



TEACHING GUIDE

ABOUT THE BOOK

A boy and his family—descendants of Spanish knights and aided by talking Andalusian war horses—must save their friends and their town from a growing horde of supernatural creatures.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Spoiler Warning: Stop now if you haven't read the book.)

*Also found in the back of *Del Toro Moon**

1. Matt's father and brother argue a lot, which upsets Matt. Why do you think the author included this kind of family dynamic?
2. What did Javier mean when he said "Turk was exactly what our family needed"?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONT.)



3. Why are the skimmers so dangerous if they are contained inside the Maze?
4. How did Isabel's arrival change the power struggle between Turk and El Cid?
5. What roles do Roman and Kathleen play in Matt's life? Is there another character who fills a similar role?
6. Does Perry like Matt in the same way that Matt likes Perry? How can you tell?
7. Both Perry and Matt are big fans of *The Lord of the Rings*. How does this help them become friends? Why do you think people become so obsessed with certain books or movies such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, or *Star Wars*?
8. When Matt thanked Turk for saving his life, the stallion responded with: "I didn't do it for you." What was Turk saying?
9. Authors often use a literary device called foreshadowing—a hint about an upcoming event or plot twist. Find three different scenes that foreshadowed El Cid's death.
10. What was El Cid trying to tell Matt when he said to "make room"?
11. Why do you think Rigo decided to stay with the Del Toro family instead of moving on?
12. Matt was surprised how well Perry handled learning about the true nature of the Del Toro family and the horses. Why was she able to do this?
13. Who do you think will eventually take over the family ranch: Matt or Ben? Why?
14. If you could partner up with any of the warhorses, which one would you choose? Why?
15. What other books remind you of *Del Toro Moon* and why?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

SIMULATED LETTERS:

Pair students and have them write letters from one character to another to show their understanding of the story. Within the letter format, they can show empathy, offer advice, or respond to a situation within the story. Have students try to adopt the character's voice and write in a way that demonstrates their personality.

Then have a classmate or partner respond from a different viewpoint. For example, Matt could respond to Perry's letter at the end; Matt could write a letter of things he wishes he'd said to El Cid—and El Cid could respond; or Ben could write a letter to their father explaining the things he wish he could say. Have the sender and recipient repeat as many times as you'd like for the teacher to monitor the writing and/or the students' comprehension of the story.

COMPARE/CONTRAST:

Students can describe Ben and Matt's (or Turk and El Cid, or any other character's) relationship in writing, then draw a line down the middle of a paper and have them write personality traits of each on either side. How are they alike? How are they different? Using words like *different*, *in contrast*, *similar*, *alike*, *same as*, and *on the other hand* helps students see the patterns in stories.

Then have students write about a relationship they have with one of their siblings or family members and compare and contrast the different traits each has. This can also carry into a lesson on autobiography or expository writing.

COMBINE SETTINGS:

Del Toro Moon uses Western and Fantasy tropes to create a unique worldview. What are some of these tropes? How are they similar and how are they different? How do the differences create new tension or interest?

Have students think of two very different genres or settings—or alternatively, teachers can prepare slips ahead of time of different genres, setting, tropes, etc. and add to a hat or bowl for students to draw from—and students must write a story combining the two diverse components. Have students share their fiction with the class as desired. Ask them to reflect on ways combining seemingly dissimilar elements inspires their creativity and develops new thought patterns.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (CONT.)



BOOK BOXES:

Book boxes are a collection of objects and/or pictures related to a book. After finishing *Del Toro Moon*, have students decorate a container and find 4-6 objects that represent components of the story or are important to their understanding. Each student could write a letter to include in the box explaining the importance of each item, or they could give an oral presentation examining the connections they made while reading the book.

What do these components say about the aspects of the story that mattered most to them? Were they able to see themselves in the story as portrayed through objects they already owned? Do any of the objects convey deeper meaning about found families, new or old friendships, loyalty, bravery, or anything else that could be the focus or springboard for a personal narrative?

FANDOMS:

Ask the students to share some of their favorite fandoms—groups that support a specific creation in popular culture or are widely known in society. These could include examples such as *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*, *Pokémon*, sports teams, musical groups, or anything else that they feel connected to. Have them write an essay including any of the following:

- What is it that makes them feel connected to this group?
- What traits from this group do they see as positive? Negative?
- In what ways do they explore or express their belonging to this group?
- Do they share these connections with people in their families?
- Are fellow fans part of the reason they identify so strongly with the fandom?

Have them explore why Matt and Perry's mutual love of *The Lord of the Rings* was helpful to them in facilitating connection, and how students might transfer that to their own lives where sometimes social media, bullying, or otherwise being an outsider can make finding those connections more powerful.