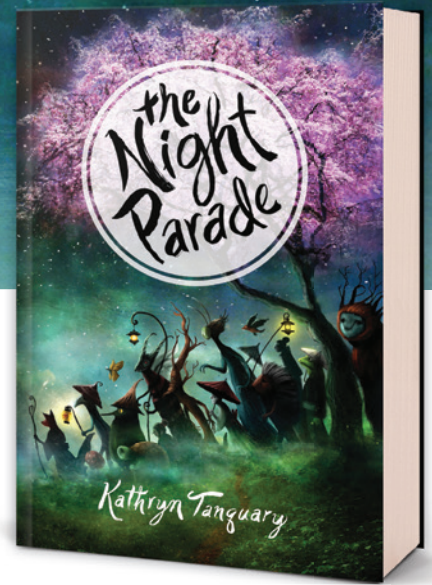


An Educator's Guide to *The Night Parade* by Kathryn Tanquary

A Common Core State Standards–Aligned Educator's Guide for Grades 5, 6, and 7

Note: The activities in this guide align with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts for Grades 5, 6, and 7, but standards for other grades may also apply.

Prepared by We Love Children's Books



About the Book

The last thing Saki Yamamoto wants to do for her summer vacation is trade in exciting Tokyo for the antiquated rituals and bad cell reception of her grandmother's rural village. Preparing for the Obon ceremony is boring. Then she meets the local kids and sees an opportunity for some fun, even if it means disrespecting her family's ancestral shrine on a malicious dare. When Saki rings a sacred bell, she invokes a death curse and has three nights to undo it. With the help of three spirit guides and some unexpected friends, Saki must prove her worth—or say good-bye to the world of the living forever...

Blending old traditions and tales with the modern world, *The Night Parade* is enriched by the imaginative creatures and novel settings of the traditional Japanese folktales that inspired it. Readers will enjoy accompanying Saki on her quest as she undoes the curse and discovers her true self in the process.



About the Author

Kathryn Tanquary is a graduate of Knox College with a BA in creative writing. She currently resides in Japan as a teacher of English as a foreign language in the Gunma Prefecture. This is her first novel, but she has been writing stories about fantastic creatures, mysterious powers, and real people for years. Learn more about her writing experiences and insights into her life in Japan at www.kathryntanquary.com.

Praise for *The Night Parade*

“Wonder and imagination abound in Tanquary’s debut, a fantasy set in a contemporary Japanese mountain village; filled with respect and admiration for cultural tradition, it evokes both Grimm’s fairy tales and Miyazaki’s films... Vivid details and realistic situations ensure accessibility, and subtle teaching moments are wrapped in wide-eyed enchantment.”

—*Publishers Weekly* Starred Review



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Pre-Reading Questions and Activities

Japanese legend has it that every year supernatural creatures parade during summer nights. This is called “The Night Parade of One Hundred Demons.” As a class, use library resources and the Internet to research this legend and look at some of the images of the Night Parade.

This book takes place in modern-day Japan. It is the story of a girl who visits her grandmother’s house in a rural community. Japanese folklore, beliefs, and traditions play a major role in her adventures. What do students know about these topics? Do they think they need a background in them to enjoy the story?

This book fits squarely into the realm of fantasy. What other fantasy novels do students know? How would they define a “fantasy” book? Do students like to read these books? What do students think would be most difficult about writing a fantasy? What would be the easiest part?

Vocabulary

Have students keep track of unfamiliar words and phrases on a Vocabulary Record Sheet as they read. Have them record the word or phrase and the page where it appears in the first column, derive the meaning from context in the second column, and record the dictionary meaning in the third column. In the fourth column, have them select a synonym that could have been used instead. Break students into pairs to discuss their vocabulary lists. Why did the author choose the words she did? Come together as a class to discuss the most interesting words from each group and create a class vocabulary list.

