

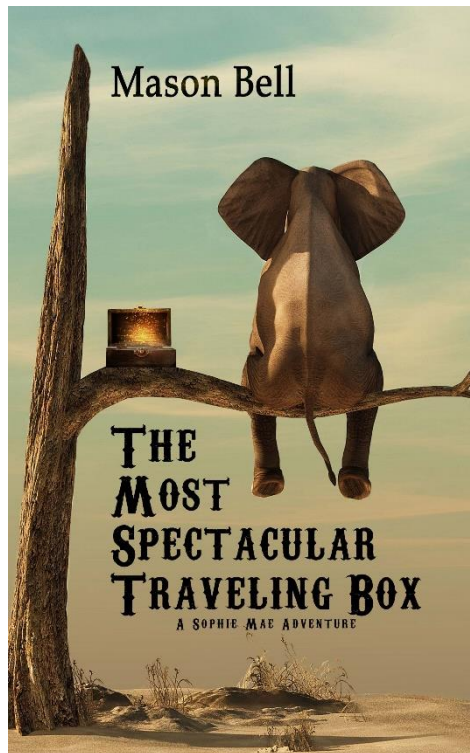
Name_____

Class_____

Date_____

Study Guide

The Most Spectacular Traveling Box by Mason Bell



A great fictional read-aloud book for middle schools.

Name: _____

Study Guide

Topic Research

During the 1930s, the United States endured four key events: the Dust Bowl, the Great Depression, the lingering health issues from the Spanish Flu pandemic, and The Great War (World War I). Research each event and give a brief description below.

Dust Bowl	The Great Depression
Spanish Flu	The Great War

Name: _____

Chapters 1-3

1. What is the point of view for The Most Spectacular Traveling Box?

____ 1st-person ____ 3rd-person

____ 2nd-person ____ omniscient

2. What are the two main settings? Give examples.

3. Based on George the Great's actions, what is his personality? Give examples.

4. What are some clues as to how Sophie Mae's home affects her health?

5. Explain why drought and dust storms had families fleeing their homes. Give evidence from the text.

6. Predict what will happen to Sophie Mae if she stays in Drycrop. What examples can you find from the text?

7. Mark an X beside each true statement for chapters 1-3

____ Sophie Mae finds the box.

____ Food is plentiful at the Gardenia Estate.

____ A desperate man begs for food in Drycrop.

____ Sophie Mae lives alone.

____ Locals have swap days to gather supplies.

Name: _____

Chapter 4

1. List three emotions/feelings that Sophie Mae experiences in these chapters. Back up each with examples from the text.

Emotion/Feeling	Example Text

2. Contrast Mr. Kimall's and the traveling businessman's demeanor in relation to the economic depression. Give examples from the text.

3. What can you infer about the people living in local Hooverville? Give evidence.

4. Why did Sophie Mae return to the Gardenia Estate? What does this say about her character? Back up your answer with examples.

Name: _____

Chapters 5-6

1. Why would it be important for George the Great to study the potions' effects on the residents? Give evidence from the text.

2. How does the imagination room work? What ideas would you bring to the room?

3. Will Sophie Mae be comfortable in the Gardenia Estate? Give three reasons to back your theory.

Match the characters with their job titles.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| ____ Leggy | a. non-speaking giraffe |
| ____ Mary Louise | b. estate troublemaker |
| ____ Billy | c. banished chemist assistant |
| ____ Myrt | d. sassy ex-circus elephant |
| ____ Ernest | e. estate gardener |

