

MORT *The* MEEK

AND THE
RAVENS'
REVENGE

RACHEL DELAHAYE
ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE ERMOS



THE FIRST IN A WICKEDLY FUNNY NEW SERIES ABOUT AN ASPIRING PACIFIST IN A BRUTAL KINGDOM!

On Brutalia violence is a way of life. Ravenous ravens circle overhead, monstrous grot bears cause chaos and the streets are bulging with brawls. But Mort isn't like the other islanders – he's determined to live peacefully. His struggle is made even tougher when the cruel queen appoints Mort as Royal Executioner. No one has challenged the royals and lived to tell the tale.

Can Mort keep his head and outwit the queen?

Perfect for fans of the HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON series, FROSTHEART and THE NOTHING TO SEE HERE HOTEL.




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Chapter One

THE RAVENS OF BRUTALIA

(pages 1-6)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What are the punishments given out for breaking Brutalia's laws?
- What is Brutalia's motto?
- What do the people of Brutalia live in the shadow of?
- What does the call of the ravens sound like?
- Which four parts of the brain do the ravens dream about?
- Why should you not feel sorry for the ravens of Brutalia?
- How does this chapter 'set the scene nicely'?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Write a paragraph describing if you would like to live on Brutalia or not and why.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

GEOGRAPHY: Create your own maps of the island of Brutalia. Use coordinates and grid references to locate places such as the two badly built towers.



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Chapter Two

RAVEN PIE

(pages 7-14)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- Whose trial had the people of Brutalia gathered to see?
- What was this month's non-death punishment of choice?
- Why did not one of the crowd say or do anything when the Queen asked for the guard to be taken away?
- Why does the Queen now call them 'Royal Ravens'?
- Why does Weed grow his own fruit, even though that is a crime too?
- Why was Brutalia not a fair place? Do you agree with this?
- How are we introduced to Mort, the main character, at the end of Chapter Two?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Write a character profile for the Queen including all the information that you know and anything you can infer about her so far.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

DRAMA: In small groups, re-enact the chaotic trial scene. Freeze frame at different points and reflect on what each character is feeling.





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Chapter Three THE EXECUTION

(pages 15-25)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- Why did Weed want Mort to be there at his execution?
- Who was the next most important person in Brutalia after the Queen and King?
- How does Mort know the Royal Executioner?
- How does the double-page picture help the reader to picture the scene of the execution?
- What does the word 'barbaric' mean?
- Why is Mort's mum unable to take on the role of Royal Executioner?
- How do you think Mort is feeling at the end of this chapter?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Mort is a pacifist but has just been employed in the role of Royal Executioner. Write a balanced argument about the concept of Pacifism, thinking carefully about the reasons for pacifism, its links to global peace and why people believe in it.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

HISTORY: Learn more about crime and punishment and what it was like to be an executioner in periods of time throughout history like the Middle Ages.

DRAMA: Present a television broadcast breaking the news that Mort has been selected as the Royal Executioner for Brutalia. Interview Mort on his new role.





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Chapter Four MORT THE BRUTE

(pages 26-37)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- Who is speaking at the start of each chapter?
- What do the phrases 'walk the walk' and 'talk the talk' mean?
- What is a pacifist?
- Who are Mort's siblings?
- How did Mort earn his nickname of 'Mort the Meek'?
- What does it mean to be 'meek'?
- How did Uncle Bob show he was a brutalist?
- Who might the person be on the boat at the end of this chapter?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Write a Pacifist Promise, in the style of the one Mort recites every day, beginning with *I, a member of the Pacifist Society of Brutalia, promise...*

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

HISTORY: Research and create a fact file about the role of pacifists throughout history such as Mahatma Gandhi and the conscientious objectors during the war. Do pacifists exist today? Share what you learn together.



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Chapter Five

OH NO!

(pages 38-49)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What is a homophone?
- Why does Mort struggle to make a fist? What does this tell you about his character?
- Why do you think the Body Luggers hadn't thrown Bob into the Salty Sea from the Great North Rock like they were supposed to?
- Why does everybody in Brutalia avoid the Body Lugger? What are the rumours about what happens if you come into contact with a Body Lugger?
- Where does the name 'Mort' come from and why is it a well-chosen name for his character?
- What impression do you get of Ono?
- What does Mort learn about himself through meeting Ono?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Write the events of the chapter from Ono's perspective. Think about the different emotions Ono experiences and Ono's interaction with Mort.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

LITERACY: Research the etymology of words like 'Mort' from Latin and discover how words in the English language come from Latin. Create a character and give it a name from another language. Describe your character's personality and illustrate it.



