

# *The Slither Sisters* Educators' Guide

## About the Book

Looks can be deceiving! Sarah and Sylvia Price may resemble ordinary middle school students, but they're actually hideous monsters in disguise. Even worse, they're campaigning for student council, with a secret plan for abducting the entire seventh grade! The only ones brave enough to stop them are twelve-year-old Robert Arthur and his best friends: the school bully, the school ghost, and a very hungry two-headed rat.

This second novel of the Lovecraft Middle School series begins right where *Professor Gargoyle* ended—with more action, more adventure, and more outrageous monsters!

## Genre

Children's Horror

## Themes

- Supernatural events
- Friendship
- Bullying
- Courage
- Middle school
- Democratic process

## Vocabulary

### Chapters 1–5

physicist, summon, epidermis, tentacle, barbed, incomprehensible, maw, flailed, scanned, festooned, orthotic, revolted, labyrinth, disoriented, natatorium, retracted

### **Chapters 6–10**

chandelier, mahogany, crimson, predicament, inoperable, flanking, decelerate, pioneered, specimens, cliché, amends, amassing, infractions, flourishes, hyperbole

### **Chapters 11–15**

physique, squalling, emerged, apparatus, serrated, plumes, translucent, discern, incantation, cadence, articulate, pandemonium, guillotine, cacophonous, sanctuary, flak

### **Chapters 16–19**

replica, reproductions, chaperones, ascending, vessels, vaguely, accelerating, tethered, instantaneous, intoned, unprecedented, falsetto, peculiar, intent, fetid

## **Before Reading**

- Help students recall and summarize important events from *Professor Gargoyle*, paying special attention to the cliff-hanger at the end of that book. What do students think will happen to Robert, Glenn, Karina, and the Price sister in *The Slither Sisters*?
- Allow students to browse the book for a few minutes, looking at the illustrations and skimming the text. Then use a graphic organizer to predict what will happen in the story, relying evidence (clues) from the text and illustrations (see “Internet Resources,” below).
- Activate students’ prior knowledge and increase their background knowledge by engaging in a class discussion about monsters or books and movies about monsters. Have students browse various popular books about monsters, searching for creatures that look similar to the illustrations in *Professor Gargoyle* and *The Slither Sisters*. Ask students to bring in their favorite monster books or invite them to find monster books like the following at your school or public library:

- *A Practical Guide to Monsters* by Nina Hess. Mirrorstone, 2007.
- *A Field Guide to Monsters: Googly-Eyed Wart Floppers, Shadow-Casters, Toe Eaters, and Other Creatures* by Johan Olander. Amazon Children's Publishing, 2010.
- *Mythical Monsters: The Scariest Creatures from Legends, Books, and Movies* by Chris McNab. Tangerine Press, 2006.
- *Monsterology* by Dr. Ernest Drake. Candlewick, 2008.
- *The Element Encyclopedia of Magical Creatures: The Ultimate A-Z of Fantastic Beings From Myth and Magic* by John and Caitlin Matthews. Sterling, 2005.

## **While Reading**

- Revisit students' clues-and-predictions graphic organizers every few chapters to list more clues and revise their predictions.
- To help students learn summarizing skills, after every chapter, have them talk in pairs or small groups and record in a reader's response journal what they think is/are the most important event(s) that happened in each chapter. Discuss students' opinions.
- To add interest to the reader's response journaling pages, on a few of their summary pages, students can try drawing a comic strip of the event they recorded. Let students share their comic strips in small groups or with the whole class.
- After reading the story through chapter 3, hold a mock (or real) election for class president. Discuss strategies that affect political campaigns, such as campaign promises and slogans. Let students come up with slogans and make badges or posters showing themselves as candidates.

