

Book Discussion Notes –Swiss Family Robinson

1. YLBC – Opening and business
2. Narration – _____
3. Author Review – Johann D. Wyss- _____
4. Discuss Toy, item from home that reminds you of book
5. Each person say “I like ____ because” (each character)

Discussion:

| Question | Answer |
|------------------------|--------|
| Title | |
| Author | |
| Year Written | |
| Setting – Time | |
| Setting – Place | |

Characters:

| Question | Answer |
|---|--------|
| Protagonist(s) – Leading character, hero, or heroine of a drama or other literary work who traditionally, undergoes some sort of change (pushing something forward). – | |
| Adjectives to describe Protagonist(s) | |
| Antagonist - An antagonist is one that contends with or opposes another, adversary or opponent, the villain. The antagonist of a story is the character that provides an obstacle for the protagonist. | |
| Adjectives to describe Antagonist(s) | |

Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, Resolution

| Question7 | Answer |
|---|--------|
| Conflict (Man vs. Man, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. God, Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Society) | |
| Rising action - During rising action, the basic internal conflict is complicated by the introduction of related secondary conflicts, including various obstacles that frustrate the protagonist's attempt to reach his goal. Secondary conflicts can include adversaries of lesser importance than the story's antagonist, who may work with the antagonist or separately, by and for themselves or actions unknown, and also the conflict | |
| Falling action (Emotional Climax) - The falling action is that part of the story in which the main part (the climax) has finished and you're heading to the resolution. | |
| Climax - The third act is that of the climax, or turning point, which marks a change, for the better or the worse, in the protagonist's affairs. If the story is a comedy, things will have gone badly for the protagonist up to this point; now, the tide, so to speak, will turn, and things will begin to go well for him or her. If the story is a tragedy, the opposite state of affairs will ensue, with things going from good to bad for the protagonist. Simply put, this is where the main part happens or the most dramatic part. | |
| Resolution - comprises events between the falling action and the actual ending scene of the drama or narrative and thus serves as the conclusion of the story. | |
| Meaning of the Title | |
| Major Themes | |
| Minor Themes | |

Other Characters:

| Who | Adjectives |
|----------------|------------|
| Father | |
| Elizabeth | |
| Fritz | |
| Ernest | |
| Jack | |
| Frank | |
| Jenny Montrose | |
| Knips | |
| Fangs | |

The Characters

- Which character do you identify with?
- Which do you *admire or dislike*?
- Who in this book would you most *like* to meet? What would you ask—or say?

The Story, the Plot and Your Experience

- Is the *plot well developed*? Is it believable?
- Does the book *remind you of someone*—or something—in your own life?

Title, Themes, Style and Symbolism

- How does the title *relate to the book*? Can you pick out a passage that's profound or interesting—or perhaps sums up the central issue of the book?

The Ending

- Did you *expect the ending* or did it *surprise* you?
- Was the ending *satisfying*? If you could *rewrite the ending*, would you?
- What ending would you have chosen for the story?

Do You Want to Read More?

- What is the *future of the characters' lives*?

Point of interest:

Although movie and TV adaptations typically name the family "Robinson", it is not a Swiss name; the "Robinson" of the title refers to Robinson Crusoe.

Question for thought:

1. Do you see any similarities between Swiss Family Robinson and Robinson Crusoe?
2. Name a few of the life lessons Mr. Robinson taught his children?

Any quotes that resonated with you?

Did you find any foreshadowing?

Any interesting phrases?

GREAT WORDS –

I LOVE these words. Break off into groups of 2 or 3 and write a paragraph describing an event, food item, or adventure using at least 5 words from the below list of cool words from the book:

