

MALAMANDER

THOMAS TAYLOR

Reading Guide

"This is fantastical storytelling at its best with a Dickensian cast and a terrifying beast from the deep. This enthralling oceanic adventure had me hoping our heroic lost and foundlings will have more mysteries to solve in books to come. I wanted to read on and on."

M. G. Leonard, Author of *Beetle Boy*

www.youngcityreads.co.uk





WHAT IS YOUNG CITY READS?

Imagine sharing a book with your best friend, your teacher, your family or your bus driver. Reading a book together is a fun experience. Everyone should try it! Young City Reads is a BIG READ for children – a giant book group for schools.

Author Thomas Taylor, Brighton Festival and Young City Reads invite you to join us in a citywide read of *Malamander* from 5 March to 21 May 2020.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Young City Reads is for everyone: whether you're an avid adventurer, budding bookworm or a simply terrific teacher ... even parents and carers can join in. It doesn't matter who you are, Young City Reads is about opening up the world of words and ideas to everyone.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

It couldn't be simpler. The idea is to get young readers (and grown-ups) everywhere reading *Malamander* between the beginning of March and the end of May. All you need to do to get involved is pick up a copy from your local library or bookshop and start reading! If you're a teacher you can sign up your whole class to receive class emails and free themed literacy resources, then read the book together in school.

SPECIAL OFFER:

The Book Nook in Hove are offering participating schools the selected title for £5.99 (25% off) and FREE DELIVERY straight to your school.

To order please contact them on 01273 911988 / info@booknookuk.com

THE GUIDE

This guide provides you with everything you need to know about Young City Reads. Taking you on a whistle-stop tour of *Malamander*, providing background information, reading hints, biographical facts and ideas for further reading.

Young City Reads is a Collected Works CIC project.

COLLECTED WORKS CIC

Collected Works CIC is an award-winning social enterprise that believes in the power of literacy. Its Young City Reads initiative works with schools, bringing together young readers across Sussex, to help them connect over books and stories and inspire them to read for pleasure. The organisation is led by Artistic Director Sarah Hutchings.

For up-to-the-minute information visit: youngcityreads.co.uk

MALAMANDER

Malamander is set in Eerie-on-Sea, a town where strange stories seem to wash up on the shore. The story follows a daring duo, Herbert Lemon, Lost and Founder at the Grand Nautilus Hotel, and Violet Parma, a young girl searching for her parents who disappeared twelve years earlier, as they team up to solve the mystery of a legendary sea-monster.

"We are so excited to share this sensational seaside adventure with young readers across Sussex. Herbert Lemon and Violet Parma are a spirited, unforgettable double act and this timeless tale is just the thing to inspire children to fall in love with reading. It's really easy for Primary Schools to get involved. Teachers can register on the Young City Reads website for free and we'll send them weekly literary resources and fun activities for their classes to take part."

Sarah Hutchings, Director of Collected Works CIC





SPOTLIGHT ON THOMAS TAYLOR

Thomas Taylor is an award-winning author-illustrator for children. He illustrated the cover for *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and has since gone on to write and illustrate several picture books and young novels. Most recently he illustrated *Scarlett Hart: Monster Hunter* by Marcus Sedgwick. *Malamander* is his first middle grade novel. He lives on the south coast of England.

"I've always lived near the sea and seaside towns, but it was only when I finally came to live in one that I discovered the secrets of coastal life that inspired my book Malamander. I'm thrilled to participate in Young City Reads 2020 as it seems so appropriate to have children who live and go to school near the coast read my book. I hope it captures their imagination to create their own stories and encourages a life-long love of reading."

Thomas Taylor, Young City Reads 2020 author

EVENTS

Thomas Taylor LIVE at Brighton Festival

Interactive schools event

Thursday 21 May, 10.30 – 11.30 am (book signing afterwards)

Brighton Dome Concert Hall

Tickets £3 (early bird offer £1.50 when booked by phone or at Brighton Dome Box office between 13 Feb and 13 Mar)

Young City Reads 2020 Launch

Selected schools celebrate World Book Day

Thursday 5 March

Library visits for your class

Participating schools can book a FREE *Malamander*-themed class visit with Brighton & Hove City Libraries.

