

Pg27: 23 Mercury Lane is a Georgian building; research the special features of buildings in Georgian Ireland.

Pg42: Druids: See if you can find out some information about druids

– research stories, architecture, ruins. Then see if you can locate any history of druids in your local area. If there were no druids in your area, find the closest town you can nearby.

Pg42: Freemasons: See what you can find out about this secret society – when did it start? Who could join? What was its function? Does it still exist today?

Pg59: 'The history of the world is built on stories.' Read some ancient Irish myths and discuss how you think they are relevant to modern life.

Pg103: The statue of The Three Fates at the entrance of St Stephen's Green was a gift from a German President, 'with gratitude for the help given to German children by the Irish people after World War II.' Find out more about the role Ireland had to play in helping German children.

Pg117: Look at some old newspapers – how does the news and advertisements compare to a modern newspaper?

Pg275: Ebony remembers an old song that her grandpa used to sing – 'Mackerel skies and horses tails, Moor your boats and lower the sails'. Interview members of your family and the local community to find some traditional songs and sayings linked to the weather in your local area.

SPHE

Pg105: Introductions/Making friends: What are the common greetings / topics of conversation?

READING PROGRAM

NOTES FOR TEACHERS



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Pg126: Ebony can sense Winston's mood and knows he is afraid. What are some of the signs you can look out for in a friend if they are concerned /upset by something?

Pg148: Ebony thanks Zach for giving her an honest answer – is there any situation when it's OK to lie? Is honesty always the best policy?

Pg158: Ebony Smart kept the amulet secret. Do you think she was right to do so? How do you decide what secrets to keep and when you need to tell someone something?

DRAMA

Pg5: News Reporter: Imagine you are working for RTÉ: do a live TV report on the incident. Choose another scene from the book to report on.

Pg 5: Performance: Perform the opening line in as many different ways as you can think of – convey different emotions, moods.

Pg60: Animal Antics: how does Winston communicate without being able to talk? Imagine yourself as various different animals and use your body to mimic how they might communicate.

Pg282–7: Chase Scene: In pairs, create and act out a chase scene like that with Ebony and Mulligan. Remember to use facial expression and body language to convey emotion.

ART

Pg26: Drawing: Using this chapter as your inspiration, sketch a

charcoal drawing of Ebony's first visit to Dublin.

Pg35: Design: Imagine you were going exploring – design your own utility belt containing everything you'd need.

Pg38: Sculpture: Using clay, design a model of the Ebonius Tobinius rose.

Pg62/63: Portrait: Draw or sketch a portrait of Uncle Cornelius.

Pg89: Design: Uncle Cornelius had special letter-headed paper – design a logo for your name.

Pg117: Drawing: Create a villain and design a Wanted poster.

Pg311: Drawing: From the description in the book, sketch a picture of what you think the Reflectory might look like. Design your own version.

MATHS

Pg15: Crack the Code: The N1NE L1VE5 number plate has numbers in the place of letters: make up your own code system and write a message to your partner. See if they can crack the code. (You might need to give a couple of clues to help them)

Pg114: Number Riddles: There is a number riddle in *The Book of Learning* that reveals Ebony's fate if she does not break the curse. Look up some other number riddles and see if you can find the answers!

P.E.

Pg12: Speed: Investigate how speed is measured and see how fast you can run.

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READING PROGRAM NOTES FOR TEACHERS



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NOTES

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