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Chapter Six THE MILLETS

(pages 50-59)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- Who is Snit Parlot?
- Why is Mort worried about his siblings shouting, ‘Mort the Meek’?
- What was his mother’s weapon of choice?
- Why is Mort the only one with permission to visit Weed?
- What do the Millets do instead of fighting?
- How does the author use humour in this chapter when Mort knocks on the Millets’ door and enters their house?
- What does Mort snatch from the worktop as he leaves the Millets’ house?
How might this come in handy?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Write down five questions that you would ask Weed when you go and visit him in the Cell of Doom.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY: Bake your own bread like the Millets family do. Think carefully about the cooking skills you need to use such as weighing and measuring, following a recipe and food safety.





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Chapter Seven THE CELL OF DOOM

(pages 60-72)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What condition was a common complaint from the prisoners from sitting on the cold stone floors?
- Why are the prisoners of the Cell of Doom unable to sleep?
- How does Mort change from Mort the Meek to Mort the Brute when hearing the Every-ten-minute Horn Blower is nearby?
- What is the 'good news' Mort tells about Weed about his impending death? Why does Weed not think it is good news?
- Why does Mort think that the ravens are acting weird?
- When is Mort challenged to a fight and against what?
- How would you describe the mood between Mort and Malc Calm?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Create a Role on the Wall to show the differences in character between Mort the Meek and Mort the Brute. Write words to describe Mort the Brute and phrases that he says around the outside of the outline and words to describe Mort the Meek and phrases that he says on the inside of the outline.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

DRAMA: Work with a partner to act out the difference between how Mort the Meek and Mort the Brute would behave. What would Mort the Meek do or say? What would Mort the Brute do or say?

MATHS: Compare and contrast the similarities and differences between Mort the Meek and Mort the Brute using a Venn diagram.



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Chapter Eight SCAREDY CAT (pages 73-86)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- How does Mags manage to look so good?
- Why did Mags show no fear towards the Queen?
- What is the book that might give Mort his only chance of survival called?
- What is the name of the tiger?
- How does the writer create tension as the tiger lunged at Mort?
- How did Mort beat Warren, without hurting him?
- Which animal does the Queen line up for Mort to fight next?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Write your own rhyming poem about a flower of your choice like the one found in Mags' book, Foraging for Nature Stuff, about the *Coleus canina*, otherwise known as the 'Scaredy Cat'.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SCIENCE: Go foraging in nature for flowers.

Using an identification and spotter sheet, record which flowers grow in your school grounds.

Research how different plants are adapted to suit their environment in different ways. Pick a plant in the school grounds and keep a note of the changes you see throughout the year.





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Chapter Nine

DEAD MAN

(pages 87-103)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- How does Mort think that the ravens know that his life is over?
- What does 'gutless' mean? Why does Mort use it to describe himself?
- How does Mort feel when he sees Dead Man's Island?
- What makes Mort shudder?
- What was the name of the shack where the song was coming from?
- Why does Mort want to stay on Dead Man's Island?
- What does Mort find he has in common with Ono?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Write down as many synonyms as you can for the word 'meek.'

Seek help from a thesaurus if necessary. Use these synonyms in sentences of your own to show your understanding.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

RE: In this chapter, it explains that fighting goes against everything that Mort believes in. Find out more about what pacifism means in different religions like Christianity and Hinduism and the actions you can do in school and at home to help promote peace.





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Chapter Ten

GUTS

(pages 104-112)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- Why did Mort have the best night's sleep he's ever had?
- How is Dead Man's Island different to Brutalia?
- What words are used to describe the sights of Dead Man's Island?
- How does Mort feel when he thinks about Weed?
- What is the strange feeling that Mort is repeatedly experiencing?
- Mort says 'I might be Mort the Meek, but I'm not Mort the Mean'.
Which is better: to be meek or mean? Why?
- What idea do Mort and Ono come up with to help Mort beat the Grot Bear?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Using Dead Man's Island for inspiration, write a description of your own secret island and give it a name.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

PSHE: Write a short reflection emphasizing the importance of friendship and loyalty. Give examples of how you can be a good friend and the positive impact your kind actions can have on others.





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Chapter Eleven THE GROTESQUE FLIGHT

(pages 113-124)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What does the word 'grotesque' mean?
- What does 'beauty in the eye of the beholder' mean? Why is the Grot Bear ugly?
- How has Mort convinced the Queen that he is Mort the Brute not Mort the Meek?
- Why does Mort clutch his chest when he hears about Ono helping her dad with a body at number fifty-four Pitch Street?
- What were Weed's final words? Do you feel any sympathy for him?
- What does Mort realize about his feelings for Weed?
- How will Mort be mighty? Can you think of a time when you have been mighty?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Write a report for the local newspaper describing the events of the fight sequence. Create headlines for the article celebrating Mort the Brute.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

DRAMA: In small groups, take it in turns to act out the fight sequence between Mort and the sailors. Use props if you have them available.