RL 5.4, 6.4, 7.4

RF 5.4

SL 5.1, 6.1, 7.1

L 5.4, 5.6, 6.4, 6.6, 7.4, 7.6

The Night Parade Glossary

There are many Japanese words in this book. As students read *The Night Parade*, have them record the words they encounter that they think are Japanese. Each entry should include the word and the sentence it was used in, the page number it was on, and a definition from context. Use Internet resources to confirm the meaning of the word. Come together as a class to compare word lists and create a class glossary. Discuss why the author used the words she did. What effect does using these Japanese words have on the reader? How would the book be different if the author had used more common American English words?

RL 5.4, 6.4, 7.4

RF 5.4

SL 5.1, 6.1, 7.1

L 5.4, 5.6, 6.4, 6.6, 7.4, 7.6



Post-Reading Discussion Questions and Activities

Character Map of Saki

In this book, we get to see Saki in a time of change. She is learning lessons about life, friendship, and herself. Come together as a class to create a character map of Saki using the following categories: physical description, what she says and thinks, what she does, and what others say and think about her. After this exercise, discuss the major elements of her character, how they change in the course of the book, and how she has grown. What does she learn during her adventures? What does she do during her adventures that show she has changed? What are the most effective ways used in this book to show readers Saki's character?

RL 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.3, 7.1, 7.3

SL 5.1, 6.1, 7.1

Spirit Guides

Saki meets three distinct spirit guides who help her fulfill her quest to lift the Death Curse. Each one has its own personality and abilities. The fox is clever but self-interested. The tengu is officious but reliable. The tanuki is mischievous, full of pranks, and fun. Have students create a character map for each guide. After they have completed these character maps, come together as a class to compare and contrast the spirit guides. How are their characters different? How are they the same? What are their unique powers? After the discussion, have each student write an essay about their favorite spirit guide. If students could pick any one to be their guide, which would they pick and why? Have students edit and revise as necessary before turning in their final paper.

RL 5.1, 5.3, 6.1, 6.3, 7.1

W 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 5.9, 5.10, 6.1, 6.4, 6.5, 6.10, 7.1, 7.4, 7.5, 7.10

SL 5.1, 6.1, 7.1

Speaking in Your Own Voice

Saki is the point of view character for *The Night Parade*. Discuss what we mean when we use the terms “point of view character” and “narrative voice.” Ask students how they think the book would be different if it had been told from a different point of view, such as Saki's grandmother, the spirit guides, or her new friend Maeda. How might it have been different if it had been written in the first person? Have each student write a scene which retells a pivotal event from a different character's point of view, or in a different narrative voice. Break students into pairs to practice reading their pieces aloud to each other. Encourage students to develop a voice appropriate to the character and have volunteers perform their scenes for the class.

RL 5.1, 5.3, 5.6, 6.1, 6.6, 7.1, 7.3, 7.6

RF 5.4

W 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.10, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.10, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.10

SL 5.1, 5.4, 6.1, 6.4, 7.1, 7.4



Themes

Identify major and minor themes in *The Night Parade* and how each one develops over the course of the story. What do students think Saki would say was the most important thing she learned on her visit to her grandmother's? What "theme" can readers take from this lesson Saki learns?

RL 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 7.1, 7.2

SL 5.1, 6.1, 7.1

Snappy Summary

A well-told story includes both large events that drive the action forward as well as smaller ones that convey detail, atmosphere, and nuance. Have each student choose two major plot points and four minor ones and write a simple, one-sentence summary of each one on an individual card. Break students into pairs and have them merge their sets of cards, arranging them in chronological order and clipping duplicate cards together. Next, have each pair merge with another pair and integrate all their cards, and so on until the class has one master plot summary combining all the cards. Now have students take turns reading the cards in order until the entire plot summary has been read aloud. Were any major events missed? What events were duplicated? How do the scenes and plot points, major and minor, fit together to tell the story? How do the main events contribute to the development of the theme, setting, and plot?

