

Loyalist to a Fault

The Dead Kid Detective Agency #3

By Evan Munday

Teacher Resource Guide developed by Eleanor Creasey, B.Ed., M. Ed.



Loyalist To A Fault is the third in Evan Munday's The Dead Kid Detective Agency series. As did the first and second books in the series, this book offers teachers and students the opportunity to explore the mystery genre, some great vocabulary, interesting settings, and another captivating whodunit starring girl detective October Schwartz. For those who have not yet read the previous books in the series, *The Dead Kid Detective Agency* and *Dial M for Morna* — both nominated for the Silver Birch Award — it is recommended that you and your students consider reading them first to appropriately set the context for this third mystery.

In this resource, several activities are suggested as possibilities for working with the text in middle school grades five through eight. This novel would also be a good read-aloud for the middle school and younger grades, and each of the activities could be modified depending on the level of the students, their learning needs, and the depth of exploration chosen. Some of the activities presented here are similar to those suggested in the resource guide for the first and second books in the series, but others present new and different challenges.

1. Predictions

Prior to reading *Loyalist To A Fault*, guide student predictions with some of the following discussion questions:

- What do you know about mystery novels?
- What mysteries have you read?
- What did you like about the mysteries you have read?
- What did the mysteries have in common?
- What did you like about the first and second books in this series?
- What do you think this book will be about when you read the title?
- Examine the illustration on the front cover. What do you see? Who do you see? What does the illustration tell you? When you examine the illustration, what do you think this book will be about?

- Discuss the title of the book. Why do you think this title was used? To what does the author refer when he uses the word “loyalist”?
- There is an epigraph at the beginning of the book. It reads, “I’m on a boat!” and is from The Lonely Island. What do you think this means and how might it play into the mystery you are about to read?

Once these discussions have taken place, it is helpful for students to start a KWL Chart so they can document what they think they already know and consider what might happen in the book. At this point in the study, students will complete the first two columns based on the discussion that was held surrounding the above .

<i>K</i> What I Know	<i>W</i> What I Would Like To Know	<i>L</i> What I Learned

Let the students know that completing this chart will be an ongoing part of their study and reading. Ask them to add to the “What I Learned” column as they discover details that answer their questions or that present new information to them as they read. This chart can be referred to while reading the book as new insights become available, and could be a good forum for class discussions.

2.Exploring the Text

Vocabulary

In his writing, Evan Munday uses a multitude of words that provide a grand opportunity for readers to expand their vocabularies. The following project is presented as one way of working with the words in this novel.

Make Your Own Crossword Puzzle

It is suggested that you do one together as a class first. Then divide the class into three groups and assign each group one of the following lists to make their own crossword puzzle. As a culminating activity, have the students trade puzzles so they can be exposed to as many new words as possible. A suggestion would be to use List 1 to do together as a class, and lists 2, 3, and 4 for individual crossword puzzle-making.

List 1

heinous, p. 5
 sinister, p. 5
 rasping, p. 6
 petty, p. 6
 burnished, p. 7
 decrepit, p. 9
 morbid, p. 10
 razed, p. 10
 shenanigans, p. 11
 montage, p. 11
 sporking, p. 12
 furrow, p. 16
 sallow, p. 17
 intangible, p. 18
 necromancy, p. 18
 disdain, p. 23
 adamant, p. 23
 infatuation, p. 24
 bearings, p. 27
 guillotine, p. 32
 morose, p. 33
 sneer, p. 33
 spritely, p. 34
 cacophony, p. 36
 clandestine, p. 37

List 2

desiccated, p. 38
 nocturnal, p. 41
 alibi, p. 45
 daubed, p. 45
 admonished, p. 46
 emanate, p. 48
 nemesis, p. 49
 devoid, p. 53
 revelation, p. 58
 conundrums, p. 61
 pertinent, p. 64
 suffice, p. 64
 nook, p. 71
 exonerated, p. 72
 tardy, p. 72
 guise, p. 73
 cryptic, p. 82
 stonewall, p. 84
 platonic, p. 86
 tauntaun, p. 98
 furtive, p. 102
 empathy, p. 113
 grand larceny, p. 115
 conflagration, p. 124
 dissipated, p. 125

