

Pony by RJ Palacio

In Palacio's story, twelve-year-old Silas is awoken in the dead of night by three menacing horsemen who take his father away. Silas is left shaken, scared, and alone, except for the presence of his companion, Mittenwool . . . who happens to be a ghost. When a pony shows up at his door, Silas makes the courageous decision to leave his home and embark on a perilous journey to find his father. Along the way, he will face his fears to unlock the secrets of his past and explore the unfathomable mysteries of the world around him.

Genre: ghost, family, horse

Themes: bravery, isolation, American Civil War, love, loss, quest

Age: 12 +

Activities:

1. Palacio writes: 'You can travel thousands of miles, over strange lands, and still never find anything as unknowable as love.' Have students explore the concept of what love is. How would they define it and how does it impact Silas on his journey to find his father?
2. Become the author: At the end of the story Silas has opened the 'John Hills School for Orphaned Children' in memory of Mittenwool. Ask students to write the next chapter of Silas' story. What does the future hold for him?
3. Research Project: In the story, Silas' father experiments with photographic sciences after Silas is struck by lightning. Have students research the history of how photography developed from 1826 right through to modern day. Students might even predict how photography might 'develop' in the future!
4. Map the Journey: Silas goes on a long adventure to find his missing father. Ask students to map out his journey. They can label key locations and key people Silas meets. Include illustrations or symbols to represent the characters or events that occur at each location.
5. Character analysis: Analyse Silas' character throughout the story. Have students create a character profile, including physical descriptions, personality traits, and motivations. You can extend this activity to look at Silas before and after his journey.

Enjoyed this book? You might also enjoy...

- **War Horse** by Michael Morpurgo
- **Wonder** by RJ Palacio
- **Carry On** by Rainbow Rowell