

Study Guide to accompany Ben Mikaelson's

# *Touching Spirit Bear*



## STUDENT WORKBOOK



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER: \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS PERIOD: \_\_\_\_\_

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>About the Author of Touching Spirit Bear</i>	ii
<i>Part 1 Pre-Reading Activities</i>	1
<i>What Is.....</i>	2
<i>Circle Justice</i>	
<i>A Spirit Bear</i>	
<i>About the Setting of Our Story:</i>	3
<i>Southeast Alaska and The Great Bear Rainforest</i>	
<i>KWL and NWL Research -</i>	5
<i>What does it take to survive on an island in the Alaskan wilderness?</i>	
<i>The Power of Words: Key Vocabulary</i>	7
<i>Touching Spirit Bear Part 1</i>	12
<i>Questions to Consider: Chapter 1</i>	13
<i>Questions to Consider: Chapter 2</i>	14
<i>Characters in Profile: Cole Matthews</i>	15
<i>The Power of Words: More Key Vocabulary</i>	17



# WHAT IS....

## CIRCLE JUSTICE

Circle Justice is a form of justice found in many native cultures from around the world. Although they may have different names, these councils share many traits.

Often, particularly among the North American First Nations, these councils are made up of all members of the community. In most cases, the goal is seldom to “punish”, but to understand and prevent a recurrence of the “crime”. Anyone affected by the “crime” has the right to be heard, and to take part in the “sentence” imposed.

## A SPIRIT BEAR

A Spirit Bear is a rare subspecies of the American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) known as the Kermode Bear (*Ursus americanus kermodei*), or Ghost Bear. This black bear is a white bear as a result of recessive genes being expressed. Current estimates place the total number of Spirit Bears between 300 and 1200 individuals, and they live within a small geographical area in British Columbia and southern Alaska.



# SETTING FOR OUR STORY: SOUTHEAST ALASKA AND THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST



Scale map of Alaska overlaid on map of the lower 48 contiguous States (Map A), and outline map of Alaska with Southeast Alaska highlighted (Map B). Source: State of Alaska.gov.

takes place in Minnesota and on a small island in Southeast Alaska, which is the darkened area on Map B.

Alaska is the largest state in the United States. As we can see from the scale map (Map A), the outermost points would stretch from Jacksonville, FL to San Francisco, CA. All of Iowa, about 90% of Missouri, Kansas, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, over half of Nebraska, and large areas of North and South Dakota as well as Oklahoma would all fit inside Alaska.

It is important to understand the vast size of the state in order to realize why some of our preconceptions may be incorrect. The story *Touching Spirit Bear*



## WHAT IS....

### CIRCLE JUSTICE

Circle Justice is a form of justice found in many native cultures from around the world. Although they may have different names, these councils share many traits.

Often, particularly among the North American First Nations, these councils are made up of all members of the community. In most cases, the goal is seldom to "punish", but to understand and prevent a recurrence of the "crime". Anyone affected by the "crime" has the right to be heard, and to take part in the sentence imposed.

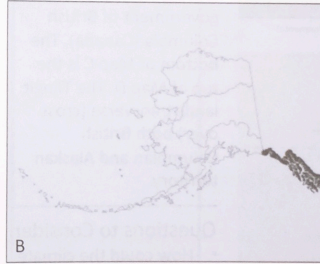
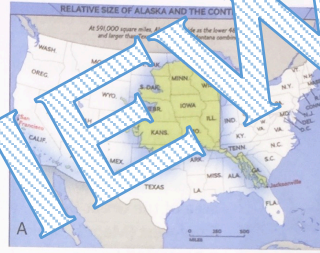
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2

## SETTING FOR OUR STORY: SOUTHEAST ALASKA AND THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST



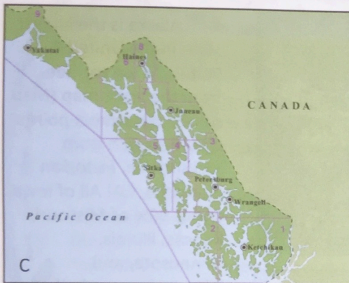
Scale map of Alaska overlaid on map of the lower 48 contiguous States (Map A), and outline map of Alaska with Southeast Alaska highlighted (Map B). Web, State of Alaska.gov.

takes place in Minnesota and on a small island in Southeast Alaska, which is the darkened area on Map B.