List 3

dolt, p. 127
 ingenious, p. 136
 antivenom, p. 136
 docent, p. 137
 compatriot, p. 139
 intuitive, p. 139
 aficionado, p. 142
 mausoleum, p. 143
 visceral, p. 144
 rhetorically, p. 147
 nemesis, p. 148
 pratfalls, p. 153
 abject, p. 153
 algorithm, p. 157
 befuddlement, p. 159
 assailant, p. 166
 decapitate, p. 170
 astrolabe, p. 179
 revelations, p. 180
 mused, p. 188
 inconsolable, p. 204
 tumult, p. 205
 goading, p. 206
 berated, p. 212
 admonished, p. 212

List 4

introspection, p. 214
 anthropomorphic,
 p. 219
 coven, p. 222
 rant, p. 223
 dubious, p. 225
 incarceration, p. 225
 incendiary, p. 225
 manifestoes, p. 225
 amenable, p. 230
 penchant, p. 237
 lupus, p. 240
 hoax, p. 240
 anachronistic, p. 241
 euphemism, p. 241
 smattering, p. 241
 prevaricating, p. 242
 confrontation, p. 242
 mortified, p. 242
 facetiously, p. 244
 melee, p. 247
 pentagon, p. 251
 pentagram, p. 251
 stellar, p. 254
 chloroform, p. 257
 retrospect, p. 270

Steps to follow for making a crossword puzzle:

1. Choose 25 words.
2. Make a 25 x 25 grid in Word.
3. Print three copies of the grid.
4. On one copy, print each word, and put one letter in each square.
5. Cut out the words.
6. Using the cut-out words and the second copy of the grid, place the words on the grid, such that crosswords are used; in other words, that letters overlap appropriately. This may take some juggling. Once you have decided, these may be taped or glued to this second grid.
7. In pencil, print the words on the third grid (the blank one), being careful to put them in the right spaces.
8. Add numbers. From the top across and down, number “across” words and “down” words.
9. On the third copy of the grid (the one with the words in pencil), shade all the squares that will not be used.
10. Erase the words that you have printed in pencil, being careful to leave the numbers un-erased.

11. Arrange the words as to “Across” and “Down” and in number order to form a “clues” section below the final grid.
12. Look up a definition for each word and include it in the “clues” section beside the correct word in the clues section. Continue to work in pencil!
13. Erase the words and leave the definitions.

Your crossword puzzle is now ready to use!

Words in Context

Being able to decide on the definition of a word from its context (the examination of the parts of the sentence or sentences surrounding the word) is one way to find meaning. Below are ten sentences from *Loyalist To A Fault*. Read each sentence and then, using the context of the underlined word, make an educated guess about the meaning of the word. Following completion, discuss as a class.

1. (p. 12) “Shame about the radio,” October sighed, sporking some macaroni salad.
sporking means _____
2. (p. 18) That set the dead kids off on a massive belly laugh.
massive means _____
3. (p. 19) Tabetha Scott threw me some serious stink-eye.
stink-eye means _____
4. (p. 27) Derek added, “Bears make good navigators. They’re always able to find their bearings.”
bearings means _____
5. (p. 28) “Sorry,” Derek said, though whether he was expressing his condolences over Cyril’s early death or just reminding us all of the board game he wanted to play, I can’t be sure.
condolences means _____
6. (p. 36) “Remember, these history projects are important. We’re at the end of the semester,” Fenstermacher shouted over the cacophony of kids shifting their desks and stuffing their backpacks.
cacophony means _____
7. (p. 37) And while it was true that October Schwartz would (maybe) see Ms. Fenstermacher at the Stickville Museum on Sunday, she had clandestine plans to visit much earlier.
clandestine means _____
8. (p. 166) As October desperately tried to figure out how to get around the pirate and, you know, not bawl uncontrollably, her assailant calmly collected the photos and trophies and placed them in his satchel.

assailant means _____

9. (p. 204) Our son, Cyril, was found dead just days ago, drowned near the ship Eustace was building. Eustace and I have been inconsolable.

inconsolable means _____

10. (p. 242) October, realizing that she should probably be appreciative that her dad cared enough to see her presentation, was instead mortified.

mortified means _____

Figurative Language

In the novel, Munday frequently uses figurative language to help the reader visualize what he is saying, and to add interest to his descriptions. He makes extensive use of the figure of speech called **simile**.

