



Adventures at Camp Lots-o-Fun

Marilyn Helmer

illustrated by Mike Deas

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AR Quiz # 141280

About the Book

Bad weather, bugs and boredom—DJ and the boys in Camp Lots-o-Fun's Cabin Six are starting to call it Camp Not-so-Fun. To make matters worse, one of the boys seems to have it in for DJ. But DJ isn't about to let that bother him. His enthusiasm and lively imagination ensure that there is never a dull moment when he is around. A bear in the woods, monsters in the lake and a hermit's ghost make for a week at summer camp that none of the boys will soon forget.

About the Author

Marilyn Helmer is an award-winning author of many children's books, including picturebooks, early readers, novels, riddle books and retold tales. When she isn't writing herself, she enjoys visiting schools and libraries to talk to children about writing. *Adventures at Camp Lots-o-Fun* is Marilyn's fourth book with Orca.

About the Writing of the Book

The idea for the book came from a week Marilyn spent at a friend's cottage the summer when she was nine. A bear in the woods, a circle of stones marking buried treasure and a huge shadow in the lake sent the girls' imaginations running wild. The bear turned out to be a neighbour's friendly dog, the circle of stones unearthed nothing but dirt, dirt and more dirt as the girls spent a sweaty morning digging and the huge shadow in the lake—well, that never was explained. But the memory of those summer adventures gave Marilyn the idea for *Adventures at Camp Lots-o-Fun*.

Writing involves research, and Marilyn put the same enthusiasm into researching camp crafts, spiders, constellations and scavenger hunt finds as she did into making her very own sock monkey.

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections

Prereading Ideas

- The main character, DJ, is picked on by one of the other boys in his cabin. Has anyone ever picked on you? If so, how did you handle the situation? Should you treat this person the same way he or she is treating you?
- Imagination is a wonderful thing but sometimes it can go too far. Things like hearing strange noises in the night or watching a scary movie can send your imagination running wild. Talk about experiences you have had when your imagination has made things much worse than they really are.
- How would you feel about going off to summer camp on your own? Would you worry about being away from home and not knowing anyone else there? What ways can you think of to make new friends?

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Do you have a special bedtime friend like DJ's sock monkey? Has anyone ever teased you about it? How did you react when you were teased?
2. If you see someone being picked on or bullied, what would you do? Would you stand up for that person even if it means that you might be picked on or bullied too?
3. How do you make friends with people you don't know, especially in a group? Should you wait until someone speaks to you or should you make the first move? If you notice that one person is being left out, would you try to welcome him or her into the group?
4. How would you feel about going away to summer camp alone? Would you be excited about making new friends and doing fun activities? Or do you think you would miss your family and friends back home too much?

5. Let's say you had to be partners with someone you didn't like, as DJ does with Andrew. What is the best way to handle the situation? Should you ask to work with someone else? Or should you try to make friends with that person?
6. How can you make friends with someone who, for no reason, doesn't seem to like you? Should you even try?

Suggested Activities

1. Have the students write and tell a short scary story, either individually or in a small group. Then have them tell their story sitting in a circle as though they were gathered around a campfire.
2. Tongue twisters are fun to try yourself and to trick your friends with. Have the class make up their own tongue twisters. A hint—the trickiest letters to get your tongue around are T, F, P, B and S, particularly when they are followed by H or L.
3. Constellations such as Ursa Major, the Big Dipper, Cassiopeia and Polaris are mentioned in the book. Have the students research these and other constellations. Where did they get their names? What time of year can we see them in the night sky? What are falling stars? Pretend that you have discovered a new constellation. Draw a picture of it and give it a name.
4. Insects are interesting and there are many different kinds. How many can you name? What is the difference between a deerfly and a mosquito? Look up fishing spiders and draw a picture of one. Why do you think that some people are afraid of spiders?
5. Have you ever been on a scavenger hunt? Suggest things you might look for if you were having a scavenger hunt on the beach, on a farm, in the woods or in someone's backyard. If possible, have a scavenger hunt in the schoolyard.
6. Look up *goose bumps*. Where does the phrase come from? What could scare you enough to give you goose bumps?
7. Make up new words to a song like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."

Other Titles of Interest

I Want to go Home! by Gordon Korman

Ghost Wolf by Karleen Bradford

The Big Swim by Cary Fagan

Sophie's Friend in Need by Norma Charles

Summer Camp by Bobbie Kelman

Dot to Dot in the Sky, Stories of the Planets by Joan Marie Galat

Dot to Dot in the Sky, Stories in the Stars by Joan Marie Galat

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Dinosaurs on the Beach

Sharing Snowy

The Fossil Hunters

Reviews

“Helmer has crafted a rollicking tale. DJ’s antics will carry readers along swiftly with lots of chuckles throughout. The pictures by Mike Deas are action-filled and just a bit goofy.”
—*Canadian Children’s Book News*

“Many young children will relate to *Adventures at Camp Lots-o-Fun*. The story touches on many of the fears and worries children have, especially when they are away at camp...Well-written and entertaining for a young reader. The few illustrations give the reader a clear picture about what is really happening in the story...Recommended.”
—*CM Magazine*

“Helmer takes the early chapter book reader through a delightful, adventurous, imaginative, heart-warming trek on a week with the boys of Cabin Six...A story to delight the fan of the outdoors and the summer camper...An excellent recreational reading book, or a classroom read-aloud.”
—*Resource Links*