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3

## SETTING FOR OUR STORY: SOUTHEAST ALASKA AND THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST



Southeastern Alaska. Image: Department of Environmental Conservation, State of Alaska



Great Bear Rainforest, British Columbia

Although the exact island in the story is fictional, the island would be located in the lower portion of the map on the left (Map C), in Alaskan (US) waters. This is adjacent to the northern area of the Great Bear Rainforest (Map D), which is protected by the government of British Columbia (Canada). The bottom of Map D is the town of Hazelton. The Great Bear Rainforest is a cross between both British Columbian and Alaskan territory.

### Questions to Consider

- How could the climate affect the story?
- How much annual

- rainfall does this area receive?
- What are the average temperatures, both daytime and nighttime?
- What flora (plant) and fauna (animal) would be available for use?

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4

## WHAT IS THE CLIMATE AND TERRAIN LIKE ON AN ISLAND IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA?

Before beginning your research, fill in the first two columns. Fill in the last one after completing your research.

What I Want to Know	What I Learned

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# SETTING FOR OUR STORY: SOUTHEAST ALASKA AND THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST



Southeastern Alaska. Image: Department of Environmental Conservation, State of Alaska



Great Bear Rainforest, British Columbia

Although the exact island in the story is fictional, the island would be located in the lower portion of the map on the left (Map C), in Alaskan (US) waters. This is adjacent to the northern area of the Great Bear Rainforest (Map D), which is protected by the government of British Columbia (Canada). The bottom of Map C is the top of Map D. The Tlingit lands transverse (cross over) both British Columbian and Alaskan territory.

## Questions to Consider

How could the climate affect the story?

- How much annual




rainfall does this area receive?

- What are the average temperatures, both daytime and nighttime?
- What flora (plant) and fauna (animal) would be available for use?



## WHAT IS NECESSARY TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE ON ONE OF THESE ISLANDS?

In the first column, list the necessities you would need to barely survive. In the second column, list what you would want above the necessities. In the third column, what do you have NOW that you could live without?

What I <b>Need</b> to survive.... 	What I <b>Want</b> 	What I can <b>Live</b> without 

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## THE POWER OF WORDS: KEY VOCABULARY

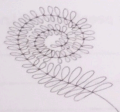
Complete the chart below by writing in the definition and then using the word in a sentence of your own creation. Use a DICTIONARY!!

Skiff (noun) Pg 3	A small, shallow, open boat with a narrow and square prow and square stern, propelled by oars, sails or a motor.	They sailed across the bay in the small skiff.
At.ooow (noun) Pg 19	A Tlingit word for an object with special meaning. In <i>Touching Spirit Bear</i> , the at.ooow is a blanket made of cedar bark and mountain goat hair. The patterns tell family histories and stories.	
Omen (noun) Pg 3		
Banishment (noun) Pg 3		
Feigned (verb) Pg 5		
Remote (adjective) Pg 6		

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## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: CHAPTER 22

1. What is a significant difference in Cole's emotional response when he is unsuccessful at "becoming invisible"? Why is this important?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How did Cole betray the beaver's trust? Do you believe that it was really trust, or did the beaver just not notice him?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why do you believe that Edwin is not staying to visit when he brings supplies? Is he angry with Cole? What do you believe?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Have you figured out the secret to "being invisible"? What do you think?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Have you ever been invisible to anyone?  
\_\_\_\_\_



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70

## "Carve" Your Totem Pole

Draw in pictures of animals or symbols to create your personal "totem pole."



To the side, describe what your totems are and what they represent in your life or family history.

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# WHAT IS NECESSARY TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE ON ONE OF THESE ISLANDS?

In the first column, list the necessities you would need to barely survive. In the second column, list what you would want above the necessities. In the third column, what do you have NOW that you could live without?