When using figurative language, the writer describes something through the use of unusual or unexpected comparisons, for effect, interest, and to make things clearer. In figurative language there is always a comparison between different things. Readers are not intended to interpret these comparisons in a literal sense. Figurative language appeals to the imagination and can provide new ways of looking at and thinking about what is being considered.

A figure of speech that directly compares two different nouns by using the words “like,” “as,” or “than” is called a simile. Similes indirectly compare two nouns (persons, places or things) by allowing them to remain distinct.

Example: *Chris was as fast as a speeding bullet.*

(This sentence indirectly compares Chris and a speeding bullet.)

Simile Exercise #1

Below are some similes from the novel. Look each up and write the comparisons used by the author.

1. (p.77) The pirate, still glowing in the center of the library like a tile in Michael Jackson’s video for “Billie Jean,” staggered back and grasped at his sword handle.

compares _____ *and* _____

2. (p. 98) When she noticed October cross the threshold of the kitchen, a cruel smile opened up on Ashlie’s face like the belly wound of the tauntaun Han Solo cuts open in *The Empire Strikes Back*.

compares _____ *and* _____

3. (p. 115) The P.A. system crackled like a half-finished firework, then the morning announcements commenced . . .

compares _____ *and* _____

4. (p. 178) “You stop right there,” he said, holding a black baton in front of him like a light sabre.

compares _____ *and* _____

5. (p. 215) The boxy building, missing any sort of real roof, stood out in Spindlewood Lane like a Great Dane standing in a police lineup.

compares _____ *and* _____

6. (p. 217) October’s mind raced like a greyhound on a doggie treadmill.

compares _____ *and* _____

7. (p. 218) Disappointment crawled onto October’s shoulders like a short girlfriend attempting to see Limp Bizkit’s set at a summer music festival.

compares _____ *and* _____

8. (p. 241) So her classes with Mr. Martz, her sometime- ally Mr. Santuzzi, and Mrs. Tischmann felt as long and unnecessary as the extended cuts of the *Lord of the Rings* movies.

compares _____ *and* _____

Simile Exercise #2

Using the comparative words “like,” “as,” or “than,” create and write five similes of your own. Remember that similes aid description and help to paint a picture in the reader’s mind.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Character

Character Sketch

Write a character sketch of October Schwartz. In several paragraphs, discuss the following:

- Who is October and what is her role in the story?
- What are her goals?
- Why is she important in the story?
- Is she a protagonist or antagonist?

- What do you like or dislike about October Schwartz and why?
- Summarize the outcome of the story as it relates to October. Did she achieve her goals?

Remember to use evidence from the story to support your character sketch.

