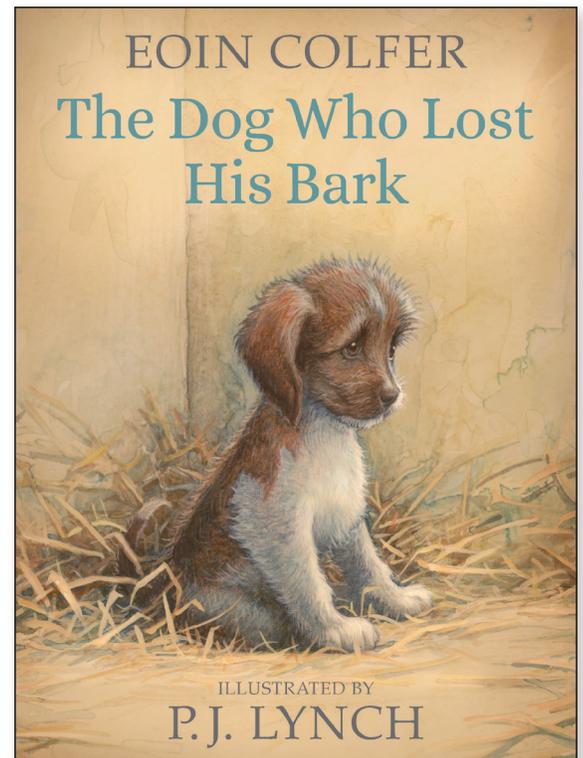


The Dog Who Lost His Bark

EOIN COLFER ILLUSTRATED BY P.J. LYNCH

About the Book

Patrick has been desperate to have a dog of his own for years. This summer, with his father away, he feels the need for a canine friend more than ever. When he and his mother go to spend the summer with his grandfather, Patrick's dream comes true — at least for a while — when he finds Oz at a shelter. For the little dog, life has been harsh, and he's become scared of people. Can Patrick fix that? Both boy and dog will face big changes over the summer. And maybe one of those changes will be that silent Oz will learn to bark again.



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Also available as an e-book and in audio

Common Core Connections

This discussion guide, which can be used with large or small groups, will help students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts. These include the reading literature standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL), as well as the speaking and listening standards for comprehension and collaboration and for presentation of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL). Questions can also be used in writing prompts for independent work.



Discussion Questions

1. Describe Oz's situation when he is first born. What are the good parts of his life? What are the negative parts? Talk about his first owner and how he treats the puppies. Why does Oz hide when people come to look at the puppies? Why does he stop hiding?
2. Once Oz is finally chosen by a family, what happens to him? Give examples that show what the people who take him away and the boy who gets him as a Christmas present are like. What does Oz learn to fear about human beings?
3. When the story is told from Oz's point of view, certain words are set in all uppercase letters. Pick some of these words from the first two chapters and explain why you think the author chose to set them that way. What other aspects of the writing make it sound like a puppy's voice?
4. One word that Oz uses frequently is *AWESOME*. What are some of the things that he considers awesome at the beginning and then later in the book? Do they change? What else might a dog find awesome?
5. Find places in the novel where the words are in italics. What do the italics indicate? Why do you think the author chose to use italics instead of quotation marks in some cases? How does the typeface change when Patrick is texting his father?
6. Starting with the cover and going through the pages to the first chapter, discuss what the pictures convey about the story. What emotions do the pictures convey? How do the pictures at the beginning give clues about what will happen later in the book?
7. Patrick has always asked for a dog, but his parents have said no. Why did they say no before? Why does Patrick's mother allow him to have a dog now? What are some other hints that things are going to change in his life in connection with his father?
8. Why does Patrick choose Oz from among the other dogs? Why does Zane think it's not a good choice for Patrick? Why does Patrick name the dog Oz? Do you think the name suits Oz at first, later, or the whole time? Why?
9. Zane tells Patrick, "This little guy is so traumatized, he's lost his bark" (page 35). What does he mean by *traumatized*? What traumatized Oz? Why has Oz concluded that being quiet is a good idea?
10. Why is it important for Oz to learn to bark? Explain some of the ways that Patrick tries to get him to bark. How does Patrick's grandfather help solve the problem? Describe the breakthrough that gets Oz to howl.
11. Patrick's mother also helps solve the problem. What is her idea for prompting Oz to bark? How does Zane help? Why do you think Mom's plan works?



Discussion Questions

12. Mom believes that Dad should tell Patrick what's going on in their marriage. Why does she think that? Why doesn't Dad talk to Patrick about it? What's your opinion of how the parents handle this big change in Patrick's life?
13. How does Oz know that something's wrong with Patrick? List some of the changes in Patrick and how he treats Oz. How does Oz respond to these changes?
14. Why does Patrick return Oz to the animal shelter? Do you think it was a good decision? Why? Why doesn't Mom interfere in the decision at first? Why does she finally go get Oz?
15. When Mom brings Oz back from the animal shelter, what is Patrick's reaction at first? Why does Oz go get the violin, and why does he try to play it? How is this similar to what Patrick did for Oz earlier in the book?
16. Name some of the songs that are mentioned in the book. Which ones do you recognize, if any? What are some of the ways that music is important in the plot and in the lives of Patrick, his parents, and his grandfather?
17. The author uses some vivid comparisons and figures of speech. For example, Oz thinks that "pretending smelled like the BURNED FOOD that the loud man sometimes scraped into their food bowls" (page 7). Find other imagery and figures of speech in the story and talk about what they add for the reader.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eoin Colfer, a former elementary school teacher, is the *New York Times* best-selling author of the Artemis Fowl fantasy series for children. The recipient of many awards, he lives in Ireland with his wife and two children.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

P.J. Lynch has won many awards, including the Mother Goose Award, the Christopher Medal three times, and the prestigious Kate Greenaway Medal on two occasions, first for *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey* by Susan Wojciechowski and again for *When Jessie Came Across the Sea* by Amy Hest. He lives in Dublin with his wife and their three children.

These questions were prepared by Kathleen Odean, a school librarian for more than fifteen years who chaired the 2002 Newbery Award Committee and now presents professional development workshops for educators on new books for young people.