<p>What I <b>Need</b> to survive....</p> 	<p>What I <b>Want</b> to make life comfortable...</p> 	<p>What I can <b>Leave</b> behind and live without...  ?</p>





# THE POWER OF WORDS: KEY VOCABULARY

Complete the chart below by filling in the definition and then using the word in a sentence of your own creation. It's a GLOSSARY!!

<b>Skiff (noun)</b> Pg 3	A small, flat-bottomed, open boat with a sharp prow and square stern, propelled by oars, sails, or a motor.	They sailed across the bay in the small skiff.
<b>At.òow (noun)</b> Pg 19	A traditional form of object with intricate designs. In <i>Touching Spirit Bear</i> , the at.òow is a blanket made of cedar bark and mountain goat hair. The patterns tell family histories and stories.	
<b>Omen (noun)</b> Pg 3		
<b>Banishment (noun)</b> Pg 3		
<b>Feigned (verb)</b> Pg 5		
<b>Remote (adjective)</b> Pg 6		



# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: CHAPTER 1

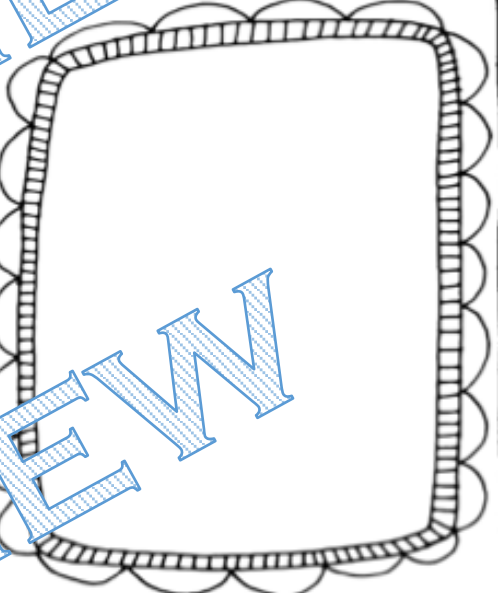
1. How does the 3<sup>rd</sup> person limited narrator point of view affect your image of Cole? How does it affect your image of Garvey? The 3<sup>rd</sup> person limited point of view of the narrator makes me see Cole as  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Is Garvey fooled by Cole? Why do you believe this? What is your proof? I believe that Garvey is/is not fooled by Cole because  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the PRIMARY difference between "regular" justice and Circle justice? The primary difference between "regular" justice and Circle Justice is that regular justice focuses on  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. If Edwin is not afraid of Cole, why does he let Cole "get away with" spitting on him? Edwin allows Cole to "get away with" spitting on him because Edwin  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The author uses Cole's memories to provide us with the "back story" of why Cole is in the skiff. Why is this effective, or not effective, for the story? Does the back story matter? Why or why not? I feel that the use of Cole's memories is/is not effective because  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Describe Cole in five (5) words!  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Describe Garvey in five (5) words!  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Sentence Stems Guide  
Your Struggling  
Writers in Critical  
Responses*



# CHARACTERS IN PROFILE: COLE MATTHEWS

Describe Cole's personality (his interests, character traits) in your own words and on the island (Chapters 1-7). \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Draw a picture of how you see Cole Matthews.

Compare Cole to people you know. Do you think you would be a friend to him? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Predict what Cole will be going through next. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



What are some reasons, or motivations, for Cole's attitudes?

---

---

Is he somebody you could feel sympathy for? Why or why not?

---

---

Why do you think that Cole fixated on Peter Driscoll as a target for his anger?

---

---

What is his attitude towards:

His mother?

---

---

His father?

---

---

The criminal justice system (not Circle Justice)?

---

---

Circle Justice?

---

---

Garvey and Edwin?

---

---



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: CHAPTER 5

1. We learn that Cole's greatest fear is total isolation and loneliness. If this is true, why do you believe he agreed to being punished? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Although the Koyukuk bear, often called the Ghost Bear or Spirit Bear, is real, many First Nations (or Native American) peoples have often given them a supernatural quality. How are these supernatural qualities demonstrated in Cole's first sighting of the Spirit Bear? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Cole becomes angry at the bear, and he throws a rock at it even though there is no way he can hit it. He then threatens to kill it if he ever sees it again. What can we infer, by his actions, are his true reasons for being angry? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. How does the atrociously perfect condition of the bear after Cole attempted to burn it, mirror the Spirit Bear? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. Why is it significant that Cole breaks the Circle rules and yells at his father? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.



