Junior Reading (Y34)

Autumn 2021

For our reading classes together over the autumn term, we will be exploring each book in three lessons, with the first offering a general overview, the second delving into the stylistic and narrative elements of the writing and the final lesson offering a closer, more thorough examination of the text itself through the use of close textual analysis and with particular attention paid to literary techniques and structural devices. These lessons are designed to help the students develop new frameworks through which to read and understand literature, equipping them with the vocabulary with which to discuss themes, genre and morals.

*Lesson 1:* **Varjak Paw**

In lesson 1 we will be starting our introductory work on *Varjak Paw,* thinking about the central ideas and context of the novel. We will be looking at the notion of belonging at the heart of the novel, asking the class to identify times they have felt like Varjak does in the city. We will delve deeper into the idea of genre, thinking about how this changes and morphs over the course of the novel and the students will be encouraged to think about the deeper meaning behind the story. The class will also be given time to ask any questions they had about the book and to give their opinions on how the story, characters and themes made them feel.

*Lesson 2:* **Varjak Paw**

In lesson 2 we will dive further into the novel, thinking about the perspective of the book and the way Said builds suspense. We will develop a framework of themes to work with, identifying where and how thematic ideas make the reader relate to and empathise with the characters. We will think about the unique perspective of the novel, discussing other book which feature an animal protagonist. Finally, we will complete work on the fear of the unknown, looking at the way that the Vanishings become a symbol of Varjak’s status as an outsider and how the mystique around Jalal the Paw gives Varjak freedom to fulfil his destiny.

*Lesson 3:* **Varjak Paw**

In lesson 3 we will be focusing on developing the students’ analytical skills, looking at closely analysing the text of the novel. The class will be asked to discuss the way colour imagery and symbolism is used throughout the book, focusing on Varjak’s amber eyes. They will be asked to use their own experiences as inspiration and will be able to re-tell parts of the story whilst also having to work with the thematic framework Said creates in the book. This lesson will focus on how to draw out suspense and tension in a book, how to build convincing and interesting layers of symbolism and how to create a dreamlike atmosphere in the style of Said.