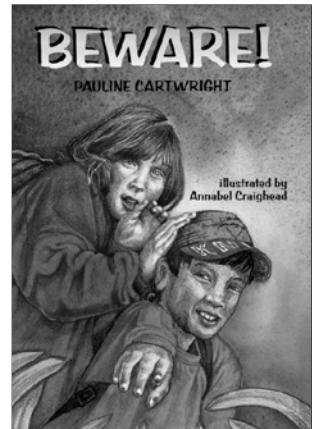


Beware!

by Pauline Cartwright

Illustrated by Annabel Craighead



Book Summary

Jake and Kelsey have often picked grapes from a property they pass on their way to school. However, this year Mr. Granger, the new owner, puts up a sign saying "Beware of the Agapanthus." After the children discover what an agapanthus really is, they decide to pick some grapes – only to find that Mr. Granger has beaten them to it.

Features of the Book

- The high-interest narrative
- The clear message in the text
- Unfamiliar vocabulary – *agapanthus, schnauzer*
- Effective use of language – *squeaked, sniffed, scowled, hissed*
- Attitudes and values that require critical thinking and response

Purpose

Beware! can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- relating ideas and events to students' own experience or views;
- identifying the main idea or theme and supporting detail;
- identifying the author's intention;
- discussing the author's choice of language;
- analyzing characters' feelings and actions.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- Relating ideas and events to students' own experience or views
- Identifying the main idea or theme and supporting detail
- Identifying the author's intention

Introducing the text

Discuss situations that the students may have been in (such as sneaking apples from a neighbor's tree) that require them to make a moral judgment.

- *How did you feel? What made you decide to act in that way?*

Discuss how the students can learn to distinguish between what is right and wrong, for example, from their parents and peers and by reading, watching television, and going to school.

Look at the title of the book together.

- *What does it suggest to you?*

Discuss the exclamation point and why it is there.

- *How would you say the title?*

Depending on your students' learning needs, you may choose to introduce the word "agapanthus" or give them the opportunity to discover the word for themselves. This is satisfying for students and builds confidence. You may need to review with them the strategies they know for working out the meanings of unfamiliar words. Similarly, the word "schnauzer" provides a challenge.

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read chapters 1 and 2 independently. After they have finished reading, they could identify and list the ways in which the author sets the scene. Remind the students of the title and invite them to predict what might happen.

Ask the students what they think the moral issue is. (Jake and Kelsey have been taking fruit that doesn't belong to them.) Refer them to page 5 – “And we only take a few bunches.”

- *What does this tell you about Jake and Kelsey?*
- *Does it really matter how many grapes they take?*

Ask the students to read the rest of the book independently. You could provide a purpose for the reading, such as:

- *What is the main message from the author?*
- *How do you think Pauline Cartwright wants you to feel after reading this story? Why do you think this?*
- *Put yourself in the place of Jake or Kelsey and think about what you would have done.*

When the students have finished reading this book, there will be many issues to discuss.

Questions to encourage critical responses to the text could include:

- *Do the children change because of their experience?*
- *Does the story show whether their attitude toward other people's property changes? Does the last page help you to decide about this?*

☞ The students could use the questions on the blackline master on page 74 to focus their responses.



Revisiting the Text

The suggested activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson if appropriate or could be taken as a mini-lesson at a later time.

S Identifying the author's intention

Brainstorm different kinds of stories – a story with a moral, a story that just entertains, a mystery, an adventure, a tall tale, and so on.

- *Why do you think the author wrote this story?*
- *What kind of story would you call it? Have we read other stories like this together?*
- *Look at the fiction chapter books you have read this year. Can you put them into groups that match the themes we have been discussing?*

S Discussing the author's choice of language

Consider the ways in which emotions and atmosphere are conveyed through actions and the author's use of language. There are good examples of this on pages 7 to 9 (freaky; squeaked; scampered off suddenly, like a frightened rabbit; Jake's whole body froze; His smile had gone). Invite the students to find further examples. Attention to language in this way helps them to focus on the choice of words in their own writing.

S Analyzing characters' feelings and actions

Further analysis of the characters' feelings and actions can be encouraged through discussion. You can ask questions such as:

- *What do you think the children would have done if the sign hadn't been there?*
- *Why do you think this? Find evidence in the text to back up your argument.*
- *Do you think Mr. Granger was being honest in putting up the signs? Why/why not?*
- *In one word, how would you describe Mr. Granger's character?*

The students can share their suggestions with the group and give reasons for their choices.