- While reading chapters 6–10, visit websites about H. P. Lovecraft to find out more about the inspiration for Lovecraft Middle School (see “Internet Resources,” below).
- In chapter 9, Sarah Price declares, “Democracy flourishes with competition” (p. 83). Discuss what this sentence means. Why is it true (or not true)?
- Go to the Lovecraft Middle School website (see “Internet Resources,” below) and click “Our Founders,” then “Who was H. P. Lovecraft” to find information about the monster Cthulhu, mentioned in chapter 13. Then let students study the crest on the title-page spread of *The Slither Sisters* to find connections with H. P. Lovecraft’s work.
- Revisit the monster books students browsed before they started reading *The Slither Sisters* to see if any mention or contain illustrations of a monster similar to Cthulhu. Create a class Venn diagram to discuss the similarities and differences between the two monsters.
- Before reading the last two chapters of *The Slither Sisters* (chapters 18 and 19), have students predict how the story will end now that Sarah and Sylvia Price have lost their “vessels” and been forced to return through the vortex to the “alternate universe.” Direct them use evidence from the story to justify their predictions. Then, write students’ predictions on chart paper to reference when they begin the next book in the Lovecraft Middle School series, *Teacher’s Pest*.

## **After Reading**

- After students have completed a summary for each chapter in their reader’s response journals, have them work individually or in pairs to create a comic strip summarizing each chapter. Compile the comic strips into a graphic novel (see “Internet Resources,” below.)

- As an alternative to a summary comic strip, help students analyze the story and create a six-panel comic strip that identifies six story elements: title, characters, setting, problem, events, solution (see “Internet Resources,” below).
- To enhance reading comprehension, make a class ABC book that summarizes plot development, setting, vocabulary, characters, and characters’ emotions in the book (see “Internet Resources,” below). Use the Alphabet Book Planning Chart PDF and the Alphabet Organizer PDF (both included in this educators’ guide) to help students plan their ABC books.

## **Internet Resources**

- **Predictions and Clues Graphic Organizer**  
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonrepro/reproducibles/profbooks/followclues.pdf>
- **H.P. Lovecraft Websites**
  - [HPLovecraft.com](http://HPLovecraft.com)
  - [www.cthulhulives.org/](http://www.cthulhulives.org/)
- **Tales from Lovecraft Middle School Website**  
[LovecraftMiddleSchool.com](http://LovecraftMiddleSchool.com)
- **Story Summary Comic Strips (Lesson Plan)**  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/book-report-alternative-comic-195.html>
- **Story Elements Comic Strips (Lesson Plan)**  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/book-report-alternative-examining-236.html>
- **Comic Creators**
  - <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/comic/>
  - [www.comiclfe.com](http://www.comiclfe.com)

- **Lesson Plan: Writing ABC Books to Enhance Comprehension**

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/writing-books-enhance-reading-392.html>

## **About the Author**

Charles Gilman is the author of the Lovecraft Middle School series—and the pen name of Jason Rekulak, an editor who lives with his wife and children in Philadelphia. When he's not dreaming up new tales of Lovecraft Middle School, he's biking along the fetid banks of the Schuylkill River in search of two-headed rats and other horrific beasts.

## **About the Illustrator**

From an early age, Eugene Smith dreamed of drawing monsters, mayhem, and madness. Today, he is living the dream in Chicago, where he resides with his wife, Mary, and their daughters Audrey and Vivienne.

# ALPHABET BOOK PLANNING CHART

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Book Title     *The Slither Sisters*    

	Juicy Words (Vocabulary)	Characters	Plot	Setting	Emotions
A		Mrs. <u>A</u> rthur			
B					
C					
D					
E					
F					Fear
G					
H					
I					
J					
K					
L				Lovecraft M.S.	
M					
N					
O					
P					
Q					
R					
S			Student council		
T					
U					
V	Vortex				
W					
X					
Y					
Z					

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A					
B					
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F					
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# ALPHABET ORGANIZER

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Book Title \_\_\_\_\_

Letter	Word/Phrase	Description
A		
B		
C		
D		
E		
F		
G		
H		
I		
J		
K		
L		

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Word/Phrase</b>	<b>Description</b>
M		
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