Name: _____

Chapters 7-9

1. Identify if the statement is a simile, onomatopoeia, or personification.

_____ "Bright orange and yellow coral grew on the boulders below, and seagrass swayed like wheat crops on a breezy day."

_____ "Her dress remained crisp as ever, even resisting the urge to float with the water."

_____ "Her tail swooshed at George who trudged through the dewy grass toward the barn."

_____ "Mr. Kimall's truck roared up the drive."

_____ "Compared to the ruin of Drycrop, the Gardenia Estate was like a dream."

_____ "His hands wagged like moose antlers as he taunted his opponents."

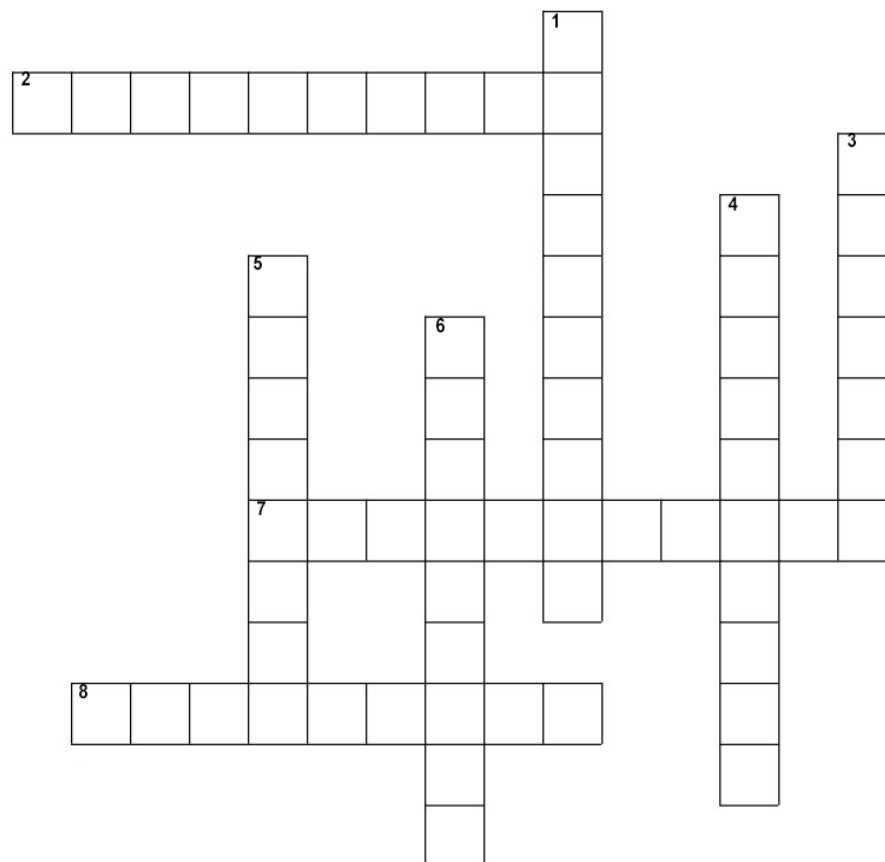
2. What reasoning does George the Great give for not releasing the potion? Give evidence from the text.

3. Myrt feels alone after losing her reflection. How would modern society deal with such an issue?

Name: _____

Vocabulary, Chapters 1-9

Alchemy-Dumbwaiter-Beneficiary-Seclusion
Ramshackle-Makeshift-Penmanship-Dust Bowl



Across

- 2. A state of severe disrepair
- 7. A person who derives advantage from something
- 8. A state of being private or away from others

Down

- 1. The art of writing by hand
- 3. Medieval forerunner of chemistry
- 4. Delivers supplies to each floor of a house
- 5. Name given to sandstorms during the 1930s
- 6. Serving as a temporary substitute

Name: _____

Chapter 10

1. Billy and Mary Louise employed trickery to attend the carnival. What was their goal, and how could they have handled the situation without deception? Give evidence.

2. Label each statement True or False.

_____ Billy wants to win a catcher's mitt from the bottle toss game.

_____ Gus and Mary Louise are captured by the animal trainers.

_____ 'The Spirit' scares away the carnival goers.

_____ Gus the Grizzly attacks Mary Louise from his cage.

_____ Sophie Mae, Dink, and Billy ride Leggy to the carnival.

Name: _____

Chapters 11-12

1. List two main events in chapters 11 and 12 that show the difference between the Gardenia Estate residents and the people of Evenland.

