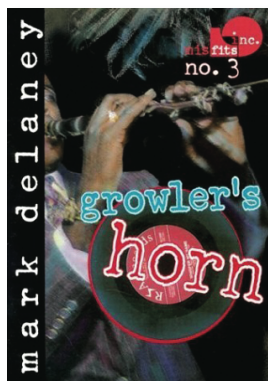


TEACHER'S GUIDE



Misfits Inc., No. 3 Growler's Horn

Written by Mark Delaney

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Also available in e-book

Ages 10–14 | Realistic Fiction | Series: Misfits, Inc.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

In this third installment, our four teenage crime-solvers, the Misfits, Inc., attend an auction so that Jake, an aspiring musician, can buy a clarinet. Once he's acquired the clarinet, the Misfits find an odd, handwritten note hidden inside the instrument. Soon they discover that the clarinet once belonged to a promising jazz musician named Growler Morton, who mysteriously disappeared in the 1950s, as did three million dollars of his record company's money. When the clarinet is stolen the Misfits find themselves driven to unravel the secret of Growler's horn, attempting to restore the good name of an innocent man.

THEMES

- Friendship
- Jazz music
- Creators' rights
- 1950s-era racism
- The recording industry and its treatment of artists

BEFORE YOU READ

Ask readers to think about and discuss the following questions and issues:

- Who are your closest friends? What qualities do you admire in them? What qualities make them different from other people you know? Do you admire these differences, or just accept them?
- How important is music in your life? What does music do for you?
- Do you play a musical instrument? Would you like to learn one? Which instrument interests you most?

Why? Discuss the various types of sounds different instruments make.

- How many different types of music can you name? Can you think of examples of specific songs from each type? What are the similarities and differences between the types?
- If someone close to you were to vanish suddenly, to disappear without a trace and without saying goodbye, how would you feel? What would you do? How long do you think you would be able to hold on to hope that the person might one day reappear?
- What do you know about the 1950s?

AS YOU READ

Ask readers to consider the following questions:

- In the prologue we meet Karl Logan. How does he make his living? In what way is he different from your image of someone who steals? What details in the prologue hint at how successful he is in his line of work?
- The four protagonists call themselves *Misfits, Inc.* What specific incident involving Byte first illustrates her inability to “fit in”? Do you find her behavior unusual? What might you say to (or about) a student who did what she did?
- The event that starts a conflict in a story is called a *complication* or *inciting incident*. What problem is Jake experiencing in band? What solution does his band instructor offer? How does buying the clarinet at the auction start the conflict in the story?
- What are your impressions of Karl Logan? Do you

like him as a character? How do you feel about his fate at the end of the story? Why?

- What are your impressions of Helen and Scott Morton? How has the disappearance of Growler affected each?
- What is “circumstantial evidence”? What crime is Growler thought to have committed? What circumstantial evidence suggests he may be guilty?
- Describe the relationship between Franklin Bellows and his son Derek. List some details from the book that illustrate their relationship.
- What crimes did Franklin Bellows commit? What “punishment” does he receive at the end of the story? Is this punishment appropriate? Why or why not?

AFTER YOU READ

After discussing the following issues in class, ask students to write a paper or prepare a presentation for the class on their thoughts:

- Diagram the elements of plot as they appear in this story. What do we learn in the novel's *exposition*? What *inciting incident* starts the conflict? What are the novel's various *conflicts*, internal and external? What is the *climax* of the story? What do we learn during the *resolution* or *denouement*?
- Karl Logan seems guided by his own personal sense of morality. What is his “moral code”? How seriously does he take it? How is it both similar to and different from morality as most of us understand it? Do you find him to be a likable character? Why or why not?
- Review the details of this mystery. What crime was committed? When? Who was guilty of the crime? Why did Growler Morton disappear? What was the purpose of the clues placed inside his belongings? Who hired Karl Logan, and why?
- Logan does not care whether the Misfits find Growler or the money, nor does he care what happens to Franklin and Derek Bellows. He only wishes to do his job and get paid. Does the story really need him? Why or why not? Students may wish to “re-plot” the story without Logan to see what happens.
- Consider the three major villains in the story—Karl Logan, Franklin Bellows, and Derek Bellows. List the crimes of each. Create a 1–100 scale diagram, with 100 being the most evil, and place each man on the scale. Explain your choices.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

MUSIC

- Listen to some examples of jazz music from the 1950s. Compare them to jazz pieces from both earlier and later periods. How was the music from the '50s different? Who were the better-known performers?
- A comedian once quipped that “jazz [music] is five guys all playing different songs at the same time.” Examine the music of a modern jazz combo. What is it about the sound of jazz that might create this impression?

