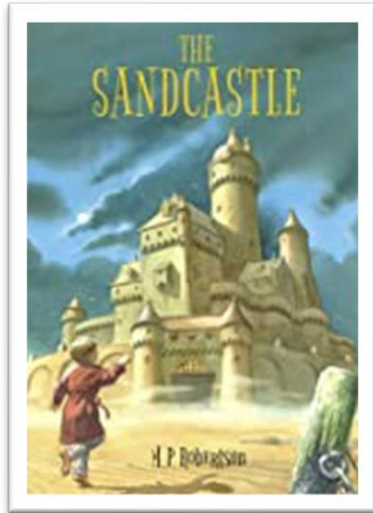


Read for Pleasure

The Sandcastle

By M. P. Robertson



Jack loves building Sandcastles, but he can't stop the sea from stealing them away.

One day he finds a shell with magical powers, and makes a wish to be king of his own sandcastle.

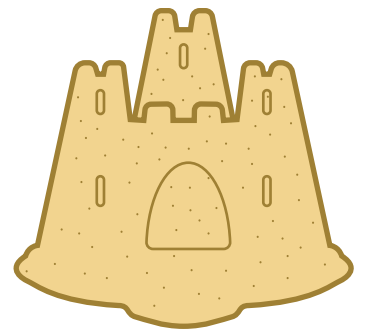
That night he finds himself in the middle of an amazing adventure.

But will his new power be greater than the power of the sea?

Title Talk

The title of this story is: The Sandcastle.

- Where and when do you think this story will be set?
- How big a sandcastle might it be?
- Who might build such a castle? Why might they want to build it?
- Would such a castle be strong and sturdy enough to withstand the sea when the tide turns and begins to roll in?
- If not, what would happen to the castle and all those inside?



Cover Chat

Now look at the cover of this picture book.

- How large is this sandcastle?
- Is this scene depicted on a beautiful sunny day or a dark and cloudy night? Why might this be?
- What else suggests that this is no ordinary sandcastle?
- What might this suggest about the story itself? Discuss.



Page 1-2

- What time of year do you think this story is set? Why do you think this?
- What was Jack's favourite thing to do when he visited the beach?
- Would he be able to revisit his sandcastle the next day or would he have to build a new one? Why would this be?

Page 3-4

- As the tide rolled in, what did Jack order the sea to do?
- Why would he do this?
- Would the sea listen to Jack? Why not?
- On this particular day, what caught Jack's eye?
- Where did he place this shell?



Interestingly, if you look back at the front cover, you will be able to see the magic shell on the castle itself.

- What did Jack wish for when he found the magic shell?

Page 5-8

- Did Jack's wish come true straight away? How do you know?
- How would Jack be feeling at this time?
- However, later that night he was woken. What noise woke him?
- When he drew back the curtains, what did he see?
- Look at the sandcastle on page 8. How colossal a castle is this? Discuss.
- How would Jack now be feeling? Why would this be?
- Can you see Jack jumping for joy as the sandcastle's drawbridge slowly begins to be lowered?
- With this in mind, what do you think Jack will do next?

It is clearly night time – the moon is out; the harbour is deserted and Jack is wearing his pyjamas and a night gown. At this point you might want to discuss whether or not this magical event is really happening or whether it is more likely that Jack is having a dream.

We will return to this question when considering the book as a whole.



Page 9-10

- Why wasn't Jack scared to enter this sandcastle?
- We are told that Jack MARCHED across the drawbridge. Act this out. Why do you think the writer uses this word to describe how Jack enters the castle? Discuss.
- Who meets Jack at the gatehouse?
- What does she tell Jack? Might this be significant? Think back to what Jack wished for when he found the magic shell on page 4.
- What does the girl do next? Why might this be?

Interestingly, the writer describes this as being a LONG SALTY NOTE. Why might this be? Discuss.



Page 11-12

- As the long salty note drifts through the air, the doors to the Great Hall open and Jack is greeted by a fanfare of trumpets. How do you think this would sound?
- Where is Jack led to? Why might this be? Again, think back to Jack's wish on page 4.
- A crowd cheers and the words "Hail King Jack!" echo in the Great Hall. Which part of Jack's wish has now come true?
- How is this depicted on page 12?

Page 13-14

- Is this a joyous occasion for Jack and his subjects? How do you know?
- *In the frenzy, no one heard the waves slapping against the great doors.*

Only we, the reader, are privy to this information. What danger lurks outside and how does this make us feel? Discuss.

- Why do you think no one in the Great Hall hears this?
- What do you think will happen next?



Page 15-16

- When the sea enters the Great Hall, does it enter quickly or slowly, loudly or quietly? Discuss.

- When the sea sweeps the crowd off their feet, what do they begin to change into? Might this be significant?

Page 17-18

- Where did the girl take Jack in order to escape the fury of the sea?
- What can Jack see from the battlements of his castle?
- How is this depicted by the illustrator?
- Jack orders the sea to stay back, telling it that he is a real king and has a crown to prove it. Do you think the sea will listen to king Jack and the tide will turn?
- What does the girl say to Jack? What do these words mean with regards to Jack's command?
- Can you see the destructive power and strength of the sea? How is this depicted on these pages?

Page 19-20

- As the sea rises and Jack reaches the top of the tower, what does the girl tell Jack? Might this be significant?
- Why do you think the girl vanishes soon after? What has she turned into?
- Jack has one more wish left. What do you think he will wish for when he makes his final wish? Discuss.

Page 21-22

- What does Jack find at the top of the castle's turret?
- What does he do when he finds it?
- As the sea SWALLOWED the last of Jack's castle, where is Jack?
- What does Jack wish for at this very turbulent time?
- Do you think his third and final wish will come true?
- Look at the illustration on page 22. What do you think Jack is looking for?
- What else do you notice about A] Jack's crown and B] the mermaid's tale? Discuss.



Page 23-24

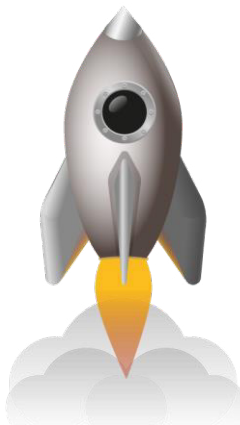
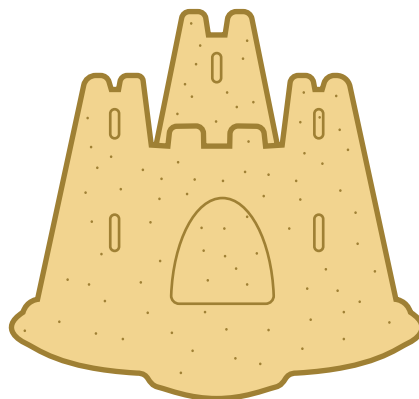
- Where is Jack when he wakes up?
- What does he find lying beside him?
- What does Jack do the next morning, happy in the knowledge that he can simply be a boy, on a beach, building sandcastles? Discuss.

Think about the book as a whole:

Do you think this magical event really happened or was it simply a dream that Jack was having that night?

Does this story remind you of another where a king* tries to command the sea not to roll in? If so, what was the king's name and why did he try to do this?

(*King Canute)



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

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“A book is a dream that you hold in your hand.”

Neil Gaiman