



RIDDLE OF RED HERRING REEF

– SEL THEMES & CONVERSATION STARTERS –

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<https://jonincharacter.com/riddle-of-red-herring-reef/>

The questions on the next page are designed to encourage deep thinking, reflection and open-ended discussions about “Riddle of Red Herring Reef” themes.

Summary of Story Themes and Lessons:

1. Self-expression and Bravery – Ariel learns to overcome her fear of sharing her artwork and expresses her unique voice.
2. Community and Belonging – The story celebrates the strength and beauty of a supportive, creative community.
3. Mystery and Curiosity – Redge’s detective work encourages curiosity, observation, and playful problem-solving.
4. Creativity and Imagination – The underwater art exhibit showcases different ways of creating and appreciating art.
5. Encouragement and Support – Friends cheering on Ariel reminds listeners how encouragement can help someone step out of their shell.

Casel SEL Framework Connections:

- Self-Awareness – Ariel reflects on her emotions and recognizes her fear of judgment, a key step in understanding personal strengths and feelings.
- Self-Management – Ariel manages her fear and anxiety, ultimately finding the courage to share her painting with others, demonstrating resilience and confidence.
- Social Awareness – Ariel deeply values her community and the celebration of others' art. The characters also show empathy and understanding toward her vulnerability.
- Relationship Skills – Jonathan and Redge support Ariel with kindness and encouragement, modeling how healthy friendships are built on listening, trust, and positive reinforcement.
- Responsible Decision-Making – Redge and Jonathan take initiative to help solve the mystery with care and curiosity, while Ariel ultimately makes the responsible choice to be honest and true to herself.

– COLOR PAGE BONUS –

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[The+Missing+Masterpiece+Color+Page_Dorktales+Podcast+.pdf](#)

– DISCUSSION QUESTIONS –

Self-Expression and Creativity:

- Have you ever made something creative—like a drawing, story, or song—but felt nervous about sharing it?
- Why do you think Ariel was scared to show her painting, even though she loved art and her community?
- What helps you feel brave when you want to share something that’s special to you?
- If you were part of the Jubilee of the Sea, what kind of art would you make to represent your own community?

Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking:

- What clues helped Redge and Jonathan figure out the mystery of the missing painting?
- How do you know when a problem is worth investigating, even if it seems small at first?
- Can you think of a time when you used clues or observations to figure something out?

Friendship and Supporting Others:

- How did Jonathan and Redge show they were good friends to Ariel?
- Have you ever helped a friend feel more confident or supported?
- What does it mean to be a good listener when someone is nervous or unsure?
- Why is it important to cheer on others when they’re trying something new?

Understanding Emotions and Being Brave:

- What kinds of feelings do you think Ariel had during the art tour and empty frame mystery?
- Can you describe a time when you felt scared to do something but did it anyway?
- What does “coming out of your shell” mean to you?
- Why is it sometimes hard to share your feelings or your voice?

Community and Belonging:

- Ariel painted her community to show how much it meant to her. What would you include in a painting of your own community or family?
- Why do you think sharing stories—through art, words, or music—helps people feel more connected?
- Who in your community helps you feel safe, seen, or supported?

Making Personal Connections:

- Have you ever been part of a special event, like a school art show, play, or talent day? What was that experience like for you?
- Has someone ever cheered you on or encouraged you when you were feeling unsure? What did they say or do that helped?
- What is something that's really important to you that you would want others to understand or appreciate—like a hobby, a tradition, or a favorite place?