

The FOREST of MOON and SWORD

LEARNING RESOURCES

EXTRACTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR KS2 TEACHERS & LIBRARIANS

Suitable for: Ages 8+

Explore themes of: ✓The History of the Witch Trials ✓Folklore ✓The Power of Nature ✓Courage in the Face of Danger

Subject Checklist: ✓Literacy ✓Art, Design & Technology ✓PSHE ✓Citizenship ✓Drama ✓History

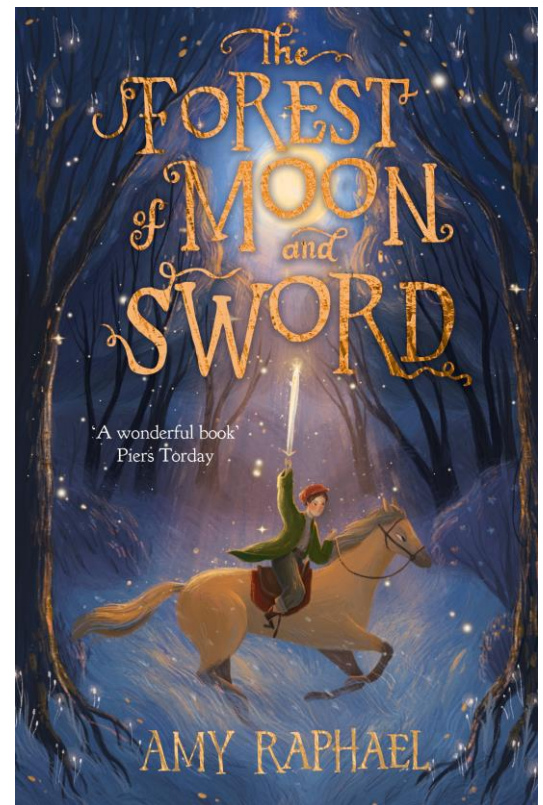
ABOUT THE BOOK

When Art's mother is accused of witchcraft and captured, she is determined to get her back - at any cost. A lyrical adventure with folklore at its heart, for fans of THE HOUSE WITH CHICKEN LEGS.

Twelve-year-old Art lives in a small village in Scotland. Her mother has always made potions that cure the sick, but now the townspeople say she is a witch. One cloudless night, Art's mother is arrested and taken to England.

Art mounts her horse, taking a sword, a tightrope, and a herbal recipe book, and begins a journey through wild forests, using nature's signs and symbols to guide her.

But will she spot the signs from the omens? Will she reach her mother, before it's too late?



**Written by Amy Raphael and illustrated by August Ro.
Available in paperback, eBook and audio editions.**



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LESSON ONE: THE HISTORY OF THE WITCH TRIALS

OBJECTIVE:

Learn about the witch trials of the 17th century; act-out an important scene from the text

'Traitors! Witches! Scottish witches! You will burn in hell.' The soldier's voice is ablaze with pure hatred.

My mouth is dry. I cannot swallow. My legs shake uncontrollably. I shut my eyes and count slowly, as Mother told me to.

100. 99. 98. 97. 96. 95.

One of the women emits a high-pitched wail as she is lowered through the attic door.

'Silence, woman! Silence, all of you!'

The soldier's tone is so sharp that the woman falls silent. All I can hear is muffled voices as the soldiers direct Mother and the women out of the attic and down the stairs.

50. 49. 48.

The front door slams.

Now I am alone.

10. 9. 8.

My legs are shaking hard. I can no longer feel my feet.

3. 2. 1.

Extract taken from chapter 1, pages 22-23 of The Forest of Moon and Sword

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What do you associate the word 'witch'? Who do you picture in your mind?
- Have you read any other stories that include witches? Discuss them together.
- What did you already know about witch trials in the 17th century before reading this story? Give examples.
- What is happening in this extract? What do you think Art, her mother, and the other women are feeling?
- How does the writer make you feel the tension in the attic? Explain your ideas.