ART: Create MORT THE MIGHTY posters after his victory over the sailors and the Grot Bear. Make sure you explain how strong his character is and how much of a brutalist he is, without being brutal!





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Chapter Twelve

BRAIN OVER BRAWN

(pages 125-138)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What is ‘brawn’?
- How does Mort feel when he wakes up? When have you felt determined to do something?
- How will Mort show Weed that he does still care?
- Why have the Millets started to bake excessively again?
- Why does Mort push through a doughnut to Malc Calm’s cell? What does this show about his character?
- How does Weed act when he is outside in the street?
- What do you think is causing the mysterious echo?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Write a diary entry from Mort’s perspective detailing the events of this chapter.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SCIENCE: Learn more about what an echo is and what causes sound reverberation when sound waves are reflected back off a surface.





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Chapter Thirteen

A SHORT CHAPTER ABOUT A PUZZLE

(pages 139-146)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- Why does Mort need silence, focus and concentration?
Do you need these things when solving a puzzle?
- How do Gosh and Gee behave towards Mort?
- What does it mean when Mort's mum says to 'defend her honour'?
- How does Mort suggest his mother deal with the problem?
- Do you agree that she should just ignore the name calling?
- How does Mort's dad react when Mort tells him about how he has acted recently? Why?
- Where does Mort picture himself to help him to think?
- What advice would you give him if you could?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Write a set of instructions detailing the plan of action to help Weed at his execution if you were Mort.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY: Design a puzzle for a friend to try. Test it out and see if they can solve it. Consider how you can make it harder or easier to solve and make improvements to your design.





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Chapter Fourteen

THE STAGE IS SET

(pages 147-158)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What was the atmosphere like in Brutalia's square?
- What word is used to describe the Queen feeling nastier than nasty?
- Who has replaced Malc Calm as the Queen's bodyguard?
- How does it feel to be 'chilled to the core'?
- Should Weed trust Mort after being locked back up by him?
- What tactics have Mort and the Millets come up with to help Weed at his execution?
- Do you think everything will go to plan?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Write a setting description about what Brutalia is like on an execution day. Make sure to include the sights, sounds and smells of the day.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

PSHE: Note down at least three qualities that make Mort a good friend to Weed. Do the same for why Weed is good for Mort.





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Chapter Fifteen

A BAD OMEN

(pages 159-169)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What is a 'bad omen'?
- Why do the people of Brutalia come to watch Weed's execution? Can you think of a time in history when executions were treated as entertainment?
- Would you go and watch an execution? Why?
- What causes Mort to 'practically faint'?
- How does the writer describe the number of ravens in the sky?
- What is the collective noun used for a group of ravens?
- What does the Queen do to Mort after seeing the doughy Weed get the 'Raven's Revenge'?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Imagine you are one of the people in the crowd when the ravens come over in the sky and attack the doughy Weed. Write a diary entry, recounting what you saw from your perspective.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

MUSIC: Use different instruments to soundtrack the scene when the ravens come over in the sky. Think about the volume, tone and tempo of the music to make it as dramatic as you can.





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Chapter Sixteen

LIVE OR DIE

(pages 170-183)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What makes the crowd gasp?
- Why is it a surprise to hear from the King? What does he reveal?
- What does it mean when the Queen loses her 'mean demeanour'?
- Why is the Queen suspicious that Mort is a witch?
- What does Mort change the motto of Brutalia to?
- How had Mort made pacifist history?
- How would you feel if you were a member of the crowd after Mort's speech about the new rules?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Using Mort's speech as inspiration, write your own passionate and rousing speech. Use repetition, emotive language and other literary devices to try to make it as empowering and persuasive as it can be.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SPEAKING AND LISTENING: Prepare and present a one-minute speech to the class. Record your speech and peer-assess each other's speeches considering clarity, expression, volume and body language.





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Chapter Seventeen

FAREWELLS

(pages 184-198)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What does it mean when Ono says ‘You deserve a holiday’ to Mort?
- What is a portal into paradise?
- Do you think Mort should go to Dead Man’s Island or stay on Brutalia?
- What is Mort’s speciality?
- Why does Mort say he would not get bored of saving Weed?
- Do you think the last chapter is ‘deep and meaningful’? Why?
- How do you think Mort will teach Weed to be a pacifist?

WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

As there is another book in the series being published after this one, write your own continuation to the ending of this story predicting what you think will happen next.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

ART: Draw a raven emblem for the Brutalia Ravens round-object-kicking team.

LITERACY: For each of the main characters in the story, write a sentence summarizing what they have learned about themselves.

ART: Read the preview extract of the next book in the series and design the cover for it.

