

MacArthur Fundamental Intermediate School

The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle

by Janet Fox

8th Grade Summer Reading Activity

Name: _____ ID: _____

During the 2023 Summer Break, all continuing 8th graders will read *The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle* by Janet Fox. The following response questions are designed to help guide readers through the overall comprehension of the novel as well as focus their understanding on important details such as story elements and literary devices.

All packets will be collected at the start of the 2023-24 school year by each student's ELA teacher. In addition to the packet, students will be provided with the opportunity to take an Accelerated Reader Quiz. Completing this packet correctly and passing the AR Quiz with a 70% or higher would help ensure a successful beginning to their MacArthur 8th Grade ELA class for the 2023 - 2024 school year.

Students, please be sure that your work is completed correctly and meets or exceeds the following expectations.

Each response should:

- be legible (readable)
- be written in complete sentences

(include capitalization, punctuation, etc.)

- be 2 - 3 sentences in length
- use examples and/or quotes from the text (textual evidence)
- make connections when possible

(include your thoughts, emotions and/or ideas)

The first question for each section of reading is an open-ended question based on your personal experiences. Completing this question first will help prepare you for the content of the reading.

Then, there will be three text dependent questions, based specifically on the story elements of the book (setting, character, point of view/perspective, plot and theme). Please know that it will help to read the questions before beginning each section in order to know what to read for.

For additional information as well as supplemental resources, please visit

<http://rookskillcastle.com/>

The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle

Chapters 1 - 7

Personal Connection – The book begins with an illustration and a definition of a *chatelaine* - a metal hoop and chain designed to keep commonly used tools organized and accessible.

Imagine you wore a chatelaine. What would you wear on it? Why?

Chapter 2 - London, Fall 1940 : The Blitz

The Bateson family is preparing for change in an effort to keep safe during World War II. The children are being sent to Rookskill Castle for school while their father, a clockmaker, is making his own plans.

Based on what he says and what he does, what other job do you think their father has? Explain your opinion.

Chapter 4 - *The Number 13*

Who is Peter Williams? Where is he from? What is his reason for traveling to Rookskill Castle?

How would you describe Peter? What character traits would you use? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

Chapter 7 - *The Fishing Girl*

Before Kat left London, her Great-Aunt Margaret gave her the gift of a chatelaine.

What 3 items are attached to it? What information did Great-Aunt Margaret share with Kat about the origin and purpose of each?

The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle

Chapters 8 - 17

Personal Connection – Through flashbacks, readers begin to learn more about Leonore, her life and her desire to have a child of her own - a desire so strong that she is willing to make sacrifices.

Have you ever wanted anything so badly? Was getting what you wanted worth whatever sacrifice you made?

Chapter 9 - *The Secret Room*

Peter, Kat, Rob and Amelie discuss the discovery of a secret room. This leads to an exploration and examination of what else Rookskill Castle may be hiding.

What is the castle like? What descriptive language (adjectives, similes, etc.) does the author use to help you visualize it? What sights do the children see? What sounds do they hear?

Chapter 11 - Ghosts

Peter, Kat, Rob and Amelie have begun seeing other children throughout the castle.

Who are these children? Why do Peter, Rob and Amelie believe these children are ghosts? Why does Kat insist that there must be some other explanation for their appearance?

Chapter 14 - Chatelaine

Other children have arrived at Rookskill Castle. Name the 3 new students. Use character traits to give a brief description of each.

The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle

Chapters 18 - 24

Personal Connection – Leonore finds that with every sacrifice she makes she is slowly becoming something other than herself. She starts to feel regret and remorse for what she has done and what she has become.

Have you ever said or done something you thought would be in your best interest only to find that it was not? How did this make you feel about what you had said or done? Did you find that this changed you in any way?

Chapter 18 - *The Third and Fourth Charms: The Boot and the Chest*

The magister is a mysterious figure who gave Leonore the gift of her chatelaine. What was his reason for doing so? What is the magister's purpose for helping Leonore?

