



***The Letter for the King* Teacher Resource**

A great deal of thanks and appreciation goes out to the members of our Teacher Advisory Committee, who volunteer their time to assist in the development of Sprockets teacher resources.

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TITLE: *The Letter for the King*

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: The Netherlands

RELEASE YEAR: 2008

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE: Dutch

DIRECTOR: Pieter Verhoeff

RUNTIME: 107 minutes

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY:

1. *The Letter for the King* (2008)
2. *Gelukkige hand, Een* (2005)
3. *Alles komt ergens van* (2003)
4. *Nynke* (2001)

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Elementary Language Curriculum

- Reading
- Media Literacy

FOCUSING QUESTION: What is genre and how is this film an authentic representation of its genre?

SYNOPSIS:

"This letter is for the king... It's vital to his country and to yours. Now that I can't take it, you have to do it... But beware. Enemies are everywhere."



When a dying knight speaks these words to Tiuri, pushing a mysterious letter into the adolescent's hands, the young squire must embark on a dangerous mission to save his kingdom. Though not yet a knight, Tiuri is forced to summon the courage and cunning of a seasoned veteran to complete this quest. Through dark woods and snowy mountains, Tiuri is pursued by thieves, spies and the ruthless Red Riders, all intent on stopping him before he can reach his goal. But by never forgetting the importance of friendship and the value of keeping a promise, Tiuri learns that you don't need a sword and shield to act with the gallantry of a knight.

Director Pieter Verhoeff brings Tiuri's quest to the screen in true epic style. The stunning natural settings will transport viewers to a medieval world of clashing swords, daring escapes and horseback chases. Based on the book by Tonke Dragt, *The Letter for the King* is a rich and exciting adventure story that celebrates the power of honesty and friendship.

Recommended for grades 5 through 8

AN EDUCATOR'S COMMENTS ON THE FILM:

"*The Letter for the King* is a wonderful transition into subtitled films for younger audiences. The traditional tale, the breathtaking cinematography and the young and heroic protagonist provide a cinematic experience that allows us to willingly suspend our disbelief, and makes us forget that we are reading text as we view."

PRE-SCREENING PREPARATION:

Have students investigate the following topics:

- What is meant by "genre"?
- List various genres and discuss common elements of each.
- Have students research the romance genre, focusing on chivalry, the quest motif, heroic knights, castles and courtly love.

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITY:

A great way to keep discussion interactive is to set up a Wiki so that students can address questions and comment on each other's responses. The following questions could be posted on a Wiki or used for discussion:



1. Why is Tiuri a “reluctant hero”?
2. Research what knights actually wore, and discuss the authenticity of the costuming in the film.
3. Why does Tiuri open the door when he is in the chapel? What would you do in the same situation? Why?
4. How does the fog and snow used in various scenes affect the overall mood?
5. Find examples of other stories or films in the romance genre (if you have a Wiki, you can provide links to these).
6. How is Tiuri’s relationship with his father portrayed in the film?
7. Discuss the use of the following:
 - Dream sequences
 - The mirror
 - The horse
 - The use of music
 - The epistolary motif (the reoccurrence of letters throughout the film)

Extension Activity:

Creative writing: Ask students to create a narrative where they are the protagonist and are confronted by a life-altering challenge. They may use the romantic setting of the film or choose a different backdrop. What will remain the same is the idea of a quest, and knowledge and self-awareness gained upon completing the challenge.

Before beginning, students should decide on the following:

Setting	
Quest details	
Obstacles in completing the quest	

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Characters assisting in completing the quest	
Lessons learned upon completion of the quest	

CONCLUSION/WRAP-UP:

Use this film to spark discussion on the quest motif in film and literature, and to begin to converse about genres.