Interview Development

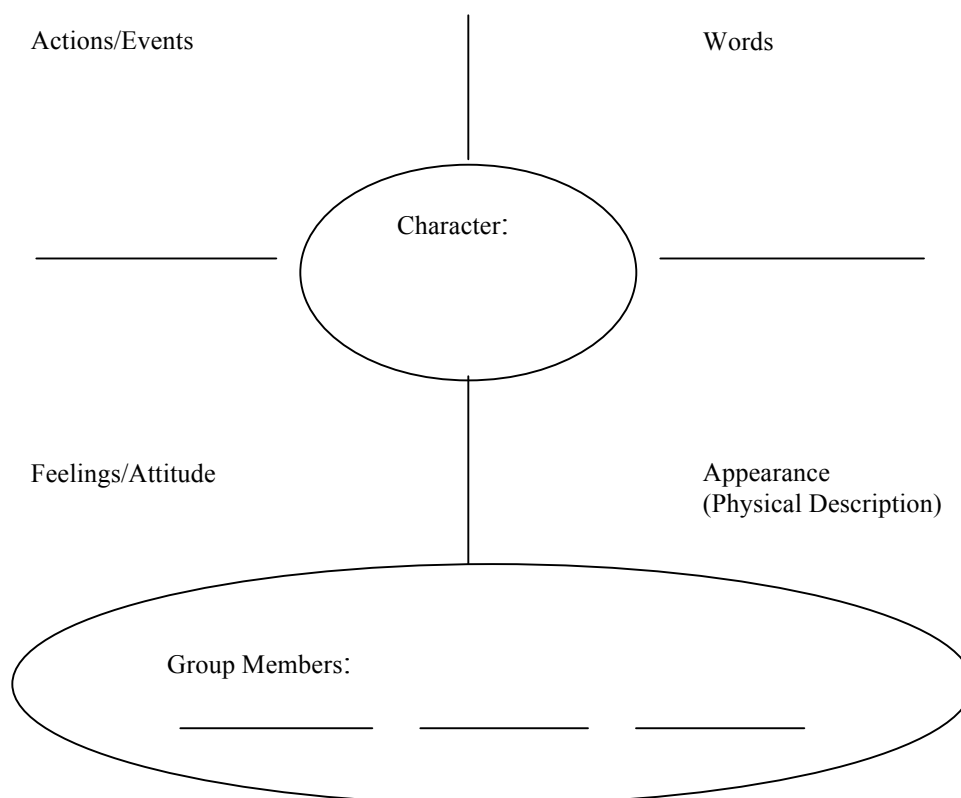
Divide the class into two groups, and have each group choose a character from the story: October Schwartz, Ashlie Salmons, or Cyril Cooper. The groups develop ten questions they would like to ask their character. They then write the answers they think their character would give to these questions. All of this is to be based on what they know of the character and how he or she acts in the story.

When the questions and answers have been developed, the group turns them into an interview. One group member is the interviewer and the other is the character. The interview is presented to the class, and the written portion is submitted to the teacher. Teachers may choose to assess students on the process of working in a group, the quality of questions and answers, and their oral presentation.

Character Web

In this assignment, students are divided into groups of three. In each group, a facilitator, a recorder, and a reporter are assigned. The facilitator's job is to make sure the group stays on topic and to keep the discussion going, the recorder's job is to document the discussion as it develops, and the reporter's job is to report back orally to the large group when requested. All members are responsible for the research and participation in the discussions in addition to their specific role.

Each group is assigned a character from the story: October, Yumi, Mr. Schwartz, or Ms. Fenstermacher. (There will be multiple groups studying a particular character.) The assignment is to discuss the character, record information in the template below (including page numbers to support documentation), then present the information to the class.



Setting

Munday describes a number of locations in the story. He uses strong and evocative terms and phrases to paint a picture in the reader's mind. He also illustrates parts of the story and these illustrations help the reader to visualize people, places and other items mentioned.

In the first activity, students are asked to respond to some of these settings by drawing them. Two descriptive passages are highlighted below, and, for each, students are asked to sketch the described location during the reading of the book. There are many descriptive passages in this novel, and students might choose to keep a sketch journal to record their impressions as the reading progresses. Teachers might use this opportunity to offer students some instruction on sketching.

- (p. 121) Goth Hardware Clerk, also known as Percy, looked nearly identical to how October remembered him: a long mop of jet-black hair, shorn closely on the one side; fishnet sleeves beneath his green uniform golf shirt; black boots with the shoelaces carelessly left undone. The only new additions to his wardrobe were black racing gloves that he was presumably wearing to protect his hands as he restocked the larger tools.

- (p. 142) Turned out there were two security guards stationed by the wooden gangplank to the ship like bouncers outside a nightclub. Dressed in big black parkas, both the large one with a black goatee and the skinnier one with glasses sipped slowly from steaming coffee cups and followed my approach with their eyes, like two cats watching a pigeon with a broken leg limp closer and closer to their window ledge.

A second activity for setting would involve the students choosing a particular setting and making their own diorama depicting it. Again, there is great detail in Munday's writing, and students would attempt to capture this detail in their dioramas.

What's in a Mystery?

