

Runt

Marion Dane Bauer ♦ Classroom Guide



Clarion Books

ISBN 0-6182-1261-2

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Teaching guide by
Tracie Vaughn Zimmer.
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Prediction Guide—Pre-Reading

What is a runt? Would you like to be called Runt? Why or why not? What do you think this book will be about? Where do you think it might take place? Why do you think so?

Great readers keep themselves involved in the story while they're reading by making predictions about what they think may happen next. They look for clues to help them make these guesses. As you read *Runt* answer these questions *as you go* and don't worry whether your answers are right or not. Also, create at least one prediction or question by the end of each chapter with one of these phrases:

"I wonder whether..."

"I think that Runt will probably..."

"I think the next obstacle may be..."

Chapter 1

Will Runt thrive? Will he keep his name? What makes you think this?

Chapter 2

What else will matter to Runt?

Chapter 3

"Runt refused to worry, though. He would find his gift one day. He knew he would." (p.23) What do you think his gift will be? Why?

Chapter 4

Will Runt find his way home? What will King and his mother say?

Chapter 5

Will Runt tell anyone the truth about Bider? Why?

Chapter 6

Will his father agree with the new name Brave One? Why?

Chapter 7

Was Runt brave or foolish? Will King find out that Bider call him coward? What would he do?

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Prediction Guide—Pre-Reading (cont'd)

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Chapter 8

Will he die? What will the humans do?

Chapter 9

Will he return home? What else could he do?

Chapter 10

How will what Runt learn from Goldie change him?

Chapter 11

What will happen to Thinker? Will he go to the humans for help too?

Chapter 12

How will the others treat Runt now? What should he do?

Chapter 13

Will Runt finally be able to prove himself? How?

Chapter 14

Will he find Bider? Explain how they might be successful.

Chapter 15

What will happen between Bider and King? Who will Runt choose?

Chapter 16

Will King want to listen to Runt now? What will happen next?

Chapter 17

How will Runt try to prove himself next?

Chapter 18

Where do you think Bider is going? What will he do?

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Prediction Guide—Pre-Reading (cont'd)

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Chapter 19

Should Runt follow? Will the pack find food?

Chapter 20

How would Runt save himself? What can he do on his own?

Chapter 21

Is Raven right about King too? Will Singer be happy?

Comprehension Check

1. Who names Runt and why is he given this name?
2. What are two mistakes Runt makes during the novel?
3. Why does Runt start to question the actions of his father?
4. Describe Bider and what happens to him.
5. How does Runt change over the course of the novel?

Discussion Guide

1. Runt tries to prove himself to his family again and again to gain their approval and acceptance. Do people ever behave this way too? In what ways? Why do we sometimes feel it necessary to act like this?
2. What does it mean to be brave? Who in the pack displays bravery? Is it ever brave to choose to do nothing? When?
3. After a few incidents, Runt's siblings avoid him. Are they justified in acting this way? Why or why not? Does he deserve this treatment? Does anyone ever deserve to be ostracized from his or her own family?
4. Discuss this quote: "Perhaps the truth was that humans were a mixture, aggressive and kind, greedy and generous. Like wolves." (p. 127) Do you

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Discussion Guide (cont'd)

(Continued from page 3)

agree with Runt's assessment? Why or why not. Give examples from the text that support your point of view.

5. Read and discuss the Afterword by the author. What was the most surprising fact that you learned? What misconceptions have people long held about wolves? Why do you think people accepted these mistruths? What other animals have been characterized as evil by people but probably are not? Why, do you suppose, this happens to some creatures and not others?

Projects

Science:

Create a poster that shows the food chain in a woodland setting. How important are the larger predators to the chain? What happens if one of the members is destroyed? Research at least one other climate and a food chain for it.

Research another predator of your choice. Find out: range of location, diet, mating habits, gestational period and length of its childhood, solitary or pack animal, a list of its enemies, and its current status in the wild. Be sure to paraphrase this information (do NOT just print out the information) and create a pamphlet about your animal.

History:

Create a timeline for the history of wolves and their involvement with humans. Or create one based on a predator of your choosing.

Math:

Create a chart (pie, graph, or bar) that reports population information about wild wolves or other predators.

Language Arts:

Thomas Jefferson once said, "The most valuable of talents is never using two words when one will do." Marion Dane Bauer's spare yet captivating writing would certainly match Mr. Jefferson's definition. One way she accomplishes this is by using action verbs that add meaning to each sentence. Reread one chapter of *Runt*, and write down several words and phrases that you think are particularly well-crafted. Share your list with a partner and discuss. Then, on your own, write a description of an animal that is inspired by what you learned from the author.