Event	Gardenia Estate	Evenland

2. Classify the conflicts as either external or internal.

_____ “Wanted” signs for George had Sophie Mae second-guessing his generosity.

_____ Ernest attempted to trick Sophie Mae with the heart-shaped necklace.

_____ Sophie Mae’s conversation with Ernest makes her feel like an outsider.

_____ Sunday night walks with Mary Louise had become dangerous.

_____ Dust Bowl refugees upset the societal balance of small town Evenland.

Name: _____

Chapters 13-14

1. How does Sophie Mae react to the lawyer who visits the house? Give evidence.

2. Sophie Mae and Dink are friends that don't always agree. Explain how their different backgrounds might cause disagreements. Give evidence.

3. Read the passage below. Do you believe Ernest wants to save his community? Use evidence as support.

"Ernest dead-bolted the door behind him and glared at the people on the street. A smile grew from his single thought. The public struggles each day to live, ignorant of the estate's power. That girl and the potion are the only way I can save humanity from itself."

Name: _____

Chapters 15-18

Match each cause with the effect.

Cause

- ____ 1. Sophie Mae and Dink argue over family.
- ____ 2. George sneaks into Aunt Catherine's room.
- ____ 3. Oscar D noticed Sophie Mae's absence.
- ____ 4. Myrt's potion faded.
- ____ 5. George made a new potion for Myrt.
- ____ 6. Sophie Mae and Dink run into Ernest in town.

Effect

- a. Myrt was too ill for the potion to work.
- b. Sophie Mae sees her grandma in the imagination room.
- c. Proof of George's guilt is discovered.
- d. Sophie Mae flees and is almost hit by a car.
- e. Sophie Mae leaves Drycrop and returns to nurse Myrt.
- f. Oscar D takes a bus to Drycrop to find her.

1. Sophie Mae takes care of Myrt when the potion fades, but all the years of her life catch up. Give examples of the emotions/feelings Sophie Mae exhibits and how she copes with Myrt's passing.

Name: _____

Chapters 19-20

1. 1. Why does Ernest visit the fake lawyer, Thomas R. Smith?

2. 2. Describe Ernest's transformation during the visit using examples from the book.

3. Read the passage below. Do you agree with Ernest that the time for distributing the potion is overdue? Give evidence to back your view.

"Oh, please," Ernest said. "Don't give me that sentimental business. People are stealing from their own parents, and you think I'm concerned with feelings and morals? The time for action has long passed. We have suffered through the Great War, the Spanish Influenza, and now this economic depression. How much more can humankind suffer?"

Name: _____

Vocabulary Chapters 10-20

Vocabulary Word	Definition
Confiscate	
Arid	
Accusation	
Spectacle	
Commissioned	
Untimely	
Condolences	
Obliged	
Oblivious	
Audible	

Name: _____

Chapters 21-22

1. What vision does Ms. Ruby have about Sophie Mae's safety?

2. Sophie Mae bends the truth to lure Ernest to the Gardenia Estate. Give two examples from the text.

3. Up to chapter 21, how many traveling boxes have been made by George the Great? To whom did they belong?

Who carries an unconscious Sophie Mae to the Mayville's cottage?

- ____ Dink with her left hand
- ____ Ms. Ruby with her strength
- ____ Mr. Langston with his mind
- ____ Oscar D with his arms

Name: _____

Chapters 23-24

Label each statement True or False.

_____ Mr. Kimall knew about the potion.

_____ Mr. Kimall used to be a lion tamer in the carnival.

_____ Dink was taking driving lessons from Mr. Kimall.

_____ Mr. Kimall had taken the potion but stayed visible.

1. When Ernest's traveling box is busted, how does Sophie Mae react? Use evidence from the text.

2. Why does Sophie Mae become disoriented in Drycrop? Give evidence from the text.

3. George the Great discovers his side effect of the potion. Explain how it affects Ernest.

Name: _____

Chapter 25

Read the passage from chapter 25 below. Give one example of how each Gardenia Estate resident helped Sophie Mae become family.

