BUILD SKILLS

The Bear Boy • Rikki-tikki-tavi

READING SKILL

Predicting means making an intelligent guess about what will happen next in a story based on details in the text. You can also use prior knowledge to make predictions. For example, if a character in a story sees dark clouds, you can predict that there will be a storm because you know from prior knowledge that dark clouds often mean stormy weather.

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Plot is the related sequence of events in a short story and other works of fiction. A plot has the following elements:

- Exposition: introduction of the setting, the characters, and the basic situation
- Rising Action: events that introduce a conflict, or struggle, and increase the tension
- Climax: the story’s high point, at which the eventual outcome becomes clear
- Falling Action: events that follow the climax
- Resolution: the final outcome and tying up of loose ends

Fill in the lines of this chart to show the plot of the story.
**“The Bear Boy”** by Joseph Bruchac

**Reading: Use Prior Knowledge to Make Predictions**

**Predicting** means making an intelligent guess about what will happen next in a story based on details in the text. You can also **use prior knowledge to make predictions**. For example, if a character in a story notices animal tracks in the snow, you can predict that the animal will play a part in the story because you know from prior knowledge that animal tracks mean that the animal is nearby.

**DIRECTIONS:** Fill in the following chart with predictions as you read “The Bear Boy.” Use clues from the story and your prior knowledge to make predictions. Then, compare your predictions with what actually happens. An example is shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story Details and Prior Knowledge</th>
<th>What I Predict Will Happen</th>
<th>What Actually Happens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People said that someone who followed a bear’s tracks might never come back, but Kuo-Haya had never been told that. I know that if people are not warned of a danger, they may do something dangerous.</td>
<td>Kuo-Haya will see and follow a bear’s tracks.</td>
<td>Kuo-Haya sees and follows a bear’s tracks and finds some bear cubs.</td>
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Unit 2 Resources: Short Stories
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The Bear Boy
Joseph Bruchac

Summary Kuo-Haya’s father ignores him. Kuo-Haya becomes lost one day as he wanders outside his village. He finds a mother bear and her cubs. The bears teach Kuo-Haya things his father never showed him. Kuo-Haya’s father tries to get back his son and learns how to be a good father.

Reading/Writing Connection

Complete these sentences about the lessons people can learn from animals.
1. At the zoo, people appreciate ________________________.
2. Scientists observe wild animals to learn about ____________________.
3. Lions might teach people how to survive ____________________.

Note-taking Guide

Use this chart to record how Kuo-Haya and his father changed during the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How does he feel when the story starts?</th>
<th>What does he learn from the bears?</th>
<th>How does he feel when the story ends?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kuo-Haya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuo-Haya’s father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The Bear Boy
Joseph Bruchac

Long ago, in a Pueblo village, a boy named Kuo-Haya lived with his father. But his father did not treat him well. In his heart he still mourned the death of his wife, Kuo-Haya's mother, and did not enjoy doing things with his son. He did not teach his boy how to run. He did not show him how to wrestle. He was always too busy.

As a result, Kuo-Haya was a timid boy and walked about stooped over all of the time. When the other boys raced or wrestled, Kuo-Haya slipped away. He spent much of his time alone.

Time passed, and the boy reached the age when his father should have been helping him get ready for his initiation into manhood. Still Kuo-Haya's father paid no attention at all to his son.

One day Kuo-Haya was out walking far from the village, toward the cliffs where the bears lived. Now the people of the village always knew they must stay away from these cliffs, for the bear was a very powerful animal. It was said that if someone saw a bear's tracks and followed them, he might never come back. But Kuo-Haya had never been told about this. When he came upon the tracks of a bear, Kuo-Haya followed them along an arroyo, a small canyon cut by a winding stream, up into the mesas. The tracks led into a little box canyon below some caves. There, he came upon some bear cubs.

When they saw Kuo-Haya, the little bears ran away. But Kuo-Haya sat down and called to them in a friendly voice.

Vocabulary Development: mourned (maurnd) v. was very sad about

timid (TIM id) adj. shy

initiation (i ni shee AY shun) n. process by which one becomes a member of a group

1. canyon (KAN yuhrn) n. long narrow valley between high cliffs, often with a stream flowing through it.
2. mesas (MAY suhz) n. plateaus (or flat-topped hills) with steep sides.
“I will not hurt you,” he said to the bear cubs. “Come and play with me.” The bears walked back out of the bushes. Soon the boy and the bears were playing together. As they played, however, a shadow came over them. Kuo-Haya looked up and saw the mother bear standing above him.

“Where is Kuo-Haya?” the people asked his father. “I do not know,” the father said. “Then you must find him!”

So the father and other people of the pueblo began to search for the missing boy. They went through the canyons calling his name. But they found no sign of the boy there. Finally, when they reached the cliffs, the best trackers found his footsteps and the path of the bears. They followed the tracks along the arroyo and up into the mesas to the box canyon. In front of a cave, they saw the boy playing with the bear cubs as the mother bear watched them approvingly, nudging Kuo-Haya now and then to encourage him.

The trackers crept close, hoping to grab the boy and run. But as soon as the mother bear caught their scent, she growled and pushed her cubs and the boy back into the cave.

“The boy is with the bears,” the trackers said when they returned to the village.

“What shall we do?” the people asked. “It is the responsibility of the boy’s father,” said the medicine man. Then he called Kuo-Haya’s father to him.

“You have not done well,” said the medicine man. “You are the one who must guide your boy to manhood, but you have neglected him. Now the mother bear is caring for your boy as you should have done all along. She is teaching him to be strong.

