



Smuggler's Cave

Sonya Spreen Bates

illustrated by Kasia Charko

978-1-55469-308-5 pb

AR Quiz # 141288

About the Book

Jake and his younger brother Tommy are back on Marsh Island. While visiting family at their beach house on the coast, Jake loses a race to his cousin, Lexie. So when she challenges him again, he can't resist a second chance at victory. This time it's a boat race—to the legendary Smuggler's Cave and back. Jake has never rowed so far before, but he and Tommy grab their life jackets and the race is on. The water is deep and choppy, the boat much harder to control than Jake thought it would be, and when they get to Smuggler's Cave the unthinkable happens. The boat capsizes, and they are swept through the small dark hole into the cave. Lexie comes to the rescue, but the rising tide prevents them from escaping, and they soon realize they are trapped.

About the Author

Sonya Spreen Bates is a Canadian writer living in Australia. She was born in the United States, but moved to Victoria, British Columbia, as a small child. She loved riding horses, playing in the school band, reading and writing short stories, although she never showed them to anyone. She dreamed of traveling to Australia, but never imagined she'd be living there one day.

Sonya obtained a Bachelor of Science in Linguistics from the University of Victoria in 1987, and then a Masters in Speech Pathology from Dalhousie University in Halifax in 1989. She has spent many years working with children with communication disorders, both in Canada and Australia, often writing her own stories to use in therapy.

She began writing children's fiction in 2001, inspired by her two daughters and their love of the stories she told them. *Smuggler's Cave* is her second book with Orca.

About the Writing of the Book

Smuggler's Cave grew from a comment made at the end of *Marsh Island* by Chris Mumford, caretaker from the Marsh Island Historical Society. When Jake thinks he's seen the ghost of Alfred Marsh, Chris Mumford says, "There's nothing spookier here than a few bats in Smuggler's Cave." As time went on, the comment stayed with me, and I started having questions about Smuggler's Cave. Where was it? What was so special about it? What was its history? And ultimately, what trouble could Jake and Tommy get into in Smuggler's Cave? From there, the story started to take shape. Not having explored sea caves myself, the challenge was to make the cave real and the events that lead to the children being trapped in the cave plausible and believable. I researched sea caves and tides, perused pictures and websites and sought the advice of Dave Bunnell, an expert with extensive experience in the field who provided invaluable advice. Putting this knowledge into words that allowed the reader to visualize the cave was a challenge, but rewarding in the end.

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections***Prereading Ideas***

Sometimes a person is challenged to do something that could be dangerous to themselves or others. It can be hard to back down from that challenge. Ask students to think of a time when they accepted a dangerous challenge. What was the outcome? How could they have handled it differently?

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Tommy didn't want to be part of the race to Smuggler's Cave, but Jake insisted he come along. Should Tommy have stood up for himself? What would have happened if he refused to go?

2. Lexie decides to go into Smuggler's Cave to rescue Jake and Tommy. Was this a good decision? How would things have been different if she'd gone back to the mainland for help? What would you have done?
3. When Tommy is injured, Jake decides to try to find another way out of the cave. Tommy doesn't want to be left alone in the dark, so they all go together. Would it have been a good idea for Jake to set out by himself? What could have happened? What if Tommy hadn't been able to walk? What would you do in that situation?

Suggested Activities

- Draw a map of your own sea cave. How long is it? How wide is it? How high is the roof of the cave? Does it have a beach at the back like Smuggler's cave? Does it have smaller caves adjoining it? What sort of creatures live in your cave?
- Jake, Tommy and Lexie found bats in Smuggler's Cave. Do a research project on bats. What is their habitat? What do they eat? What sort of noises do they make? How can they fly in the dark? What are their behavior patterns?
- Look up these words in the dictionary to see what they mean. How do they fit with the context of the story?

triathlete
receded
stalactites

historical
murky

society
crevice

opponent
expedition

- Jake, Tommy and Lexie found cave drawings in the bat cave. As an art project, create your own cave drawings similar to those the children in *Smuggler's Cave* found.
- The science of waves. Create a wave pool and make some observations. What happens to floating objects in the wave pool? If you have a small opening at the end of the wave pool (like an entrance to a cave), what happens as the water goes through the opening? What does the water do on the other side of the opening? Will a floating object be pulled through?

Websites of Interest

www.goodearthgraphics.com/virtcave/index.html

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonrepro/lessonplans/theme/caves04.htm>

<http://sealioncaves.com/home/>

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Marsh Island

Reviews

“The brisk pace may attract reluctant readers, and the suspense level is appropriate for the target audience.”
—*Library Media Connection*

“Bates does an excellent job of writing a fast-paced story for the early chapter book genre. Reading a section that takes place in the cave aloud to students would certainly pique their interest.”
—*Resource Links*

“Jake, Tommy and Lexie are engaging characters, and the addition of a female protagonist widens the appeal of this already captivating novel...This book would be thoroughly enjoyed by any child interested in classic adventure stories with resourceful characters...Recommended.”
—*CM Magazine*