“Whether or not you remember Hattie, you’re here with us now. I’m your family, and so are the others in this house. Families protect each other. They forgive each other’s weaknesses and teach us about the world from another’s view. Home is about more than location. It’s about the people you surround yourself with and give your best to.”

George the Great	Mrs. Worthington
Myrt Mayville	Oscar D
Mr. Langston	Dink

Name: _____

Chapter 26

1. What happened to Ernest?

2. Sophie Mae lost both her memories of Drycrop and Grandma Hattie to the traveling box. Does she still desire to return to the family farm? Give examples from the text.

3. Read the last two paragraphs of the book below. Infer Sophie Mae's future plans for the Mayville's Cottage.

Her mind began to wander and visions of a train station flooded back to her like a distant memory or a long-forgotten dream. The smile of a humble boy shoving bread into his cap. Sophie Mae remembered the bracelet made of pull tabs he'd given her. Glancing back at the cottage in the distance, a smile stretched across her rosy cheeks. "I think I might have a better idea."

Name: _____

Answer Guide

Topic Research

1. Answers will vary.

Chapters 1-3

1. 3rd person
 2. Date is August 1935, during the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression.
Locations are in the fictional towns of Drycrop, Oklahoma and Evenland, Minnesota
 3. Answers will vary.
 4. Sand covered the plains, hens were the only animals left, sand piles in the house, hole in the roof, no food, no water.
 5. Land lacks nutrients and water to grow food. Sandstorms blast the farms. Most chicken feed stores are closed.
 6. Sophie Mae will die. Desperate strangers. No water. Losing her sanity. No new food sources besides rats.
- All statements are true.

Chapter 4

1. Scared- "Sophie Mae cowered behind the tree and prayed he would leave."
Anxious- "Sophie Mae panicked as the boy's cap was snatched by the man and thrown to the floor."
Uncertain- "Her body weakened, and she focused on breathing and calming the urge to run far away and hide."
2. Answers will vary.
3. Answers will vary.
4. She returned for the food and mystery of the house. She has persistence even in the face of the unknown.