Reading and studying this book offers an opportunity to learn about the mystery genre in literature. Developing a "mystery cube" as the reading proceeds, or as a culminating activity, can help the readers learn more about the mystery genre and understand how *Loyalist To A Fault* aligns with this genre.

Following a class discussion, students should collect information under the following headings: Setting, Detective, Crime or Mystery, Victim, Clues, Solution. Find a six-sided cube template (there are many available on the internet) and have this available for students. Once they have collected the information they need, students should edit it so it will fit the small spaces on the cube, and they should then proceed to make their own cube. Encourage them to complete the cubes in an artistic manner, with appropriate illustrations and designs. When assembled, the cubes can be used to decorate the classroom.

3. Interesting Features

1. The author alternates between two points of view in the story: first person (with October as narrator) and third person. When October tells the story, the reader is able to understand or feel closer to October's perspective. When the third-person point of view is used, the reader receives external, objective, factual information about the goings on. Teachers should point this out to the students and have students locate the different points of view in the different chapters. This could be followed up by a class discussion based on these questions:

- As a reader, what point of view makes you feel more involved in the story?
- Why do you think Evan Munday chose to alternate points of view in this story?
- What point of view do you think is more effective in a mystery and why?

2. Evan Munday uses a number of illustrations in his story. Here are some questions to consider about these illustrations:

- How do the illustrations enhance the story?
- How do the illustrations help the reader's understanding of the events in the story?
- Do you like these illustrations as part of this mystery novel? Why or why not?

3. *Loyalist To A Fault* ends with a cliffhanger. A cliffhanger is a dilemma, revelation or twist in the turn of events that keeps the reader eager to find out what happens next.

- What is the cliffhanger ending in this novel?
- What do you think will happen in the next mystery novel in this series?

Using the cliffhanger ending in this novel as a model, teachers could discuss this method with students and devise writing projects and practices to include the notion of cliffhangers.

4. Extending the Text

Poetry

Writing poetry can be an effective and fun way to explore characters and events in a story.

- Limericks are humorous, light, five-line verses that use an AABBA rhyme scheme. Following instruction on the limerick form, students could choose a character from the story and write their own limerick. Here is an example:

There once was a sleuth name of Schwartz,
October was twelve say reports;
With dead kids in hand,
She scoured the land,
The murderer spent time in the courts.

- Cinquains are five line poems that do not rhyme. The first line contains a subject, the second line contains two descriptive words (adjectives), the third line contains three action words (verbs), the fourth line contains a phrase or sentence describing the subject, and the fifth line contains a word that means something similar to the subject. Again, following instruction on this form, students could choose a character and write their own cinquain. Here is an example:

October
Curious, precocious
Seeking, writing, snooping
She solved the mystery.
Sleuth

Writing News Articles

Using the events of this mystery story, write a news article. The following guidelines for a news article should be shared with students and followed by them:

- **Headline:** a short, attention-getting statement about the event
- **Byline:** tells who wrote the news article

- Lead Paragraph: contains the 5 W's (who, what, when, where, why) and the one H (how) — the writer shares the answers to these questions in the opening paragraph of the article
- Explanation: up to two further paragraphs containing more information the reader might want to know

Students should be told to visualize a triangle, with the most important information in the lead paragraph, and less important information later in the article.

Write Another Chapter

Sometimes we read a book that so engages us that we wish the book would never end. Take this opportunity to pretend that *Loyalist To A Fault* did not end as in the book. Write another chapter and have it end as you like. Here are some questions to consider as you prepare to write your own final chapter of the book:

1. What would you call your new chapter?
2. Would October find out what happened to her mother?
3. What would the agency discover about Mrs. Crookshank's "shopping list?"
4. What would happen to Mrs. Crookshank?
5. Which of the Dead Kids would be the focus for the continuing story?
6. What would happen to October's Dad in his relationship with Ashlie Salmons' mother?

These are only some possibilities you might consider. You may well have several ideas of your own to pursue. In this assignment, you are the author!

Research

Cyril Cooper was from a family that had strong ties to England. At his particular point in history, they were known as United Empire Loyalists and they played an important role in the development of Canada. Research United Empire Loyalists and present your findings as a PowerPoint presentation, a booklet, or a poster.