# CHAPTER 8

## WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG, BAD BEAR?



"Spirit Bear" by Jeanne Balsam.

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# CHARACTERS IN PROFILE: THE SPIRIT BEAR

PUT YOURSELF IN THE BEAR'S PLACE.  
TELL HIS SIDE OF THE STORY IN  
CHAPTER 8

PREVIEW

PREVIEW

Creative Writing Exercise  
Helps your Student-  
Scholars Connect  
With the Characters in  
New and Unique Ways!



# TOUCHING SPIRIT BEAR PLOT DIAGRAM

PHYSICAL Climax

EMOTIONAL Climax

Event 4

Event 3

Event 2

Event 1

Fill in the Rising Action by selecting 4 events that take place on the island that are highly significant BEFORE chapter 8.

Exposition: Characters and setting(s) from Chapter 1 - 3

List the different types of conflicts (man vs. \_\_\_\_\_) found in the story:

List possible THEMES for the story (1 to 3 words each that explain the message):

Denouement (Resolution): Will be found in Part 2, Return to Spirit Bear

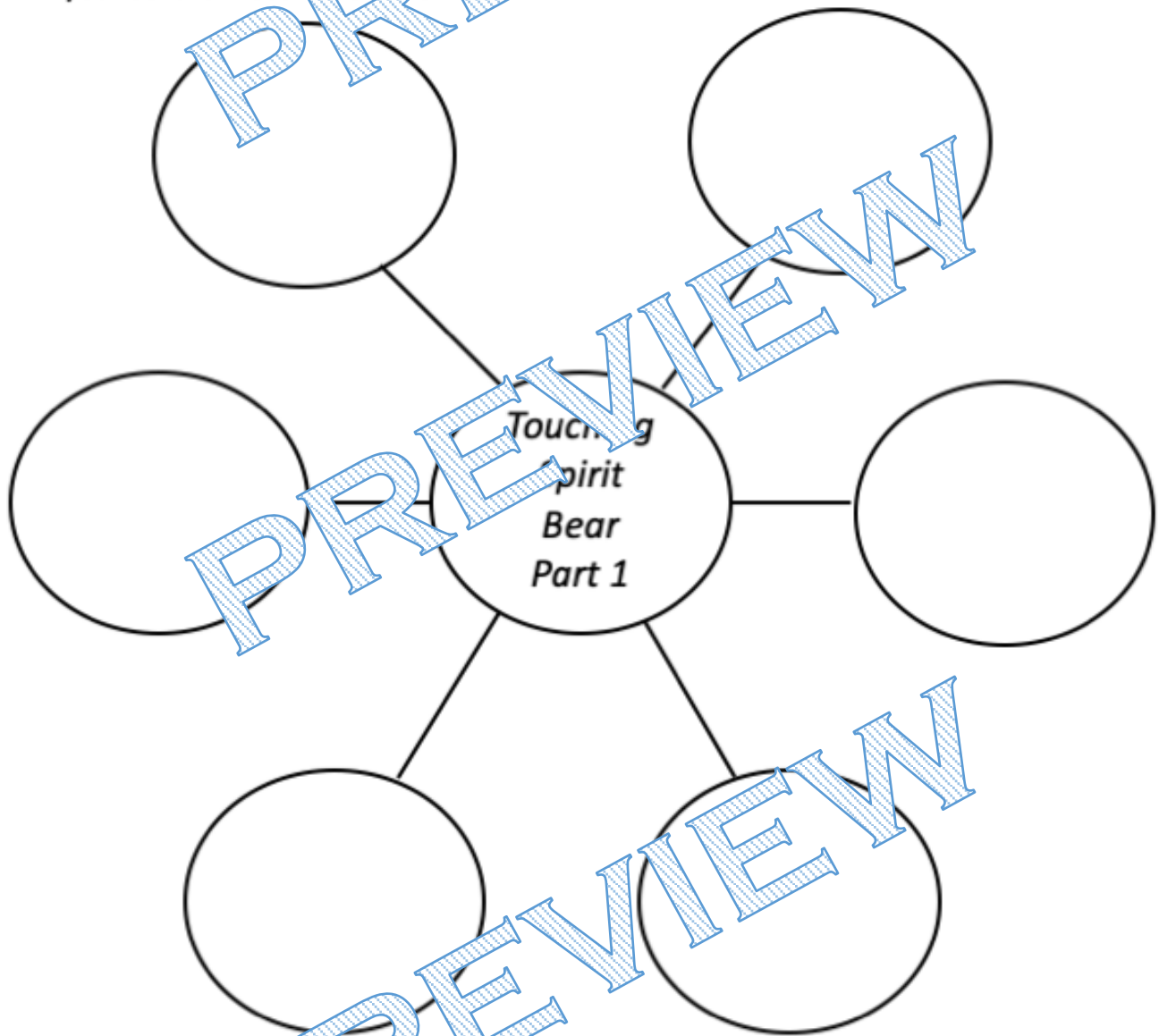
NOTE: There are two (2) separate but related climaxes in this part of the story! One is physical, and the other is mental/emotional.



