



GIRL'S BOOK CLUB GUIDE

URCHIN AND THE RAVEN WAR By M.I. McAllister



“There was a teaching he had learned from childhood - *The Heart that gave us the mists broke with love for Mistmantle, but it still beats.*” – Crispin

GENRE

Fantasy Fiction

Series

Quest

THEMES

Good vs Evil

Leadership

Loyalty

Growing Up

Duty

Bravery

CHARACTERS

Urchin

Urchin is one of Mistmantle's most beloved squirrels. He is famous for falling from the sky during the Riding Stars and heroically fulfilling the prophecy that led to the evil tyrant Husk's downfall years earlier. Now a trusted member of the King's Circle animals, Urchin continues his loyalty to the King and, during the invasion, is charged with the care of the King's precious daughter Catkin.

Juniper

Juniper is a squirrel and Urchin's best friend. He is next in line to be the Mistmantle priest once Brother Fir, his mentor and hero, dies. Juniper is a gifted healer and dedicates his life to those he serves on Mistmantle.

King Crispin

Crispin is the loyal, brave, steadfast, kind and humble King of Mistmantle. Through great trials and suffering, he and his Queen Cedar, have managed to protect Mistmantle against many hazards and once again prove themselves worthy to lead the Island to battle against the Ravens. Crispin represents all that is good, true, and honourable; he is the epitome of an excellent ruler.

Corr

Corr is a young otter who longs for greatness and adventure. Through a series of unexpected events, he is the first to alert Mistmantle of the Raven's oncoming attack. Corr learns that adventure and glory come with a high price, and through his courageous and self-giving acts, proves himself faithful and loyal to Mistmantle. It's discovered through a prophecy that Corr is a *Voyager* – an animal who can travel into the mists and return – but to protect his young heart and youth, it's decided he will be told when he is older. At the end of the story, Corr becomes Urchin's page.

Princess Catkin

Catkin is the daughter of King Crispin and Queen Cedar. At the beginning of this story, she is overly sure of herself, bossy and difficult to befriend with her know-it-all attitude. Throughout Catkin's hardships and captivity by the Ravens, she discovers her inner courage, learns what it takes to be a true and good leader, and learns to live for the good of others and Mistmantle.

The Silver Prince, The Taloness and the Arch Raven

The leaders of the Ravens, these three wicked birds desire to "kill and devour" all in their way. The proud Arch Raven is killed by Crispin on Swan Isle, and this initiates the Taloness (who is second in charge) to pursue the Mistmantle animals and launch an attack against them. As the Taloness and the Silver Prince fight for power, their bickering proves to be their ultimate downfall.

Fingal

Fingal is an otter who, during the past landslips and disease in Mistmantle, proved himself more than a jokester through his courageous acts. Now older, and still just as brave, he takes Corr under his wing and helps with an important rescue mission of Princess Catkin.

Grith

Grith is a traitorous mole who despises King Crispin and longs for his death.

Padra

Padra is an otter and the Senior Captain of Mistmantle. Padra is an honourable and loyal guard to the King and takes Urchin under his care and guidance.

Brother Fir

Brother Fir is the kindly Priest who found Urchin as an orphaned youngster on the night of the Riding Stars. He is wise and has the gift of prophecy.

STORYLINE

During a time of peace on Mistmantle Island the talking otters, squirrels, and moles are rejoicing in normality, living faithfully to the Heart, and preparing for dearest Brother Fir's passing as age overcomes him.

Unexpectedly, Lord Arcneck and other inhabitants of Swan Isle descend in desperation on Mistmantle, pleading for help against the bloodthirsty ravens who have ravaged everything in sight. King Crispin agrees to come to their aid, but it comes with a great cost – the brave Mistmantle heroes will now incur the wrath of the vengeful and terrible invaders. With a war cry of “kill and devour”, the ravens are intent on destroying everything good, true, and beautiful, and will force our favourite heroes, Urchin, Juniper and King Crispin, to make some of the hardest decisions they've had to face yet.

With the help of some new and unlikely heroes, the Mistmantle animals will fight with everything they have, knowing that when they've reached the end of themselves, the Heart will fight for them.

This is an adventurous coming-of-age story where beloved Mistmantle heroes solidify a place in our hearts through their courage and sacrifice amid extreme evil and hardship. But it's also a tale of birth, the longing for glory, and the importance of duty; where new heroes rise up, learn to follow the path the heart has laid out for them, and learn an important lesson of what a life of glorious adventure truly requires of us.

1 QUESTION ONE

What did you most enjoy about *Urchin and the Raven War*?

2 QUESTION TWO

Which character from the story did you find most admirable or brave? Why?

3 QUESTION THREE

Corr and Catkin are young animals who long for glory and adventure, and both find themselves in dire circumstances where they must rise to the challenge. Discuss how Catkin and Corr grew-up throughout the story. What does a real adventure require of us?

4 QUESTION FOUR

Crispin is a wonderful King who humbly serves the Mistmantle animals. What were some of the difficult decisions he had to make for the good of the Island? How did this reveal his true nature and motives as King?

5 QUESTION FIVE

The threadings play an important role in the story. How does Myrtle's gift of sewing and the Threading Code bring comfort - but also fear - to the Mistmantle animals?

6 QUESTION SIX

King Crispin learns that sorrow can be heaped upon sorrow, and heartbreak upon heartbreak, but no matter how bad things get, "there were still things worth fighting for." What are some things you consider worth fighting for?

7 QUESTION SEVEN

Urchin feels incredibly guilty when Catkin is captured and dreads confessing to Crispin. Why do you think he felt so guilty when he was a victim of Grith's betrayal?

8 QUESTION EIGHT

What was Urchin's plan to beat the Ravens? Why do you his plan was so successful?

9 QUESTION NINE

The Riding Stars are a mystical event that occurs to foretell some good or great harm for Mistmantle. How did the stars give Catkin hope? How did they hasten the downfall of the Ravens?
