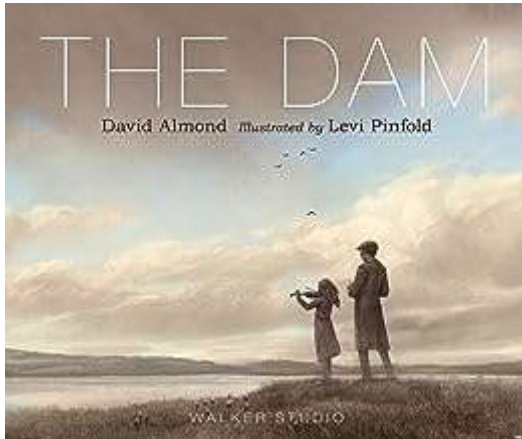


Read for Pleasure

The Dam

By David Almond & Levi Pinfold



Once the dam is finished, the land will be flooded. But before it is lost for ever, Kathryn and her father return to the silent and the still valley and fill the empty homes with one final song.

And if you listen closely you can still hear it – a song for all that was and all that will never be.

Title Talk

The title of this story is: The Dam.

- What is a dam? Why are dams built?
- Why are dams so important?
- Where are dams usually built? Why are they built in such valleys?
- What would happen to a community who lived in a valley if such a dam was needed to be built? How would this community feel? Discuss.

Cover Chat

Now look at the cover of this picture book.

- We see dark clouds looming over a reservoir. What do you think the dark clouds represent? Discuss.
- We see a father and daughter looking out across the reservoir. What might they be thinking? How might they be feeling?

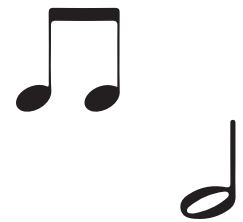
- What is the young girl doing? Why might she be doing this?
- What kind of song do you think the girl would be playing? Why might she have chosen to play such a song?

Teacher's Note:

On **page 29** we are told that this book is based upon a true story. Reading this first and discussing what impact the building of a dam might have on a community will help you to explore the book's main theme and help your learners make valuable links between the book's fictional narrative and the factual events that are laid out on the book's final page.

Page 1-2

- When does the father wake his daughter?
- Why do you think he wakes her at this time?
- What does he ask her to bring with her?
- Where did the father and his daughter begin to walk?
- Why do you think they are walking slowly towards this place? Discuss.



Page 3-4

- Look at the pictures laid out on page 3. Describe what you see.
- Why do you think the illustrator surrounds the father and daughter with nature?
- What might this suggest to you about where this story is set?
- What does the father tell his daughter?
- How do you think a) the father and b) the daughter will feel when he utters these words?
- Why are these words said with such a heavy heart?



Page 5-6

- Look at this double paged spread of the dam. Why do you think it is illustrated over two pages and the father and daughter depicted as being so small? Discuss.
- Is the dam dull and sad in colour or bright and cheerful? Why do you think the illustrator chose to depict it in this way? Discuss.

Page 7-8

- The father and his daughter arrive at the damn. Who does the father say used to play here and what did they play?
- Who does the father say used to sing here? Who used to teach singing from the song book?
- Why do you think the father starts to remember his childhood memories of singing and dancing, of music and parties? Discuss.
- What do you see depicted on page 8?
- Why do you think these memories are illustrated in black and white rather than in colour? What feelings does this help to create? Discuss.

Page 9-10

- Where is the father trying to go on page 9? Why do you think he is having to tear the door down in order to enter this house?
- Why do you think the daughter stands watching her father trying to enter the house? How might she be feeling? Why?
- Why do you think the father reassures his daughter that there is no danger here before he asks her to come inside? Discuss.

Page 11-12

- What does the father ask Kathryn to do?
- Why do you think he asks her to do this?
- What does Kathryn ask her father to do?
- Why do you think she asks him to do this?
- Look at the picture on page 12. Why do you think the father and daughter play their music and sing their song in the doorway to the house rather than step fully inside it? Discuss.



Page 13-14

- Look at this picture. Describe in your own words what you see.
- Who do you think these ghostlike images are of? What are they doing?
- Why might they be doing this?
- Do you think these ghosts are really there or are they just being imagined as they play their fiddle and sing their song? Discuss.

Page 15-16

- Why do you think the father wants to visit more than one house and fill each one of them with music?
- Do you think Katheryn would play the same tune in each house or choose something different to play when entering each one? Discuss.
- Why do you think she might do this??

Page 17-18



- Who hears this music and this singing?
- For how long do the father and daughter play and sing?
- Why do you think this?

Page 19-20



- What happens to the village when the dam is sealed?
- Why would this be such a sad event?
- However, following the small image of a boat that reminds us of water, we are told that the new lake that has been created looks beautiful. Why do you think the author chooses to tell us this? Discuss.

Page 21-22



- Describe the picture you can now see.
- Where do you think the father and his daughter are going?
- Why do you think the illustrator chooses to bathe the two characters in beautiful bright sunshine as they walk back home passing the lake? Discuss.

Page 23-24

- We are told that we will always be able to hear the music even though the village has now gone. Do you agree with this idea?
- When does the author say we will hear this music? Make a list.
- How is each of these things depicted on page 23?



Page 25-26

- Where does the father feel we will always hear the music as it rises?
- Do you think it is important that we remember these events and people from the past? Why might this be? Discuss.
- How are our memories and dreams depicted on page 26?



Page 27-28

- Where does the author say the music is?
- What do you think he means by this? Do you agree with him?
- What three things does he say this music helps us to do?
- Why is this so important? Discuss.



John Murray

John is a recognised specialist in developing children's reading and comprehension.

The creator of Reading Explorers, Top Class Comprehension and Reading Rocketeers, his seminars and CPD training focus on the teaching, learning and enjoyment of reading.

An independent Literacy consultant, he aims to support schools to improve their performance and secure best practice. Above all, it is to ignite within us a passion for books and a genuine love for the written word.

His enthusiasm and expertise can be seen throughout his work and his resources and training are used in classrooms worldwide.

