

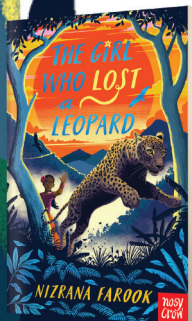
Discussion Notes and Activity Ideas



The Girl Who Lost a Leopard

Discussion Notes

- The story begins with Selvi hiding in the mountains. The author introduces us to the setting, mentioning ‘misty green hills’, ‘tall eucalyptus trees’, ‘velvety grassland’, ‘toque macaques’ and ‘a keena tree’ (pp. 2–3). Discuss the setting – can you picture what it might look like? Find images of anything you’re unsure of. Does this make a good setting for an adventure story?
- Why do you think the men are hunting Lokka? What might they want with a leopard?
- Selvi’s uncle gives her mother money, but he is also very rude to her. Do you think he has a right to treat her like this?
- Can you imagine having a leopard friend? If you could be friends with a wild animal – which would you be friends with and why?
- Selvi doesn’t have any friends at school, and she thinks it is because her classmates view her as different. What do you think about this?
- Selvi decides to give Amir another chance – do you think this is the right decision?
- Leopards are hunted for their bones, teeth and fur. As a group, discuss what you think about this.
- Selvi knows Lokka as a friend and an animal with a personality. How do hunters view leopards? How do you view wild animals?
- Amir acts differently at school. Why do you think he’s only nice to Selvi when they’re not around his other friends?
- Amir wants to control the leopard. Why is this wrong?
- When they fall, Selvi manages to stay calm – how important is her reassuring voice in helping Amir?
- After the fall, Selvi is worried about Lokka: ‘Selvi nodded, her mind spinning with different possibilities for where Lokka was as she looked out into the gathering darkness.’ (p. 83) Discuss what you think might have happened to the leopard.
- Lokka’s spots make him special and therefore the most endangered leopard in Serendib. What does ‘endangered’ mean? Do you know any animals that are endangered right now?
- Even though Amir told Ravindu about Lokka, Selvi decides to still be friends with him. Why do you think she does this?
- Selvi starts talking to people at school, and even makes a bag for Minoli. Why do you think she starts trying to make friends?
- Read the class debate about leopards closely (pp. 101–104). Discuss what you think about some of the arguments the children make. What do you think is the most convincing argument? Selvi stands up for what she believes. How important is this?



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Discussion Notes

- Selvi says that if they continue hunting, ‘Animals like leopards will be nearly gone and only live in special places and people would have to come from far and wide to see them because they’re so rare. They’ll live in cages or specially protected forests.’ (p. 103) Do you think we are already living in this world?
- Selvi realises that Amir now loves Lokka like she does: ‘The sight of him sitting there waiting patiently for her moved her in a way she couldn’t explain.’ (p.121) Why do you think this means so much to her?
- Think about something that you care for – how does it feel when you find someone who feels the same way?
- Lokka tries to protect Selvi from Jansz and Liyanage. Would you do this for your friends?
- Selvi discovers that her uncle is the boss who Jansz is working for. Did you see this twist coming? How do you think Selvi and her mum feel?
- At the beginning of the story, Selvi is viewed as different from her classmates because of her ‘wild’ nature, but by the end of the book, her classmates join in to help find Lokka. Discuss why you think this joint goal brought them all together.
- Selvi decides to let Lokka go – discuss the ways they have both helped each other throughout the story. If Lokka could talk, how do you think he would describe Selvi?
- Friendship plays a key part in the story. What acts of friendship do we see in the story? e.g. Selvi making a bag for Minoli. Discuss what makes a good friend, and why these acts were so important.
- What has this story taught you about animals and the importance of protecting them?



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The Girl Who Lost a Leopard

Activity Ideas

Endangered Animals Poster

In *The Girl Who Lost a Leopard*, Lokka is endangered. Research what 'endangered' means and find some examples of animals that are endangered. What has caused them to become endangered? Are there any ways to help these animals? Choose one of the animals and create a poster to raise awareness of the issue. Include a picture of the animal, the key issue and any ways that people can help. Create a display of these posters in your school so other people can learn about the animals too. Have conversations with your family and friends to let them know how they can help.

Lokka's Story

Lokka plays a huge role in the story, but we don't get to hear how he feels. Choose a scene from the book and rewrite it from Lokka's point of view. You could write about when he goes missing, when he comes face-to-face with the hunters or when Selvi rescues him. How does he feel? What do we learn about the other characters when Lokka is telling the story? Share your scenes with the class and think about how you all portray Lokka.

Animals and Habitats

Lokka is endangered because he is being hunted. Another key reason that leopards are endangered is because of the destruction of their habitats.

The Girl Who Lost a Leopard is set in Serendib, which is based on Sri Lanka where leopards live in the mountains, rainforests and grasslands. Research these habitats and either write a poem or create a piece of artwork based on one of them. Think about how important these habitats are and why they need to be protected. Create a class display on your chosen habitat featuring the poems and drawings as well as adding some ways that people can help protect them.



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