Chapter 19 - Wish Upon A Star

When revisiting the secret room, Peter and Kat contemplate the idea that there may be a German Nazi spy in the castle.

What has given them this idea? What do they know that supports this theory?

Chapter 23 - *The Lost Souls*

The charmed children are described in greater detail. Identify each of them. Be sure to include an example of textual evidence used to describe each one.

The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle

Chapters 25 - 33

Personal Connection – Kat watches helplessly as additional children become charmed. She is both overwhelmed by fear as much as she is driven by determination to help them.

Share a time when you have also been overwhelmed as well as determined. How were you able to overcome whatever was holding you back?

Chapter 26 - Children

In time, Kat learns that Cook and Hugo have also been working to help the children.

What are some of the ways they have been trying to care for them and protect them?

Chapter 29 - Exhaustion

Lady Leonore serves the children hot chocolate every night - a special treat in the context of World War II when luxuries like chocolate were almost impossible to find.

But the children find that there are side effects to their nightly treat. What happens to the children after they drink the hot chocolate? What do they become aware of once they stop drinking it?

Chapter 32 - Punishment

There are two arrivals at Rookskill Castle - one of a person, another of a very important message.

Who is the person that has arrived at the castle? What is the reason for their visit?

What is the message that arrives at the castle? How does it get there? Explain its importance.

The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle

Chapters 34 - 42

Personal Connection – The children begin to question the existence of magic, both light and dark. Kat, always known to be dependable and logical, seems to struggle with this idea the most.

What is something you have struggled to believe in? Why do you think it was challenging to have faith in this?

Chapter 35 - *The Cave by the Sea*

Kat shares what she knows about the mysterious figure she has seen wandering throughout the castle and its grounds. Rob, seeing this figure, decides to pursue it and discovers a cave by the sea.

What does he find in the cave and why are these items of significance? What conclusion do the children draw about the mysterious figure based on what Rob has found?

Chapter 38 - *The Case of Plato*

The instructors at Rookskill Castle are highly skilled and typically quite organized. However, they begin to act in ways that are out of character.

Describe how Ms. Gumble and Mr. MacLarren divert from their traditional lessons. What assignments do they give the children instead?

Chapter 39 - *Hand* & Chapter 42 - *The Perfect Heart*

Magic is beginning to take a toll on all the children in general but on Kat in particular.

Describe what is happening to Kat. What is she afraid this will lead to?

The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle

Chapters 43 - 49

Personal Connection – Peter and Kat decide that the time has come to place their trust in one of the adults at the castle. They have thought it through carefully and have selected someone they believe who can and will be willing to help them.

Who is someone you have put your trust in? What was it about this person that made you feel you could confide in them? Use character traits to describe them.

Chapter 44 - ~~Spies~~

Keep Calm and Carry On was a motivational poster produced by the British/English government in 1939 as the country prepared for World War II. The hope was that it would help raise the spirits of the British/English people as they were being threatened with mass air attacks by German Nazis.

What influence does this saying have on the children in general? What impact does it have on Kat in particular?

Chapter 46 - Spies and Magic

Ms. Gumble and Mr. MacLarren are becoming an important part of the children's investigation of the castle.

What does Kat learn about her instructors? Why is this information important to her understanding of who they are and what they may be able to do to help them?

Chapter 49 - Wolves

Peter and Kat find themselves trapped in a dangerous situation when they go on a mission to try to save some of the charmed children. Scared and desperate, Kat decides to utilize the chatelaine.

How is Kat able to gain control of the chatelaine? What does she say or do? What does the chatelaine do to help save her, Peter and Rob?

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Chapters 50 - 57

Personal Connection – All Hallow's Eve, or Halloween, is believed to be based on *Samhain*, a Gaelic harvest festival. It is a recognition of those who have died and departed as well as a celebration of the changing of the seasons - from light (*fall*) to dark (*winter*).

How does this element of time (and what you know of it) affect the mood of the story for you?

