



RAVEN MYSTERIES

MARCUS
SEDGWICK



Meet the wonderfully weird Otherhand family and their faithful guardian, Edgar the raven, and discover the dark secrets of Castle Otherhand.

TEACHERS NOTES

The Raven Mysteries is suitable for children in Key Stage 2 (7-11 years). These resources are designed to use alongside *Flood and Fang*, which is the first book of the series.

This novel is ideal for reading with a Year 3/4 class. The use of creative language and quirky illustrations provide a fantastic starting point for imaginative writing. These resources and lesson plans form the basis of a poetry unit of work for this age group.

The lesson ideas provide opportunities to discuss and explore poetry techniques, including the use of calligrams, similes, metaphors, alliteration and onomatopoeia. Children are encouraged to have fun playing with descriptive language and sounds.

MEET THE AUTHOR



Marcus Sedgwick used to work in children's publishing and before that he was a bookseller. His first book, *FLOODLAND*, was published by Orion in 2000, and won the Branford-Boase award for best debut children's novel. Since then, Marcus has won the Booktrust Teenage Prize for *MY SWORDHAND IS SINGING* and his older YA books have been shortlisted for many awards, including The *GUARDIAN CHILDREN'S FICTION AWARD*, the *COSTA BOOK AWARD*, the *BLUE PETER BOOK AWARD* and the *EDGAR*

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ALLAN POE AWARD. Marcus' latest YA novel, REVOLVER, has been shortlisted for the 2010 CARNEGIE MEDAL. When he is not writing older fiction, Marcus enjoys writing the quirky and original Raven Mysteries series for younger readers, which has reached book three: LUNATICS AND LUCK. Marcus now happily writes full-time and as you can see, likes to keep himself very busy. He lives in Cambridge and has a young daughter, Alice.

SERIES SYNOPSIS

The Raven Mysteries follows all the odd goings-on inside Castle Otherhand, home to all sorts of lunatics and fruitcakes, including the weirdly wonderful Otherhand family themselves. There's Lord Valevine, head of the Otherhand family, who spends most of his time working in the Laboratory, Minty, his wife and a former witch, their children Solstice, Cudweed. And of course there's Edgar the Raven, our grumpy but good-natured narrator and his nemesis, Fella, Cudweed's pet monkey. The Raven Mysteries are quirky tales of mystery with a touch of ghoully goth-froth that will tickle your funny bones.

LESSON IDEAS

WANTED POSTER (resource sheet 1)

What lurks in the cellars of Castle Otherhand...? It's obstructing Lord Valevine's creepy experiments, it's eating Minty's sponge cakes and it's putting Edgar in a flap!

- After reading Chapter 2 (or at least before Chapter 14, when the monster is revealed) Discuss what is known about the monster Edgar has spotted.
- Read the excerpt where Edgar first sees the monster and highlight all the adjectives used to describe it. Ask children to suggest other adjectives that could describe a monster.
- Explain that the children are going to help Edgar create a wanted poster for the monster. They should complete the picture and write a description of the monster using adjectives from the story and adding some of their own.

EDGAR'S SIMILES AND METAPHORS (resource 2)

Kawk! Edgar is the grumpy old narrator of the Raven Mysteries. He is the eyes and ears of the Otherhand Castle. And he can be a bit on the grumpy side...

- Edgar loves talking in Metaphors and similes. Look at some of the examples of things he says on resource sheet (2).

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- Discuss the meaning and ask children to decide if they are similes or metaphors.
- Then pupils create their own metaphors and similes using the sentence starters.
- Finally look for other examples of similes and metaphors in the Raven Mysteries.

SPOOKY SPONGE CAKES (resource sheet 3)

Once a famous witch, known especially for her devilish potions, Minty now enjoys the simpler things, such as cooking and is obsessed with making cakes!