HISTORY

- Growler disappears in 1957. Who was President at that time? What were the major news events that year? What were people watching on television?
- Create a timeline of the 1950s. Using Internet or library sources, find a specific jazz piece that was playing on the radio at the same time as the events you've listed.

BUSINESS LAW

Growler's record company cheated him. What is a contract? How did record labels take advantage of recording artists in the '50s and '60s? Which incidents led to legal action? What was the result of the action? Find some modern recording acts that have raised contract issues with their labels (one clear example is the recent, and astounding, lawsuit between the Dixie Chicks and Sony Records).

ECONOMICS

- What is an interest-bearing bond? How are bonds different from stocks? What is the difference between a “bearer” bond and other types of bonds?
- What is the federal income tax? When did it originate? What legal challenges has it faced and overcome?

BIOLOGY

- Growler's remains are found without fingerprints. What causes the tips of our fingers to leave prints? Why are they helpful in identification? When were fingerprints first used, and when were they first accepted by the legal system as valid evidence? For a fun look at the earliest days of fingerprinting, consider reading passages from Mark Twain's *Puddinhead Wilson*. In this novel, written before fingerprinting

was generally known, the protagonist solves a mystery of identity by using fingerprints.

- Science teachers may suggest that identifying a body with Growler's injuries today would be easier than it was in 1957. Today's investigators would use DNA. What is DNA? How reliable is it? What scientific developments made the use and study of DNA possible?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- Teachers may wish to expose students to portions of the remarkable Ken Burns documentary *Jazz*. After viewing selections, students may discuss or write about their favorite performers or pieces.
- Have students research the roots of jazz music, including early slave songs sung on plantations. (Interestingly enough, some of the early songs were actually codes designed to lead escaped slaves north, e.g., "Follow the Drinking Gourd.")
- Math teachers may wish to have students deal with the financial aspects of the novel. Select an average interest rate. What would the three million dollars in 1957 bonds be worth today, with interest added
- A dollar doesn't buy what it used to! Have students compute what three million in 1957 dollars would be worth today, adjusted for inflation.

RESEARCH TOPICS

- Have students research a prominent jazz musician. They may do a presentation in front of the class where they a) show photos of the artist, b) play pieces off CDs or *legally* downloaded from the Internet, and c) discuss the performer's work and style.
- Many prominent musicians from the 50s and 60s have at one time filed a lawsuit against a record label. Research a famous lawsuit having to do with creator's rights, whether in the recording, film, or publishing industries. What were the specifics of the case? How did the judge rule? Do you agree with the outcome? Why or why not? (Some prominent examples are the above-mentioned case involving the Dixie Chicks; the case filed by Little Richard; the decades-long battle of Siegel and Shuster, creators of Superman; and the famous "My Sweet Lord" case lost by George Harrison.)

REVIEWS

"This third installment of their adventures will please fans of the series and newcomers alike, with lots of action, sympathetic heroes and intriguing villains.

A fun mystery." —**KLIATT**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Delaney earned a masters degree in comparative literature from the University of California at Irvine. He is the author of the *Misfits, Inc.* series and *Pepperland*. A former bookstore owner, he now teaches high school. Delaney lives in Tennessee.

The Misfits, Inc. series:

Misfits, Inc., No. 1: The Vanishing Chip
Misfits, Inc., No. 2: Of Heroes and Villains
Misfits, Inc., No. 3: Growler's Horn
Misfits, Inc., No. 4: The Kingfisher's Tale
Misfits, Inc., No. 5: The Protester's Song
Misfits, Inc., No. 6: Hit and Run

Peachtree Teacher's Guide for
MISFITS, INC., NO. 3: GROWLER'S HORN
 prepared by Mark Delaney

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