



# Champion of the Marsh

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions can be discussed verbally and/or written out on the lines provided. Parents and teachers may want to skip or explain questions that seem too sophisticated for your audience.

\*\*\* **BEFORE** READING CHAMPION OF THE MARSH \*\*\*

1. Do you believe in monsters? Why or why not? If not, where do you think the idea of “monsters” comes from?

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2. In your mind, what does a monster look like? Describe in a paragraph of 4-5 sentences. (Younger students can draw a picture.)

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3. What animal in nature reminds you most of a monster? Why?

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

4. Are all monsters bad and evil? Can some monsters be good?

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5. Can a person be a monster? If yes, in what way?

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6. Where would you expect to find a monster? Why?

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7. What would you do if you saw a monster?

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

8. Could you ever be friends with a monster? If so, under what circumstances?

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9. What physical characteristics would you expect monsters to have?

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10. What is your most important possession?

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11. Would you be willing to trade that object for something else? If yes, for what?

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

\*\*\* **WHILE** READING CHAMPION OF THE MARSH \*\*\*

1. What kind of creatures would you expect to find in a swamp?

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2. Crickets and other insects chirp and twitter as Matt nears the swamp. What is the difference between “chirp” and “twitter?” Can you think of any other words that have the same or similar meaning?

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3. Why do you think Kenny yells, “And no crazy lizards or big ‘ol bullfrogs!” What do those words suggest about Matt and Kenny’s friendship?

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4. Explain what is meant when the narrator says that Matt “knew he wanted monsters to exist and he hoped that was enough.”

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5. When Matt hits Mo in the head with a stone, Mo screams, “Owwwwwww!” Then Matt hides behind a tree and tries to squeeze between the creases in its bark. Squeezing between the creases in a tree’s bark is an example of “hyperbole.” Before you look up the word in a dictionary, what do you think “hyperbole” means?

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6. Why is Matt surprised and upset when Mo calls him a monster?

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

7. Mo has six arms. How many other animals or insects can you think of that have more than two arms? Why might Mo need six arms?

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8. Mo says “the moon is a spark of hope that exists even in the darkest night.” In your own words, what does that mean?

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9. Both Matt and Mo have bet their friends that monsters exist. What is suggested about cultures and relationships that Matt bets his catcher’s mitt and Mo an alligator tooth?

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10. When Mo appears, the other monsters react as if waiting for him to arrive. Why do you think they are waiting for Mo?

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11. When the monsters see Matt, Mo lays two arms over his shoulder and says, "They're bamboozled." Name some synonyms for bamboozled? Think of as many as you can.

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12. When Matt wins the Bobbing for Eyeballs contest, creatures howl, gasp, and stomp their feet, hooves, and tentacles. Other than howling and gasping, what are some other sounds and reactions monsters might make? Can you think of other types of limbs they might have in addition to feet, hooves, and tentacles?

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13. When Matt returns to the stump, Kenny opens his eyes and sees the laurel wreath on Matt's head. What is a laurel wreath? Why do the monsters crown him with a wreath instead of giving him a trophy or a medal?

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\*\*\* **AFTER** READING CHAMPION OF THE MARSH \*\*\*

1. How many sounds and smells can you remember from the reading? If necessary, go back and reread the story while searching for those senses.

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2. Why do Mo and his friends celebrate the moon? Why do you think the moon is important to them?

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3. Matt stares between gaps of dew-beaded branches at hundreds of monsters in a clearing. Draw one of the creatures. You can also describe your own monster and/or draw a picture of it.

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4. Would you have played Bobbing for Eyeballs thinking they were real eyeballs? Why or why not?

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5. What face would you make in the Horrifying Face Contest? Draw a horrifying face or describe your horrifying face in 4-5 sentences.

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6. Other than Bobbing for Eyeballs, Bowling for Bones, and the Horrifying Face Contest, name more games monsters might play.

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7. Think of another title for this story. What would be better than the original?

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8. What do you think happens after Matt and Kenny get back home? What happens the next day?

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9. Do Matt and Mo stay friends? Why or why not?

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10. What other special occasions might monsters celebrate?

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