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**Vocabulary Development:**

- **approvingly** (uh PROOV ing lee) *adv.* with support; thinking it is good
- **responsibility** (ri spahn suh BIL uh tee) *n.* a duty or something that must be done
- **neglected** (ni GLEKT id) *v.* failed to take care of
as a young man must be strong. If you love your son, only you can get him back."

Every one of the medicine man's words went into the father's heart like an arrow. He began to realize that he had been blind to his son's needs because of his own sorrow.

"You are right," he said. "I will go and bring back my son."

Kuo-Haya's father went along the arroyo and climbed the cliffs. When he came to the bears' cave, he found Kuo-Haya wrestling with the little bears. As the father watched, he saw that his son seemed more sure of himself than ever before.

"Kuo-Haya," he shouted. "Come to me."

The boy looked at him and then just walked into the cave. Although the father tried to follow, the big mother bear stood up on her hind legs and growled. She would not allow the father to come any closer.

So Kuo-Haya's father went back to his home. He was angry now. He began to gather together his weapons, and brought out his bow and his arrows and his lance. But the medicine man came to his lodge and showed him the bear claw that he wore around his neck.

"Those bears are my relatives!" the medicine man said. "You must not harm them. They are teaching your boy how we should care for each other, so you must not be cruel to them. You must get your son back with love, not violence."

Kuo-Haya's father prayed for guidance. He went outside and sat on the ground. As he sat there, a bee flew up to him, right by his face. Then it flew away. The father stood up. Now he knew what to do!

"Thank you, Little Brother," he said. He began to make his preparations. The medicine man watched what he was doing and smiled.

**Vocabulary Development:**

- **violence** (VY uh luhs) n. actions meant to hurt someone
- **guidance** (GYD uhns) n. help in finding a better way to do something

3. **lance** (LANS) n. long spear.
Kuo-Haya’s father went to the place where the bees had their hives. He made a fire and put green branches on it so that it made smoke. Then he blew the smoke into the tree where the bees were. The bees soon went to sleep.

Carefully Kuo-Haya’s father took out some honey from their hive. When he was done, he placed pollen and some small pieces of turquoise at the foot of the tree to thank the bees for their gift. The medicine man, who was watching all this, smiled again. Truly the father was beginning to learn.

Kuo-Haya’s father traveled again to the cliffs where the bears lived. He hid behind a tree and saw how the mother bear treated Kuo-Haya and the cubs with love. He saw that Kuo-Haya was able to hold his own as he wrestled with the bears.

He came out from his hiding place, put the honey on the ground, and stepped back. “My friends,” he said, “I have brought you something sweet.”

The mother bear and her cubs came over and began to eat the honey. While they ate, Kuo-Haya’s father went to the boy. He saw that his little boy was now a young man.

“Kuo-Haya,” he said, putting his hands on his son’s shoulders, “I have come to take you home. The bears have taught me a lesson. I shall treat you as a father should treat his son.”

“I will go with you, Father,” said the boy. “But I, too, have learned things from the bears. They have shown me how we must care for one another. I will come with you only if you promise you will always be friends with the bears.” The father promised, and that promise was kept. Not only was he friends with the bears, but he showed his boy the love a son deserves. And he taught him all the things a son should be taught.

Vocabulary Development: pollen (PAHL uhn) n. a powder made by flowers, which is carried by wind or insects to make other flowers produce seeds

4. turquoise (TER kwoyz) n. greenish-blue gemstone.
Everyone in the village soon saw that Kuo-Haya, the bear boy, was no longer the timid little boy he had been. Because of what the bears had taught him, he was the best wrestler among the boys. With his father's help, Kuo-Haya quickly became the greatest runner of all. To this day, his story is told to remind all parents that they must always show as much love for their children as there is in the heart of a bear.

**Reader's Response:** Is this story meant for children or for adults?

Explain your answer.
1. **Compare and Contrast:** How is Kuo-Haya’s life with the bears different from his life in the village?

2. **Connect:** How does seeing a bee help the father decide how to get his son back?

3. **Reading Skill:** Write a **prediction** based on prior knowledge that you made as you read this story. Use this chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story Details</th>
<th>My Prior Knowledge</th>
<th>Prediction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. **Literary Analysis:** Identify two events in the **plot** that increase the tension of the story.
“The Bear Boy” by Joseph Bruchac

**Literary Analysis: Plot**

**Plot** is the related sequence of events in a short story and other works of fiction. A plot has the following elements:

- **Exposition**: introduction of the setting (the time and place), the characters, and the basic situation
- **Rising Action**: events that introduce a **conflict**, or struggle, and increase the tension
- **Climax**: the story's high point, at which the eventual outcome becomes clear
- **Falling Action**: events that follow the climax
- **Resolution**: the final outcome and tying up of loose ends, when the reader learns how the conflict is resolved

In a story about a race, for example, the exposition would probably introduce the runners. The rising action might include a description of a conflict between two of the runners and some information about the start of the race. The climax might be the winning of the race by one of the runners. The falling action might include a meeting between the two runners, and the resolution might describe the end of their conflict.

**DIRECTIONS:** Answer the following questions about the plot elements of “The Bear Boy.”

1. The exposition of “The Bear Boy” introduces characters and describes a setting. Who are the characters, and what is the setting?

2. How do you know that the father’s neglect of Huo-Kaya is part of the rising action?

3. What happens in the climax of “The Bear Boy”?

4. Describe one event in the falling action of the story.

5. What happens in the resolution of “The Bear Boy”?
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Support for Writing an Informative Article

Use the graphic organizer below to record details from each section of "The Bear Boy." Your details should tell when, how much, how often, or to what extent.

**Introduction**

Details:

**Body**

Details:

**Conclusion**

Details:

Now, use your notes to write an informative article telling how mother bears care for their cubs. Write for an audience of third-graders.