



## Novel Guide for Gifted and Advanced Readers



This guide is appropriate for use with gifted and advanced readers. It addresses their affective and cognitive needs through questions that can be used for discussion. Depending on the length of the book, students should read the entire book before conducting the bibliotherapy lesson, the **Group Discussion** using the higher order questions and the **After Discussion** activities. Students should be given the **Before Discussion** activities to complete during their time while reading the book. If the book is exceptionally long, you may need to modify this lesson plan. See **Novel Guide: Notes for Implementing** for additional procedures and recommendations.

**Book Title:** *Masterpiece*

**Author:** Elise Broach

**Interest Level:** 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

**Lexile:** 700

**Length:** 288

**Guide developed by:** Melissa Pierce

### Summary

Marvin, an artistic beetle, lives with his family under the kitchen sink in a New York City apartment. The apartment belongs to the Pompadays who have an eleven-year-old boy, James. As James' birthday is approaching, Marvin wants to secretly leave a birthday present for him. Marvin surprises James by creating an elaborate miniature drawing using a pen-and-ink set James got for his birthday. James ends up getting the credit for the drawing and is asked to do it again. A friendship develops between James and Marvin as they go to the local museum to compare Marvin's drawing to a famous artist, Albrecht Dürer. They do not realize what adventure is awaiting them at the museum. In a plot twist, boy and beetle are faced with the reality that one of the museum directors is behind the thefts and switches the replica with the real drawing. He almost gets away with his theft until Marvin realizes the switch, tags along with the real drawing, and alerts James of the problem. James is able to get help and all the lost drawings are found.

### Conceptual Connections

**Conceptual Lens:** friendship

**Other Key Concepts:** trust

**Essential Understandings:**

- True friendship takes time, attention, and trust.
- Trust is essential for a friendship to flourish.

**Essential Questions:**

- How does true friendship need time, attention and trust?
- How do friends earn and keep each other's trust?

## **Affective Focus (Bibliotherapy)**

### **Introductory Activity/Hook**

Friendship takes work and attention. The strong bond of friendship is something individuals can nurture as they spend time with others. Trust is earned over time and helps us feel more confident about relying on others. Sketch a picture of a time/place where you really created a strong bond of friendship with someone. Think about where you were and what you were doing. Add a short caption explaining how you felt.

### **Menu of Bibliotherapy Questions**

#### ***Identification:***

- What is Marvin's talent? How does he use his talent in the story?
- What happens when Marvin meets James?
- How did Marvin and James' lives change after they meet?
- What is the adventure Marvin and James embark on? How does the adventure change them?
- At the end of the book, what happens between Marvin and James that demonstrates true friendship?

#### ***Catharsis:***

- How did Marvin feel about being different and talented in the beginning of the story?
- How was James feeling at the beginning of the book before he met Marvin?
- How did James feel about Marvin's talent?
- How did Marvin's feelings about himself change after his talent was discovered by James?
- How did Marvin feel about the risk involved with trusting James?
- How did Marvin feel about going on the adventure with James? How did James feel about going on the adventure with Marvin?
- How do Marvin and James' feelings about each other develop into a strong friendship by the end of the book?

#### ***Insight:***

- How do you determine who a true friend is for you? For others?
- How do you nurture/grow your friendships?
- How does it feel to be able to trust another person?
- How can adventure with its trials and dangers strengthen a friendship?

### **Universalization/Follow up Activity**

With a partner, brainstorm ideas for a friendship "survival" guide. Decide the essential must-haves and share with the class (It may be necessary to discuss the importance of time, attention, and dedication for friendship). After sharing, choose your favorite must-haves from all the groups and make headings for your individual survival guide. Illustrate and provide a short paragraph for each heading.

## Reading Comprehension: Independent Work and Group Discussion

To foster strong reading comprehension, literacy skills, and love of literature, students need to read critically, respond to what they read with text-based evidence, develop a robust vocabulary, and engage in high level discussion with peers. The following activities address these components.

### **Before Group Discussion** (Activities for students to complete independently)

**A. Knowledge and Comprehension Questions** related to the novel. Students use sticky notes to locate answers in the text as they read. Teacher may use student's answers for a grade.

#### **Knowledge Questions**

- Who were the main characters?
- What is the setting for the beetles like? The humans?
- What did James' father give him for his birthday?
- How did Marvin and James meet?
- What skill did Marvin have that helped him retrieve the missing contact for Mrs. Pompaday?
- What did James think about the drawing Marvin drew for him?
- What were the two ways Marvin and James were able to communicate with each other?

#### **Comprehension Questions**

- Why is the book organized with topics/phrases for chapters instead of just numbered chapters?
- Why would Marvin, as a beetle, need to stay hidden and out of human view at all times?
- Why does Marvin want to find an extra special birthday present for James?
- Why does James choose to take credit for Marvin's pen and ink drawing and why is Marvin relieved that James takes credit?
- Why does the description and comparison of Marvin's pen and ink drawing to Albrecht Dürer's artwork help James value Marvin's talent even more?
- Why is Marvin worried about leaving the apartment with James to go to the art museum?
- Why are James and Marvin willing to help the museum retrieve the missing drawings and/or catch the thief?
- Why does Marvin hide away in the real drawing as it is being stolen?
- Why does Marvin attempt to communicate with James when he discovers the real thief?

**B. Vocabulary Study:** Students will complete the following activities with vocabulary from the novel. The activities may be used for a grade, but should also be included in the discussion.

- Students look up the word in the dictionary or online, noting the definition that best fits how the word is used in the passage. Also, determine possible synonyms and evaluate the author's use of the word in the passage.
- Students will complete a graphic organizer provided by the teacher.