To book please contact Jo Rosenberg on

01273 296977 • libraryclassvisits@brighton-hove.gov.uk



MYSTERIES, MONSTERS AND MATES FURTHER READING FROM BRIGHTON & HOVE LIBRARIES

If you loved *Malamander* then you'll love these other titles available from Brighton & Hove Libraries. You can search for books, eBooks and eAudio titles on the Brighton & Hove Libraries website: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/libraries

SEA AND NATURE

Bloom – Nicola Skinner
Charlie and Me: 421 Miles from Home – Mark Lowery
Fish Boy – Chloe Daykin
Kensuke's Kingdom – Michael Morpurgo
The Lost Thing – Shaun Tan
The Big Book of the Blue – Yuval Zommer
The Girl with the Shark's Teeth – Cerrie Burnell
The House of Light – Julia Green
The Last Wild trilogy – Piers Torday
The Unlikely Adventures of Mabel Jones – Will Mabbitt
Whale Boy – Nicola Davies

ADVENTURES AND MYSTERIES

A Pocketful of Stars – Aisha Bushby
Asha and the Spirit Bird – Jasbinder Bilan
Brightstorm – Vashti Hardy
Frostheart – Jamie Littler
High Rise Mystery – Sharna Jackson
Kid Normal – Greg James and Chris Smith
Race to the Frozen North – Catherine Johnson
Running on the Roof of the World – Jess Butterworth
The Highland Falcon Thief – M.G. Leonard and Sam Sedgman
The House with Chicken Legs – Sophie Anderson
The Many Worlds of Albie Bright – Christopher Edge

FRIENDSHIPS

Best Friends – Jacqueline Wilson
Check Mates – Stewart Foster
Cloud Busting – Malorie Blackman
Flora and Ulysses – Kate DiCamillo
George – Alex Gino
Holes – Louis Sachar
Owen and the Soldier – Lisa Thompson
Pax – Sara Pennypacker
The Boy at the Back of the Class – Onjali Q. Raúf
The Song from Somewhere Else – A. F. Harrold
Wonder – R. J. Palacio

Did you know?

Brighton & Hove Libraries
offer free class visits to any of their
libraries for local schools. Email
libraryclassvisits@brighton-hove.gov.uk
or phone 01273 290800
to find out more.



CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Ch1: Grand Nautilus Hotel

Eerie-on-Sea: a seaside town like no other. Herbie Lemon runs the Lost-and-Foundery at the Grand Nautilus Hotel in Eerie-on-Sea, but he's never found anything like this before – or should I say anyone. When he finds a mysterious girl sneaking into the hotel it's just the beginning of his problems. Herbie is in trouble with his manager Mr Mollusc, and there's someone looking for the girl – a man with a boathook for a hand...

Ch2: Violet Parma

The girl reveals that she knows who Herbie is and that she thinks he's the only person in the world who can help her. We learn that she was left in the hotel as a baby after her parents apparently walked into the sea. Her name is Violet Parma, and the only clue to her identity is a postcard she wears round her neck. Printed on it is a mysterious code and a strange creature: a monkey with the lower body of a fish! Then Herbie is summoned by Lady Kraken, the hotel's owner.

Ch3: The Cameraluna

Lady Kraken shows Herbie the cameraluna, a special camera through which she can see the whole town by the light of the moon. Through it they see a mysterious creature creeping along the

pier! Lady Kraken asks Herbie if anything strange has happened in the hotel. He tells her about the man with the boathook, but keeps Violet's arrival secret.

Ch4: Lost Luggage

With the hotel staff starting to get suspicious, Violet and Herbie search the Lost-and-Foundery for her parents' luggage, but find that it has been mysteriously removed – apart from two pairs of shoes. They also find out that her parents stayed in Room 407.

Ch5: A Coin for the Mermonkey

In Room 407 Violet and Herbie find another postcard that matches the one around Violet's neck, but with a different code. Herbie reveals that it's a prescription card from the Eerie Book Dispensary.

Ch6: The Eerie Book Dispensary

At the Book Dispensary Violet and Herbie see the creature from the prescription card: the mechanical mermonkey. They also see local author Sebastian Eels, who looks at them oddly. Jenny Hanniver, owner of the Dispensary, reveals that she met Violet as a baby and that her parents visited the Dispensary. Unlike a shop or a library,

at the Dispensary the book chooses you. Violet's parents went in to "consult the mermonkey" and be given a book just before they disappeared. That's where the prescription card came from. Now Violet must consult the mermonkey too.

Ch7: In Which a Book is Dispensed

Violet puts a coin in the mermonkey and it automatically types out a code. The code tells them where to find the book: *Malamander*, by "Captain K." Sebastian Eels returns and tells them that the book is about a famous local legend: Captain K's battle with a monster!