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ACTIVITY: FRIGHTENING FACTS!

You will need to reference pages 116 – 122 from *The Forest of Moon and Sword*

- It may be hard to believe, but *The Forest of Moon and Sword* is inspired by real events and women being put on trial for supposedly being witches in the 17th century. Of course, today we know this isn't true, but many women (and men!) lost their lives due to these horrific 'trials'.
- First, read over the **Frightening Facts** information below. Discuss the meaning of any words you are unsure of. Then, work in pairs to fill in the missing blanks; this will help you to learn more about the history behind the text.
- When you have checked over your paragraphs together, read over the extract from pages 116–122. Think about what is happening in this extract. Why is it so shocking? How is The Witchfinder General described? Why isn't this a proper 'trial'?
- Then, re-enact this dramatic scene from the story, stopping at different points to reflect further on the questions above and the history of the witch trials. At the end of the lesson, feedback an interesting fact you have learned today!

FRIGHTENING FACTS

During the Century, witch trials took place all across Europe. King of England spread and about witches and was responsible for many trials. He even wrote a book about the danger of witches entitled

The majority of people accused of being witches were Despite being completely innocent, they could be tortured and executed, without any whatsoever. Believing in and hunting witches was due to a fear of as well as the results of war, poverty, disease, and famine. It was people at the of society who unfortunately suffered.

James I fear margins proof Seventeenth *Daemonologie*
panic the devil women



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LESSON TWO: FOLKLORE

OBJECTIVE:

Discuss the importance of Summer Solstice and folklore in the story; create your own herbal recipe

Extract taken from chapter 2, pages 32-33 of The Forest of Moon and Sword

My beloved Art,

I write this in haste. If you have this letter in your hands, it is because the soldiers have taken me. As you know, Kelso has been sending men to battle since war broke out five years ago, but we have yet to experience bloodshed on our doorstep. England, however, is broken in two. It is being destroyed by civil war between those who are for the king and those who are for parliament. People on both sides are uncertain of what the future holds. They are scared. As always in times of great fear, there are scapegoats. Women are sacrificed.

I am hoping that the soldiers take me all the way to Essex, in the south-east of England. This is where, in the parish of Manningtree, witch trials have been scheduled on the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. They say that as many as a hundred women will be murdered that day. But the trials must be stopped!

The thought of never seeing you again is unbearable and I shall do everything in my power to survive. Whatever happens, I will not go gently.

I have some advice for you. You may not need it, but I am your mother and I want to make your life less painful in any way I can. Your journey will ebb and flow, like a river searching for the sea. You will not, I know, be dragged under. Like any journey, it will begin with the first step. You will meet your guides along the way – be open to them.

Be on your guard, but do not be afraid to take risks. Let love give you courage.

Always believe in your destiny.

My love for you is infinite. My heart is with you always.

God bless you, my child.

Mother

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What else do you learn about the real history of the witch trials in this extract? i.e. civil war; the king; parliament.
- What is 'Summer Solstice'? What will happen on that day and where?
- What does the word 'folklore' mean? Can you think of any other tales or traditions that are part of folklore?
- Can you spot any elements of folklore in the 2nd half of the extract? What about in the rest of the text?
- What were some of the dangers of folklore in the 17th century? Explain your ideas.

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ACTIVITY: CREATING A HERBAL RECIPE

- Folklore is still a part of many cultures today. However, due to advances in science and technology over many years, you will see the world very differently compared to how Art would have done in the 17th century!
- Close your eyes for a moment and transport yourself back in time to 1647. Imagine that you are about to set off on an adventure and are packing some supplies. Use one of Art's most precious possessions – her mother's recipe book – to create a herbal remedy that may come in handy on your journey
- Use the ingredients from the text below and note down your recipe. You may want to design your own recipe book page
- Share your recipes as a class and have a chat about why they would come in handy on an adventure!