Name: _____

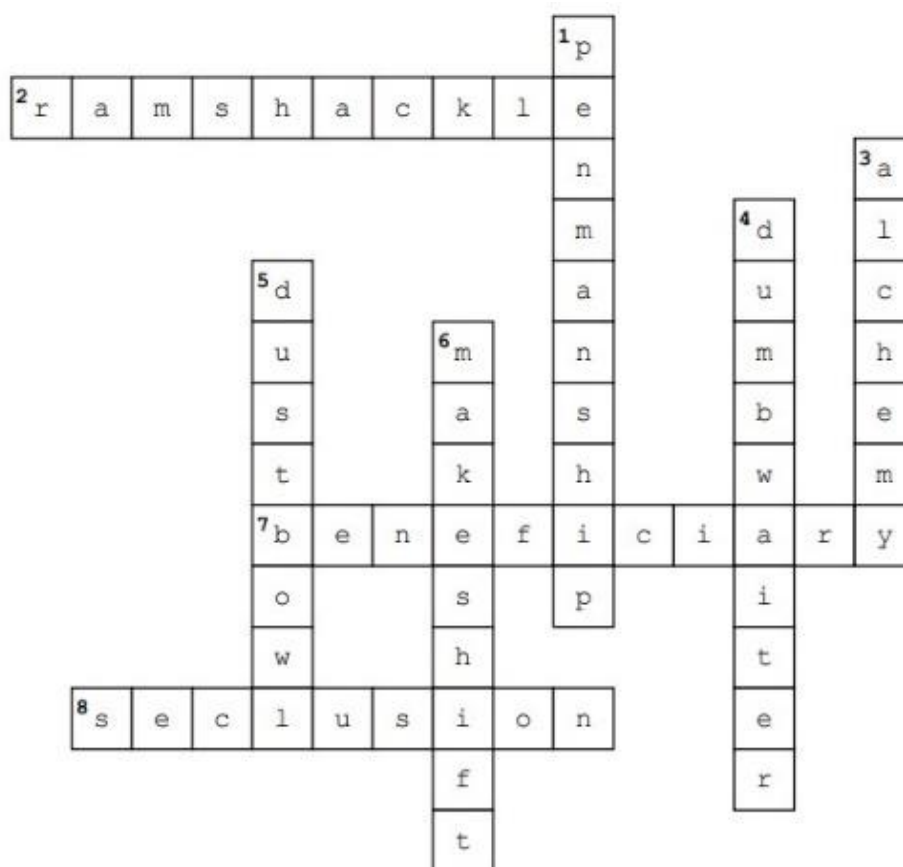
Chapters 5-6

1. Ernest lies about what he knows, is a thief with her stolen heart necklace, and considers himself smart.
 2. "It's not ready. Imagine a populace of desperate, invisible people. They would take advantage of others. Businesses would be looted, and the economy would collapse. Medical and charity organizations would fold without donations."
 3. Answers will vary.
- Matching-A D B E C

Chapters 7-9

1. Simile Personification Onomatopoeia Onomatopoeia Simile Simile
2. The potion is still experimental, and side-effects can be dangerous.
3. Answers will vary.

Vocabulary 1-9



Name: _____

Chapter 10

1. Billy wants to win a baseball bat. Mary Louise wants to find an old friend, Gus Grizzly, who lives with the carnival.

True Statements: 'The Spirit' scares away the carnival goers.

Sophie Mae, Dink, and Billy ride Leggy to the carnival.

Chapters 11-12

1. Answers will vary.
2. Internal External Internal External External

Chapters 13-14

1. Sophie Mae wants to get information from him concerning Aunt Catherine's death.
2. Answers will vary.
3. Answers will vary.

Chapters 15-18

Matching-B C F E A D

1. Answers will vary.

Chapters 19-20

1. Ernest is desperate and wants to gain control over the Gardenia Estate by being Sophie Mae's guardian.
2. His hands tripled in size and his face distorted.
3. Answers will vary.

Name: _____

Vocabulary 10-20

- Confiscate—remove, seize, impound.
- Arid—having little or no rain; too dry or barren to support vegetation.
- Accusation—a charge or claim that someone has done something illegal or wrong.
- Spectacle—a visually striking performance or display.
- Commissioned—produced specially to order.
- Untimely—happening or done at an unsuitable time.
- Condolences—an expression of sympathy, especially on the occasion of a death.
- Obligated—make (someone) legally or morally bound to an action or course of action.
- Oblivious—not aware of or not concerned about what is happening around them.
- Audible--able to be heard.

Chapters 21-22

1. “Ernest always enters the house alone. No matter how much I concentrate, I can’t find Sophie Mae.”
2. She lies about taking the potion, being kicked out of the house, conspiring with Ernest, and offering her help to get the potion.
3. Three in total. One for Sophie Mae, George, and Ernest.
Oscar D carries Sophie Mae.

Chapters 23-24

True Statements—Mr. Kimall knew about the potion.

Mr. Kimall had taken the potion but stayed visible.

Dink was taking driving lessons from Mr. Kimall.

1. She uses her own traveling box to whisk him into Drycrop.
2. She had traveled by box four times and her memory of the farm has been taken by the
traveling potion.
3. George shoots energy from his palms which shrinks Ernest to the size of a mouse.

Name: _____

Chapter 25

George the Great	Explained the potion, involved her with household chores, saved her from Ernest
Mrs. Worthington	Made her clothes and home-cooked meals
Myrt	Worked alongside her, took on role as grandmother
Oscar D	Shared his feelings of sorrow, saves her from the garden
Mr. Langston	Protected her from the fake lawyer, organized meetings to keep Sophie Mae safe
Dink	Helped Sophie Mae find her room and taught her how to have fun again

Chapter 26

1. Ernest shrunk to the size of a mouse and lives in a dollhouse in the basement lab.
2. She has no desire to return. TEXT: [Sophie Mae turned to Dink. "I know you're all expecting me to go back to Drycrop, but I don't want to. It has no meaning for me now. It's just a desert wasteland."]
3. Housing the small family from the train station in the cottage.