Ch8: Coprolites and Cuttlefish

Violet and Herbie meet Mrs Fossil, who collects strange objects from the beach.





Ch9: Seegol's Diner

Violet and Herbie try to find out more about the malamander from the mysterious Seegol, who runs the fish and chip shop on the pier. There, they see Boathook Man again. Outside, they hear someone scream...

Ch10: The Sighting

Mrs Fossil has been attacked by something in the mist. Violet and Herbie go out to investigate, and the Boathook Man grabs Violet! He then runs off after the mysterious creature in the mist – could it be the malamander?

Ch11: Exotic Erratics

Violet and Herbie escape back to the hotel where they see Erwin, the cat from the Book Dispensary. Amber Griss, receptionist at the hotel, confirms that Violet's parents stayed in Room 407 and shows Herbie the number they gave. He calls the

number and is put through to the Natural History Museum's "Department of Cryptozoology and Exotic Erratics".

Ch12: Mrs Fossil's Bucket

Violet and Herbie go to Mrs Fossil's shop, the Flotsamporium, where she is being treated by the local doctor, Dr Thalassi, who also runs the local museum. Mrs Fossil gives him a glowing red stone for his museum.

Ch13: What a Beachcomber Knows

Mrs Fossil tells the legend of the malamander – a half-man, half-fish creature that lays a magical egg that grants wishes. Violet remembers the description of the egg in the book: a red crystal just like the one Dr Thalassi took.

Ch14: Boathooks

By the fishermen's huts on the beach, Violet and Herbie see Boathook Man again. He chases after them but gets caught in a net. Then Sebastian Eels appears.

Ch15: The Malamander Egg

Sebastian says that he knows the malamander legend but doesn't believe it – and that he knew Violet's father, Peter Parma. Peter *did* believe in the malamander, and was working on a book about it that has gone mysteriously missing.

Ch16: Jenny Hanniver

Back at the Eerie Book Dispensary, Jenny reveals that she knows about Peter and Sebastian's friendship.

Ch17: The Monster Hunt

Jenny tells the story of Peter and Sebastian's hunt for the malamander. Herbie tells Violet about his phone call to the Department of Cryptozoology, who revealed to him Violet's mother's name: Bronwyn Strand.

Ch18: Close Encounter

Herbie and Violet see a red glow in the window of the town museum – could it be the malamander egg? At the museum, they encounter the mysterious creature again!

Ch19: Dr Thalassi

At the museum Violet and Herbie talk to Dr Thalassi again. He has the red stone, but doesn't believe the malamander is real.



Ch20: Leviathan

Dr Thalassi tells the full story behind Captain K's book *Malamander*. Captain K lived in Victorian times. He was born in Eerie-on-Sea and found the malamander egg on a polar expedition. Many of his crew died as the malamander tried to get the egg back. Speaking in a mysterious voice, the egg told Captain K his wish would be granted – but that if he ever lost the egg his wish would become his curse. Captain K made his wish on the egg: to live forever. In a final fight with the malamander he lost the egg and his hand. He replaced the hand ... with a boathook.

Ch21: The Museum of Eerie

Back at the hotel, Herbie finds out that Violet took the red stone from Dr Thalassi.

Ch22: Mr Mollusc

Lady Kraken reveals that she knows all about Herbie and Violet's trip to the museum. She reveals that Captain K – Captain Kraken – is her grandfather. She considers the malamander egg rightfully hers, and wants Herbie to get it for her!

Ch23: A Kraken's-Eye View

Lady Kraken shows Herbie a cameraluna recording of Violet sneaking into Sebastian Eels' house. She believes that Violet is not really trying to find her parents but is secretly plotting to get the egg.

Ch24: Mysterious Visitors

Now suspicious, Herbie looks for Violet in Sebastian Eels' house. He finds a diving suit, armour and weapons – then Sebastian comes home!

Ch25: A Study in Violet

Herbie finds Violet going through Sebastian's papers. Still suspicious, he asks her how she knows where Sebastian lives. They overhear Sebastian talking to Captain Kraken – the Boathook Man. They make a deal: if Boathook Man helps Sebastian defeat the malamander, Boathook Man's curse will be ended and Sebastian will get the power of the egg.

Ch26: Fear and Vapour

Herbie and Violet are attacked by Sebastian and the Boathook Man. They escape from Boathook Man, but Sebastian hits Violet with a harpoon!