Chapter 53 - *Witch*

From the start, Kat has been wary of Lady Eleanor, her identity and her plan. One by one, the other children have become suspicious as well.

Who or what is Lady Eleanor really? Who was she before she became who or what she is now?

Chapter 54 - *Pen, Scissors, Thimble*

Peter and Kat finally find and meet Lord Gregor Craig, the owner of the castle and Kat's distant relative. Unfortunately, he is confined to his bed and cannot be of much help to them. He does, however, share some important information about Lady Eleanor and her plan for the children.

What does Lord Craig tell Peter and Kat about Lady Eleanor? What impact does this information have on them?

Chapter 55 - *The Witch's Mark*

Lady Eleanor's life has been an unhappy one for many years. In a confrontation with Kat, she reveals her motivations for what she is doing.

What does Lady Eleanor want? Why does she want it so desperately? What role do the charmed children play in her plan?

The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle

Chapters 58 - 67

Personal Connection – Rob calls Kat “stodgy” numerous times - a word that can mean serious and close minded. Throughout the course of the book, Kat’s character evolves and she learns to blend her logic and skill with resourcefulness.

When have you had to try to solve a problem in a new or different way? How did this affect your mindset moving forward?

Chapter 61 - Scattered Pieces

Because of Kat, Lady Eleanor begins to change.

Describe what is happening to the lady. Why is it happening? What does Kat say or do to cause this?

Chapter 63 - *The Thimble*

A thimble is a metal “cap” worn over the tip of a finger to protect it when sewing. Yet, it is this very small and seemingly unimportant item that saves the children as well as everyone in the castle.

Describe how this object is utilized and what it is ultimately used for.

Chapter 66 - *The Well*


In the end, although she has always dreamed of a fairy tale life, Lady Eleanor does not have a happy ending.

What becomes of her? How is the situation with the Nazi spy resolved? What other resolutions are reached or achieved?

Chapter 66 - *The Well*

Throughout the course of the book, Kat learns many things about herself as well as the people in her life and the world around her.

Name one of the lessons Kat learns and explain how it has changed who she is.

Please use this list as a resource. Feel free to use other character traits that may not be included here.		
<u>Character Traits</u>		
Ability		
<u>Positive Connotation</u>		<u>Negative Connotation</u> 
alert	industrious	aggressive
amusing	insightful	clumsy
artistic	intelligent	cruel
athletic	inventive	dangerous
assertive	mighty	foolish
bright	patient	frail
brilliant	powerful	helpless
careful	reliable	ignorant
clever	responsible	incompetent
creative	resourceful	impaired
coordinated	sensible	irresponsible
conscientious	skillful	mean
dependable	smart	messy
energetic	strong	naughty
funny	talented	powerless
entertaining	tender	restless
gentle	tough	rough
graceful	trustworthy	rowdy
humorous	virtuous	unreliable
imaginative		vindictive
		violent
		weak
		weary

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Character Traits

Attitude

<u>Positive Connotation</u>		<u>Negative Connotation</u>	
adventurous	eager	annoying	lazy
affectionate	gallant	arrogant	malicious
ambitious	generous	belligerent	manipulative
attentive	gentle	bewildered	mischievous
aware	glamorous	boring	miserable
bold	grateful	bossy	obnoxious
brave	happy	careless	pessimistic
calm	helpful	callous	picky
cautious	honest	combative	proud
charming	hopeful	cowardly	reckless
cheerful	independent	cruel	rowdy
cooperative	inquisitive	decisive	rude
confident	kind	defiant	selfish
considerate	loving	demanding	silly
courageous	loyal	dishonest	shy
curious	noble	disrespectful	skeptical
daring	optimistic	embarrassed	spoiled
determined	patient	envious	stingy
dutiful	pleasant	fearless	suspicious
eager	polite	foolish	thoughtless
efficient	proper	grouchy	timid
energetic	studious	grumpy	wicked
enthusiastic	thoughtful	impatient	
fair	vivacious	inconsiderate	
faithful	warm	irrational	
friendly	wise	jealous	