Elderflower – good for sickness (p132)

Rye – good for headaches (p151)

Motherwort – eases anguish (p200)

Oak bark – good for wounds, old and new (p168)

Wood sage – eases sweats (p151)

Purslane – cools and eases nightmares (p152)

Hawthorn seed – for inward tormenting pains (p152)

Archangel/dead nettle – good for injuries (p167)

Blackthorn – clean infected blood and strengthen the heart (p229)

MY HERBAL RECIPE

BY

INGREDIENTS NEEDED

50ml of

A pinch of

2 tablespoons of

5ml of

A good helping of

A teaspoon of



This recipe will come in handy on my adventure because

.....



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LESSON THREE: THE POWER OF NATURE

OBJECTIVE:

Analyse how the writer presents nature as powerful and magical; sketch a picture of Mrs Fox

Extract taken from chapter 10, pages 102-103 of The Forest of Moon and Sword

I want to keep going, but steam is rising off Lady and I can feel panic flooding my body again. We stop by a shallow burn far enough from the pathway to be hidden from view and I allow her to linger, her muzzle dipping into the water to drink. I am distracted by a damselfly skimming the surface of the water, weaving backwards and forwards, its bright blue body transported by four veined wings. I sit by the burn, just for a moment, and scoop cool water up in my hands, gulping it down and splashing my face. The air is warm and clear and the sun directly overhead. The morning has already gone! I must make haste. Lady sets off through the trees at a pace, fortified by her time idling by the water. The forest is humid and the rich smell of ancient earth mingles with the delicate scent of summer flowers. When the trees give way to a large clearing, I signal to Lady to stop so that I can check for any signs of human life. My elevated position gives me a slight advantage, but I feel uneasy, as though my bad dream has bled into reality.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Can you pick out interesting verbs and adjectives used in the extract? Give examples.
- How do these words and phrases bring the forest to life and give it a magical quality?
- Why is Art's relationship with Lady important in the text? How is Lady described?
- Can you think of any other powerful or magical descriptions of nature and animals from the story?
- Have you visited or read about any other special natural places? Which sounds, sights, and smells make them special?



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ACTIVITY: MRS FOX

Extract taken from chapter 10, pages 107-108 of *The Forest of Moon and Sword*

A fox trots out of the trees, her orange tail held high.

She stops in the middle of the track, lifts her snout and sniffs the air, whiskers twitching. The black tip of one of her ears is torn. She is so close I can smell her bitter scent.

Lady snorts and the fox turns, as though noticing us for the first time. She looks at me, amber eyes unblinking. Mother used to say that a single fox crossing your path is good luck.

'Which way should I go, Mrs Fox?'

She lifts a hind leg to scratch her ear. How foolish to think that a fox could understand me.

The fox opens her mouth and slowly yawns. She trots to the end of the track, turns to look at us then turns right. We follow her until she saunters off into the trees.

- Read over the extract of Mrs Fox together as a class. Discuss together: what is unusual about the fox? How has the writer made it seem as if Art and the fox are able to communicate with each other?
- Highlight descriptions of the fox that help you to visualise her in your mind. Then, sketch Mrs Fox in detail with the forest as the backdrop. Think carefully about:
 - *Colours* you can use to create the mystery and magical quality of nature
 - *Shapes* you can create to make nature seem powerful
 - *Details* that will bring Mrs Fox to life
 - *Shading* to create atmosphere and the idea that the forest is a special place
- Share and compare your pictures on your tables. Have a chat about how you have each approached this task slightly differently. What do your sketches of Mrs Fox and the forest have in common? What were the trickiest things to capture in your sketches and why?
- Plan a different sketch of the natural world to complete in another lesson or for homework. How will today's lesson help you to illustrate the power of nature?



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LESSON FOUR: COURAGE IN THE FACE OF DANGER

OBJECTIVE:

Reflect on how brave women work together to prevent the 'trials'; write from different characters' perspectives

Extract taken from chapter 16, pages 201-203 of The Forest of Moon and Sword

'Thank you, Mercy,' I say. 'Why don't we walk the rope again? Whenever I was upset in Kelso, my brother would remind me that rope practice is good not only for balance and strength, but also for courage and fearlessness.'

