

WHAT IS A MONSTER?

1st - 3rd grade

Suggested discussion to follow the reading of
Floridius Bloom and the Planet of Gloom

(Before the discussion: Ask the students to volunteer ideas of monster-like characteristics. Make a list of these characteristics where, as on a chalkboard, they can be viewed by all and referred to at the end of the discussion.)

In *Floridius Bloom and the Planet of Gloom*, Floridius dreams about the Monsters. He fears they are coming to steal his light. Later on, he fears that Zrill is leading him straight to the Monsters. Since Floridius fears that Zrill is leading him to the Monsters, he must not think Zrill is monster - right? So, let's talk about what makes the Monsters of Gloom, monsters!

- 1) Is it because they are larger than Floridius and Zrill?
 - i) Do you know someone who is larger than you?
Is he/she a monster?

- 2) Is it because they are a different color than Floridius and Zrill?
 - i) Do you know someone whose skin color is different from yours?
Is he/she a monster?

- 3) Is it because they live outside Floridius's wall?
 - i) Do you know somebody who lives outside your town or even your country?
Is he/she a monster?

- 4) So - what makes a monster a monster?
 - i) Is it because of how he/she looks?
 - ii) Where he/she lives?
 - iii) What he/she eats? (Well... maybe!)
 - iv) How he/she acts?

- 5) What things do Floridius, Zrill and the monsters have in common?
(*answers: 1. Floridius, Zrill and many of the monsters have an obvious source of light on their body - only Floridius's doesn't work anymore. 2. They all live on the same planet.)

- 6) What things do Floridius, Zrill and the monsters not have in common?
(*answers: 1. Floridius lives all by himself inside the wall. Zrill and the monsters

live outside the wall. 2. Floridius shares his light with no one. Zrill and the Monsters share the gray darkness together.)

- 7) One definition of the word, monster, is: a terrifying (as in scary!) and dangerous creature. When do you think Floridius Bloom would use this definition "terrifying and dangerous" to describe the Monsters of Gloom?
- i) Before he follows Zrill out from behind his wall?
 - or
 - ii) After he has met the monsters?
- 8) What can we learn from this? (*Write down the student's observations. For younger students you can simply list them aloud.*)

While it is always important to remember the rule: Never talk to strangers. Sometimes we meet new people in safe situations, like when a new student joins our classroom, or a new kid moves in down the block from us. And even though we are comfortable with our own friends or the students in our class, having someone new join the picture can be scary. So, what can we learn from Floridius Bloom? The next time you meet a new student (or a new kid on the block) how will you judge him/her?

- by how tall or short he/she is? - Why?
- by the color of his/her skin? - Why?
- by the country he/she comes from? - Why?

Or

- Will you take time to get to know him/her? - Why?

(After the discussion: Referring to the list of monster-like characteristics, ask the students which characteristics might now be removed from the list. Or, create a second list and compare the two.)