- Make up some spooky recipes for Minty's sponge cakes. Ask children to suggest some of the ingredients a witch might use to make a cake and what the effect could be if you ate one of these cakes. Think about some possible names, with a focus on using alliteration.
- Why not ask children to choose one of their witch recipes and try to write it as a poem. Ask them to think of words that rhyme with the ingredients they choose. Bring in the use of onomatopoeia and ask them to think of words that suggest cooking sounds.
- You might even like to read Shakespeare's witches spell from Macbeth.

SPOOKY SHAPE POEMS:

Solstice is by far the smartest of the Otherhands. And Solstice's poetry, famed for its gloomy nature, is in fact a remarkably powerful antidote to insomnia.

- Shape poems are written in the form of the subject they are about.
- Try creating a poem describing Otherhand Castle in the shape of a cobweb or castle turret.

UTTERLY STUPID INVENTIONS (resource sheet 5)

Lord Valevine is an inventor extraordinaire; he is the inventor of self-boiling oil, the square wheel, and the invisible arrow. He also claims to have invented sneezing!

- Discuss the inventions Lord Valevine has created. What makes them so silly?
- Ask children to think of their own utterly stupid inventions.
- Then choose their favorite, draw a diagram and label it to explain how it works.

RAVEN MUSIC

- Look at the descriptions of each character on the Raven mysteries site.
- Give small groups of children different characters to think about.
- Ask them to suggest adjectives to describe their character.
- Then children think about what sort of sounds they would associate with the characters. Use

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the list of adjectives to help them come up with suggestions. Would the character's sounds be loud/quiet, fast/slow high/low?

- Children then use voices and instruments to create the theme tune for each character. You could use the theme music on the raven mysteries web site as the basis for your composition.

USEFUL LINKS

Visit www.ravenmysteries.co.uk for Goth-froth fun, online games and a tour of the castle!
www.orionbooks.co.uk

FURTHER READING

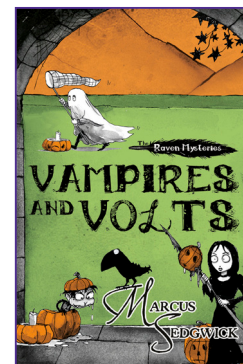
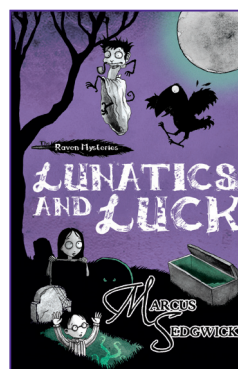
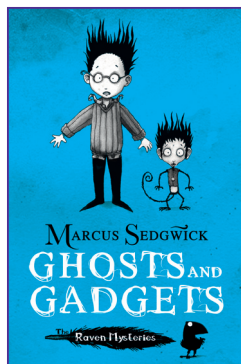
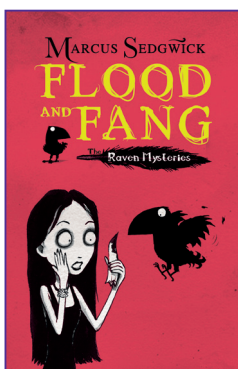
Raven Mysteries: Flood and Fang	9781842556924
Raven Mysteries 2: Ghosts and Gadgets	9781842556948
Raven Mysteries 3: Lunatics and Luck	9781842556955
Raven Mysteries 4: Vampires and Volts	9781842556962 (October 2010)
Raven Mysteries 5: Magic and Mayhem	9781842556979 (March 2011)
Raven Mysteries 6: Diamonds and Doom	9781842556986 (October 2011)

Also available in audio CD:

Raven Mysteries: Flood and Fang	9781409112440
Raven Mysteries 2: Ghosts and Gadgets	9781409116233

Also available as ebooks:

Raven Mysteries: Flood and Fang	9781842557587
Raven Mysteries 2: Ghosts and Gadgets	9781842557594
Raven Mysteries 3: Lunatics and Luck	9781842557600
Raven Mysteries 4: Vampires and Volts	9781842557617 (October 2010)
Raven Mysteries 5: Magic and Mayhem	9781842557624 (March 2011)
Raven Mysteries 6: Diamonds and Doom	9781842557631 (October 2011)



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