Ch27: Silver-Tipped

Fortunately the harpoon only hit the *Malamander* book Violet was carrying. Violet reveals that she came to Eerie-on-Sea looking for Sebastian Eels but that she isn't working with him. Herbie and Violet make up.

Ch28: The Achilles Spot

On a piece of paper hidden inside the mermonkey's hat, Violet finds the secret of

the malamander's one weakness – only to be interrupted by Sebastian Eels.

Ch29: The Missing Page

Sebastian reads the secret to killing the malamander – when the malamander lays its egg it opens its heart.

Ch30: Peter Parma's Magnum Opus

Violet decides to face the malamander herself and stop Sebastian from getting the egg. Herbie agrees to help her.

Ch31: Dodgy Business

Herbie finally gets his own back on Mr Mollusc.

Ch32: Will-o'-the-Sea-Wisp

It's midwinter night, when the malamander lays its egg. Herbie and Violet meet Mrs Fossils on the way to their mission.





Ch33: Warship

Violet and Herbie go to the wreck of the Leviathan on the beach, where Sebastian Eels waits for the malamander.

Ch34: The Malamander's Lair

Exploring the wreck, Violet and Herbie come face-to-face with the malamander!

Ch35: The Belly of the Beast

Violet and Herbie find the malamander's lair and take the egg while Boathook Man and the malamander fight. Sebastian tries to get the egg from them.

Ch36: A Window to the Past

The egg shows Violet what happened to her parents the night they disappeared. They had discovered the malamander egg in the wreck of the Leviathan while leaving Violet with their

friend Wendy. Returning to find Violet gone, they thought she had been taken by Sebastian in revenge for Peter finding the malamander first. While Violet is watching this, Sebastian knocks her into the water and takes the egg!

Ch37: Captain Kraken

The malamander returns after defeating Boathook Man in the fight. Sebastian shoots it in the heart with the harpoon. Sebastian frees Boathook Man from his curse and Boathook Man turns back into Captain Kraken – but then Sebastian uses the power of the egg to destroy him.

Ch38: A Strange and Eerie Light

Violet comes out of the water and gets the egg back from Sebastian. She makes a wish and the malamander returns to life and attacks Sebastian. Meanwhile, Herbie is trapped in the water!

Ch39: Wendy

Herbie wakes up in the Book Dispensary – Jenny, Dr Thalassi and Mrs Fossil have rescued him. Violet reveals that she used her wish to bring the malamander back to life and says that the egg is not for anyone else to take. Mrs Fossil reveals that her first name is Wendy – Peter and Bronwyn left Violet with her the night they disappeared. But she doesn't know exactly what happened to them that night...

Ch40: Erwin's Paw

Herbie worries he is in trouble with Lady Kraken, but she tells him he has an honest heart. He tells her that her grandfather Captain Kraken is finally free. Herbie tells Violet that she should be the second Lost-and-Founder at the hotel so they can solve more mysteries together in the future. Erwin the cat touches the mermonkey with his paw – the mermonkey starts to type...





THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

Myths and Legends

The plot of *Malamander* revolves around the legends of Eerie-on-Sea. Can you think of any famous myths or legends? Which country do they come from? Are there any famous myths or legends about your local area, or even your neighbourhood?

Beside the Sea

Think about the last time that you visited the seaside. Where did you go? What is your best experience or memory of the seaside? What is your worst? What do you know about the sea? How can it be considered frightening?

Books on Prescription

The Eerie Book Dispensary's mechanical mermonkey loves to prescribe books. Not necessarily the book you want, but the book you need. Can you think of a situation where a certain book might help you? What kind of book would be good to read if you feel: sad? hyperactive? hilarious? worried? curious?

Lost and Found

A lost item might tell us a lot about the person who lost it. Have you ever lost something? How did it feel when you realized you had lost it? What might someone who found your item learn about you? Have you ever found something that belongs to someone else? Who might it belong to?

MALAMANDER

"This book introduces a diverse new detective duo in Herbie and Violet, and is told with such neat storytelling and surprising phrases it would be a joy to read aloud."

The Sunday Times Children's Book of the Week

"Taylor is a supremely elegant writer, who does not dilly-dally. The plot is delivered like gunfire, and even less confident readers will be encouraged by cliffhanger chapters and knuckle-whitening prose. But this is also a touching story of friendship and loss, with wonderful vignettes of children on the cusp of growing up."

The Telegraph

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