### ***Vocabulary Words***

- vaguely (p. 9)
- vile (p. 11)
- dexterous (p. 18)
- arduous (p. 27)
- panoramic (p. 82)
- virtues (p. 102)
- fortitude (p. 153)
- prudence (p. 153)
- temperance (p. 153)

**Group Discussion:** Teacher-facilitated small group discussion. Teacher may choose to provide students with a set of the questions prior to the discussion. Students should also be encouraged to create their own questions.

**Higher-Level Questions** (using Bloom's categories):

#### **1. Application**

- Marvin takes a risk when he reveals himself to James. In the past, Marvin and his family tried very hard to remain forever hidden from human view. If you were in Marvin's place, do you think you would have done the same thing?
- What would be the most difficult thing for you if you had to replicate a real piece of art?
- How would Marvin define trust? James?
- Marvin says that friendship is like a "great work of art." What do you think this means? Do you think this is true?

#### **2. Analysis**

- What kind of an artist was Marvin? James? James' dad?
- The artist, Dürer is quoted as saying, "What beauty is, I know not, though it adheres to many things." (p. 72). How does Marvin show this beauty in his drawing of the ordinary scene outside the window?
- What kind of dad is James' dad?
- The four Dürer drawings were called *Fortitude*, *Temperance*, *Prudence*, *Justice*. Why are these titles given to the drawings?
- The artist, Dürer, is quoted as saying, "The treasure secretly gathered in your heart will become evident through your creative work." How does Marvin show what's in his heart when he replicates the Dürer drawing, *Fortitude*?

### 3. Evaluation

- What does the story tell you about character?
- What fascinated you the most about Dürer's drawings? Marvin's?
- What does the story tell us about the value of art? Museums? Artists?

### 4. Synthesis

- How would you create a new way for Marvin to communicate with James and vice versa?
- What prediction do you make based on what you know from this story, about how Marvin and James will react to problems to solve in the future?
- How would the story have been different if Marvin and James had not been able to help find the thief?
- How could you role play the ways Marvin and James did communicate throughout the story?

**After Group Discussion:** Activities for students to complete with a partner, in a small group, or individually. Activities may be used for a grade.

**A. Connections to the Curriculum:** Students will make connections to a curriculum area (math, science, social studies, language arts, art, or careers) using one of the concepts from the story. The product should reflect creativity as well as critical thinking.

- **Language Arts-**Watch an excerpt from the movie, *Charlotte's Web* or read an excerpt from the book. Students will discuss how Charlotte's talent and Marvin's talent take them on an adventure that helps someone out in some way. Have students write a short narrative poem that retells the story of Marvin's adventure and expresses the joy of victory when Marvin succeeds.
- **Social studies-** James attempts to draw and his work is described as more abstract and disjointed. Students will research abstract painting from history and draw a picture that expresses what abstract painting is and how it has influenced culture. Ask students to add a caption to explain their picture.
- **Science/Health-**Marvin and his family are beetles who have made a New York City apartment their home. Students will research beetles, their physical attributes, types, habitat, life expectancy, behaviors, including their survival rates and how habitat affects these rates.
- Christina, the Dürer drawings' expert, explains how the FBI stolen-art unit will help with the details about finding the lost drawings and possibly apprehending the thief. (p. 161). Students will research the actual FBI stolen-art unit, their procedures, protocols, famous cases, and headquarter locations.
- James' right hand is slammed into the trunk of the cab and breaks. The doctor says it's a bad break, but with "physical therapy" he should be fine. Students will find a list of websites that give tips and information about physical therapy for hand injuries. Students will list the top five websites they find easy to understand and helpful for people with hand injuries.
- **Art-** James is asked to replicate a famous detailed drawing by Albrecht Dürer, an artist from the late 1400's. He has to get Marvin to do it for him. Marvin is able to meticulously draw very tiny, straight lines to make a miniature pen-and-ink drawing. This drawing has amazing detail. Students will list the details given about the drawing, *Fortitude* and discuss how these details show and support the title given to the drawing.
- **Careers-**One of the characters, Denny, is Curator of Drawings in a museum. Students will research in books or sites on the Internet the description of this job. They will also find out where Curators' jobs would be available if one of the characters decided to apply for this job. Discuss the parts of a generic job application. Using the sample application students will fill out a Curator of Drawings application for a character of choice.
- **Language Arts/Creative Drama-**Students will read a short biography of Albrecht Dürer and research on the Internet to find and read a critique of his art piece, *Praying Hands*. How do

Dürer's experiences and beliefs influence his art? On the internet find another art piece by Dürer. Imagine that you are Dürer and you have just completed the piece of art. Write a short speech explaining the thoughts and feelings you as an artist experienced and how you portrayed these in your art. Practice and share your speech and piece of art with the group.

**B. Creative Reading:** Using the following list of creative products, students will complete a project reflecting their personal connection with the novel (students may determine their own creative product with the approval of the teacher):

1. Create a puppet play based on a favorite scene in the story
2. Create a poem based on the novel, a character, or favorite scene
3. Illustrate a favorite scene(s) from the story
4. Create a story board of the plot of the story
5. Write a screen play based on the story
6. Create a new ending for the story
7. Create a map of the location(s) of the story
8. Create a mural representative of the story and characters
9. Extend the story into a sequel
10. Rewrite a portion of the story from another character's perspective
11. Rewrite the story in another time or culture
12. Create an online product: infographic, video, character blog, etc.
13. Write a song that one or more of the characters might sing
14. Create an interpretative dance for the story
15. Student idea for a creative product related to the story