RL 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3

SL 5.1, 6.1, 7.1

Traditions: Obon

Saki and her family are journeying to Grandmother's house to participate in a traditional Obon festival. This festival marks the time when a family comes together to honor their ancestors. The exact traditions of the Obon festival and the date on which it is celebrated vary from region to region. Show the class video documentaries of the Obon Festival. Here are some options from YouTube to get you started:

- Learn Japanese Holidays: Obon – Japanese Pod 101
- OBON FEST JULY 2013 – the Maui Travel Guide
- Obon Lantern Festival – Kurt Bell

After watching the programs, have students write an essay comparing the Obon festival from the book with the video resources they have seen. What are the similarities? The differences? Did watching the videos help improve students' understanding of any of the Obon traditions as described in the book? Do students know of other cultures that have similar traditions?

RL 5.1, 6.1, 7.1

W 5.2, 5.4, 5.7, 5.10, 6.2, 6.4, 6.7, 6.10, 7.2, 7.4, 7.7, 7.10

SL 5.2, 6.2, 7.2



Fact or Fiction

The Night Parade blends accurate descriptions of Japanese culture and folklore with fictional plot elements and characters. Break students into small groups and have them review the book looking for cultural features, details, and information. Come together as a class and compile a list of cultural references the groups identified. Have each group select one or two of these references, and with the help of an adult, use the Internet and other resources to research them. Are these references accurate or were they part of the author's imagination? Examples could include: Details of life in a rural Japanese village; the Obon practices and ceremonies; folklore characters and their depiction—such as the spirit guides, the Night Parade itself, or the Village of the Object Spirits. Have each group prepare a presentation, including appropriate illustrations, posters, and handouts, and present their findings to the class. How did these real-life details improve the book? Was there anything that students found in their research that they would have included in the book had they written it?

RL 5.1, 6.1, 7.1

W 5.4, 5.7, 5.8, 6.4, 6.7, 6.8, 7.4, 7.7, 7.8

SL 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 6.1, 6.4, 6.5, 7.1, 7.4, 7.5

Dear Maeda... Your Friend, Saki

When she leaves, Saki promises to write Maeda a letter to tell the true story of her adventures in the spirit world. Have each student compose a letter from Saki to Maeda, focusing on one episode of her adventure. Students should retell the facts of the story in Saki's voice and also express some of her thoughts—they can even include a drawing! How did she feel about the episode? What did she learn from it, and how would she express that lesson to Maeda? Have students edit and revise their work before turning in the final copy. Come together as a class and discuss what it was like to work on this project. What did students learn about the book and about Saki? Why do they think Saki promised to write Maeda a real letter and not just send an email or a text?

RL 5.1, 5.6, 6.1, 6.6, 7.1

W 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.10, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.10, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.10

Words and Pictures

The fantastic creatures that Saki encounters in her adventures are visually compelling and have descriptions to match. In fact, artists have been creating illustrations of “The Night Parade of One Hundred Demons” for generations, so this is the perfect story for conversion into a more visual medium. Have each student select a passage to retell in graphic novel format. Instruct students to pay close attention to the text describing the demons Saki meets and the adventures she has, and to depict these elements in an imaginative, sensational way. Don't forget dialogue! Come together as a class and discuss what it was like trying to convert the text into a graphic novel. What aspects were most difficult? What elements work better as text? What work better as illustrations? How does a graphic novel compare to a novel? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach?

RL 5.1, 5.5, 5.7, 6.1, 6.5, 7.1, 7.7

W 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.10, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.10, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.10

SL 5.1, 5.5, 6.1, 6.5, 7.1, 7.5



What Happens Next?

The Night Parade ends with a few hints of what will happen next to Saki, her family, and her new friend Maeda. As a class, list these hints and clues and make up an outline for a sequel. Does Saki come back to the village? Does Maeda visit her in Tokyo? What happens to Grandmother? Once the class has created a complete outline, assign each student a section to write. Have students revise their work based on peer and teacher feedback and type the final results into a computer. Working in small groups, have students smooth out the transitions between the sections and publish your own class “all-original sequel.” Contact the author and send her a copy—signed by all the creators, of course!

RL 5.1, 6.1, 7.1

W 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.10, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.10, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.10

L 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3

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Visit the Common Core State Standards website to read about the individual standards listed in this guide:
<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>