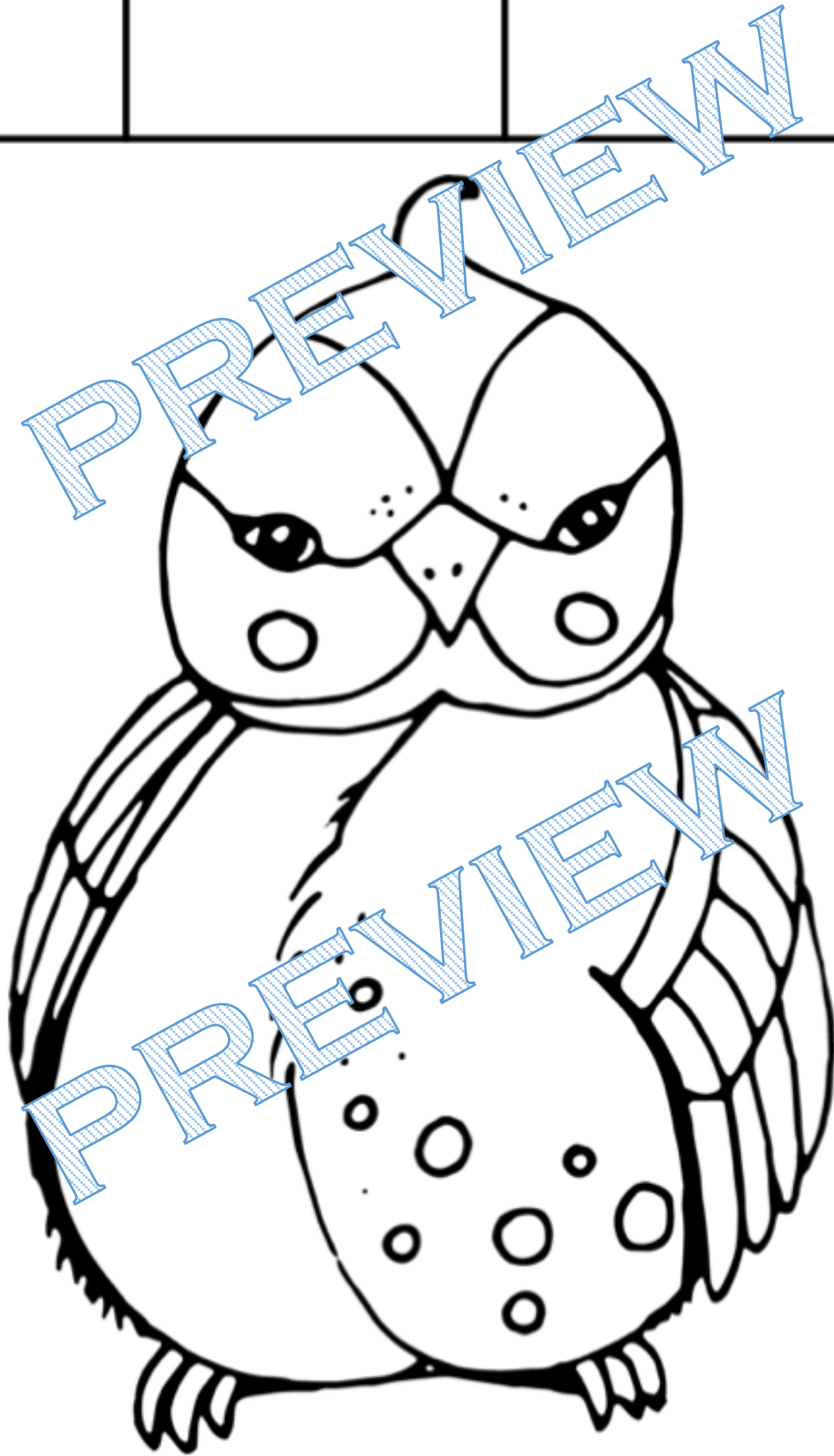


# Let's Talk THEME

We define a THEME as the subject of a piece of literature, or an idea that recurs throughout a piece of literature. Most writing has more than one possible theme, such as survival or coming of age. Here are a number of themes that you can find in Part 1 of *Touching Spirit Bear*. In the idea web below, list those you feel are most important.



Ceremoniously  
(adverb)  
Pg 191



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# "Carve" Your Totem Pole

Draw in pictures of animals or symbols to create your personal "totem pole".

To the side, describe what your totems are and what they represent in your life or family history.

PREVIEW  
PREVIEW  
PREVIEW



# CHARACTERS IN PROFILE: REVISITING PETER DRISCAL

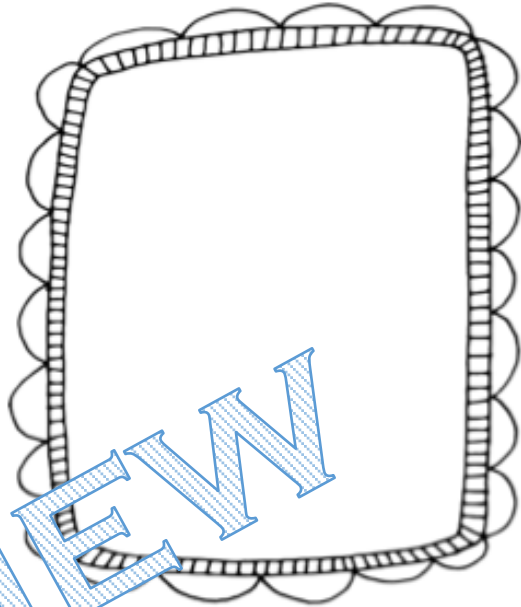
Describe Peter's personality (his internal character traits) now that he has been on the island. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Draw a picture of how you see Peter Driscal now.

What are Peter's attitudes towards the other characters (parents, Garvey, Edwin, Clark)? How have these attitudes changed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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**Maps A, B and C:** Department of Environmental Conservation, State of Alaska. Web access March 16, 2019.

<https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/response-resources/ppor/southeast>.

**Map of Great Bear Forest.** Great Bear Forest, British Columbia.

Web. <https://greatbearrainforest.gov.bc.ca/tile/the-region/>.

March 16, 2019

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## INCLUDED IN THIS RESOURCE:

- Novel Study Guide/Student Work Book containing:
  - Pre-reading research recommendations with KWL/NWL charts
  - Pre-reading and during reading Key Vocabulary charts
  - 24 different chapter “Questions to Consider” sections
  - 9 “Characters in Profile” character analysis sections
  - 1 Creative Writing exercise
  - Plot diagrams for each part of the book
  - Theme discussion webs
  - Doodle art for diverse learners
  - Original copyrighted artwork
  - Sentence stems for differentiation in early sections
- Teacher notes for implementation



*Thank you for considering this product!*

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