- **Capital (adj)** - excellent or first-rate: *a capital hotel; a capital fellow.*
- **Contrivance (noun)** - something contrived; a device, especially a mechanical one
- **forage (verb)** the act of foraging : search for provisions
- **precipitous (adj)**- very steep, perpendicular, or overhanging in rise or fall <a *precipitous* slope>
- **promontory (Noun)**- a high point of land or rock projecting into a body of water
- **stratagem (noun)** - a cleverly contrived trick or scheme for gaining an end
- **Damask (noun)** - firm lustrous fabric (as of linen, cotton, silk, or rayon) made with flat patterns in a satin weave on a plain-woven ground on jacquard looms
- **Phlegmatic (adj)** - having or showing a slow and stolid (not easily aroused or excited) temperament
- **approbation (noun)**- an act of approving formally or officially
- **vociferous (adj)** - marked by or given to vehement insistent outcry
- **prudence (noun)** - the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason
- **allegory (noun)** - the expression by means of symbolic fictional figures and actions of truths or generalizations about human existence; *also*: an instance (as in a story or painting) of such expression
- **insuperable (adj)** -_incapable of being surmounted, overcome, passed over, or solved <*insuperable* difficulties>
- **cicatrise (trasative verb)** - scar formation at the site of a healing wound OR
- **cicatrix (Noun)** - a scar resulting from formation and contraction of fibrous tissue in a wound
- **gourmand (noun)** - one who is excessively fond of eating and drinking
- **conjecture (noun)** - a conclusion deduced by surmise or guesswork (no **conjecture** could be formed as to our whereabouts)
- **superfluous (adj)** - exceeding what is sufficient or necessary : EXTRA
- **verdure (noun) – pronounced ver-jer** - the greenness of growing vegetation; *also*: such vegetation itself (the verdure of midsummer)
- **impregnable (adj)** - incapable of being taken by assault : UNCONQUERABLE <an *impregnable* fortress>
- **phenomenon (noun)** - a rare or significant fact or event ...had discovered the cause of the **phenomenon**
- **rectilinear (adj)** - moving in or forming a straight line <*rectilinear* motion>
- **pliable (adj)** - supple enough to bend freely or repeatedly without breaking
- **allusion (noun)** - an implied or indirect reference especially in literature; *also*: the use of such references (The lyrics contain biblical *allusions*)
- **impetuous (adj)** - marked by impulsive vehemence or passion <an *impetuous* temperament> (He's always been an *impetuous* young man)
- **labyrinth (noun)** - a place constructed of or full of intricate passageways and blind alleys (a complex *labyrinth* of tunnels and chambers)
- **cudgel (noun)** - a short heavy club (a farmer armed with a *cudgel* drove us off his land)
- **putrefying (verb) – to make a foul odor** (we traced the bad smell to a dead skunk *putrefying* under the house>)
- **circumspect (adj)** - careful to consider all circumstances and possible consequences : PRUDENT <diplomacy required a *circumspect* response> <she has a reputation for being quiet and *circumspect* in investigating charges of child abuse>
- **epitaph (noun)** - an inscription on or at a tomb or a grave in memory of the one buried there
- **patriarchal (adj)** – of, related to, or being a man who is father or founder
- **refractory (adj)** - resisting control or authority : STUBBORN, UNMANAGEABLE (*refractory* players will be ejected from the game)
- **equanimity (noun)** - evenness of mind especially under stress <nothing could disturb his *equanimity*>
- **inanimate (adj)** - not endowed with life or spirit <an *inanimate* object>
- **reconnaissance (noun)** - a preliminary survey to gain information; *especially*: an exploratory military survey of enemy territory

Johann D. Wyss

Johann David Wyss (May 28, 1743 – January 11, 1818) A pastor with four sons, is best remembered for his book *The Swiss Family Robinson*. It is said that he was inspired by Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, but wanted to write a story from which his own children would learn, as the father in the story taught important lessons to his children. *The Swiss Family Robinson* was first published in 1812 and translated into English two years later. It has since become one of the most popular books of all time. The book was edited by his son, Johann Rudolf Wyss, a scholar who wrote the Swiss national anthem. Another son, Johann Emmanuel Wyss, illustrated the book. [1]

Written by Swiss pastor Johann David Wyss and edited by his son Johann Rudolf Wyss, the novel was intended to teach his four sons about family values, good husbandry, the uses of the natural world and self-reliance. Wyss's attitude toward education is in line with the teachings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and many of the episodes have to do with Christian-oriented moral lessons such as frugality, husbandry, acceptance, cooperation, etc.[1] The adventures are presented as a series of lessons in natural history and the physical sciences, and resemble other, similar educational books for children in this period, such as Charlotte Turner Smith's *Rural Walks: in Dialogues intended for the use of Young Persons* (1795), *Rambles Further: A continuation of Rural Walks* (1796), *A Natural History of Birds*, intended chiefly for young persons (1807). But the novel differs in that it is modeled on Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, a genuine adventure story,[1] and presents a geographically impossible array of mammals, birds, reptiles, and plants (including the Bamboos, Cassavas, Cinnamon Trees, Coconut Palm Trees, Fir Trees, Flax, Myrica cerifera, Rice, Rubber Plant Potatoes, Sago Palms[disambiguation needed], and an entirely fictitious kind of Sugarcane) that probably could never have existed together on a single island for the children's edification, nourishment, clothing and convenience.

If his main objective for writing the book was to teach his children important life lessons, would you consider Johann a success?

1. Faith
2. Work
3. Charity
4. Survival / Perseverance
5. Resourcefulness
6. Virtue
7. Character
8. Exercise

Sources:

1. Wikipedia
2. www.childrensnursery.org.uk/swiss-family-robinson/swiss-family-robinson.html
3. Miriam Webster.com
4. <http://www.easyfunschool.com/SwissFamRobIndex.html>