I take the long rope from the saddlebag, find a long branch and strip it of its leaves. I remove my boots, tie the rope high up between two medium-sized tree trunks, ensure that it's taut and climb one of the trees.

'I shall climb the other,' says Mercy, moving up through the branches of the tree quickly. 'I'd rather encourage you from up here.'

I have never walked this high and it's reassuring to see her there, at the other end of the rope. Before stepping out, I find my equilibrium, shutting my eyes and allowing myself a moment just to be. I pull the moonstone amulet from beneath my shirt, hold it in the palm of my hand and recall Maude's words: Do not grieve for that which has yet to come to pass.

There is still time to rescue Mother. I have to find a way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

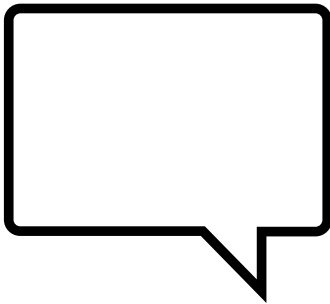
- How do Art and Mercy show great courage in this extract? What about in the story as a whole?
- Who is Maude? How does she help Art to save her mother?
- Which other female characters work together to stop the witch trial?
- What else gives Art courage in the face of danger? i.e. special objects, folklore
- Why is it sometimes difficult to be brave when we are afraid? Can you think of a time you showed courage?



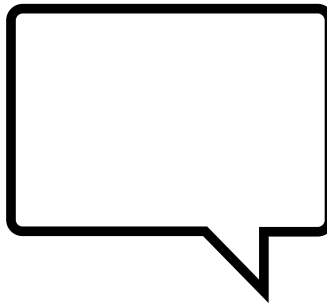
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ACTIVITY: WOMEN WORKING TOGETHER

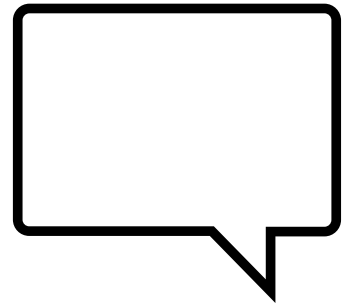
- *The Forest of Moon and Sword* is full of strong, brave women and girls working together. Each one of them must show great courage in order to help Art release the innocent women from the awful witch trial.
- For each of the female characters below, note down in their speech bubbles:
 - 1) Why they might be afraid
 - 2) How they show bravery
- Try to give examples from the story and write from the character's perspective i.e. in the first person 'I think', 'I feel'. Then, take it in turns to feedback your ideas. Can you think of any of other examples of courageous women from history? Do you know any women or girls you would describe as brave?
- Finish by reflecting on what you have learned about the 17th century witch trials. What else would you like to find out? Note down any final questions you have and see if you can find out the answers together.



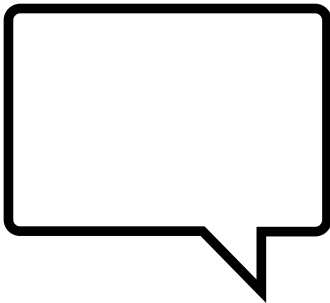
Art



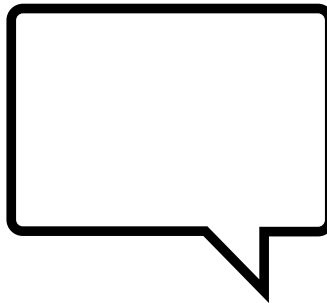
Art's mother



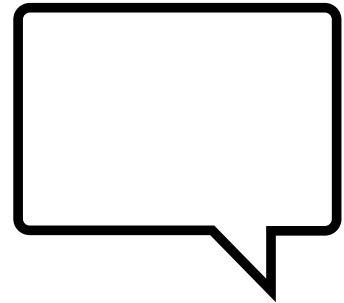
Maude



Mercy



Women on 'trial'



The Inseparables