

ZORGAMAZOO



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

WEB RESOURCES:

If you want to learn more about the book, the characters, and the author, there are several Internet resources that are fun to check out, including an audio interview. Look for these:

- Podcast interview with the author on *Just One More Book* on April 13, 2009
- <http://www.justonemorebook.com/2009/04/13/conversation-with-robert-paul-weston/>
- Book website: <http://www.zorgamazoo.com/>
- Author's website: <http://www.robertpaulweston.com/>
- Author's blog: <http://wayofthewest.wordpress.com/>

MORE BOOKS LIKE THIS:

If you enjoyed this rhyming story, you might also like the rhyming writing of Ogden Nash (*The Tale of Custard the Dragon*), Roald Dahl (*Revolting Rhymes*), or even longer works by Dr. Seuss (*The Lorax*, *The Sneetches*, *Yertle the Turtle*, *The Butter Battle Book*, etc.)

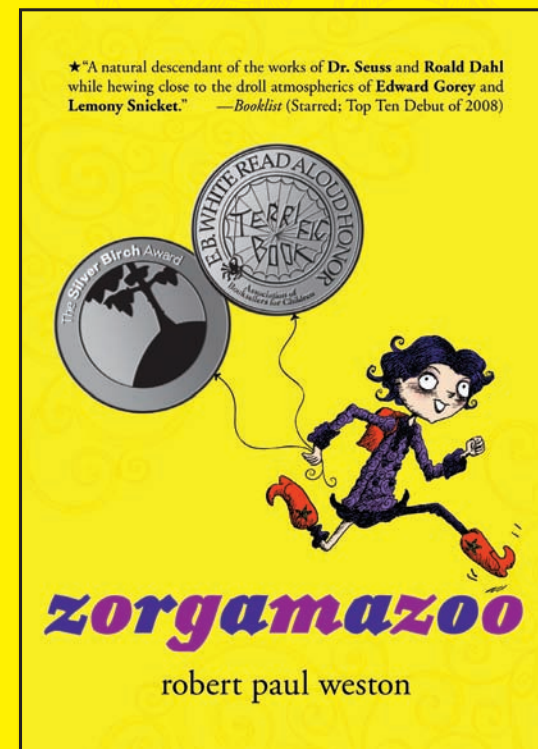


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Ages 10 & up
(HC) 978-1-59514-199-6 • \$15.99
(PB) 978-1-59514-295-5 • \$8.99
(Audio) 978-0-14-242818-4 • \$19.95

ABOUT THE BOOK

Sit down in a comfortable seat, with maybe some cocoa and something to eat, and I'll spin you the tale of Katrina Katrell, a girl full of course (and daring as well!), who down in the subway, under the ground, saw something fantastical roaming around...

What was it she saw?
I'd Rather not say.
(Who's ever heard of a Zorgle, anyway?)

But if you are curious, clever and brave, if intrepid adventure is something you crave, then open this book and I'll leave it to you to uncover the secret of ZORGAMAZOO!

Join Morty the Zorgle and Katrina and a fantastically illustrated, you'll-wanna-read-every-word-aloud, sophisticated rhyming adventure for kids of all ages!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Paul Weston is the author of *Zorgamazoo* (which ought to be read aloud to someone you love) and *Dust City* (a thriller inspired by fairy tales). He has published fiction in magazines on both sides of the Atlantic and has been nominated for the Journey Prize and the Fountain Award for Speculative Literature. He holds an MFA in creative writing from the University of British Columbia. Currently, he lives in Canada, where he lectures in creative writing at the University of Toronto.

For more information about Robert Paul Weston, please visit www.robertpaulweston.com

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Before reading, speculate on the meaning of the book’s title *Zorgamazoo*. What do you think it is? A place? A person? A magic spell?
- Who is Katrina Katrell and why did she run away from home?
- How are Bortlebee and Mortimer Yorgle alike and different?
- How does Morty Yorgle first become a reluctant hero? How does he feel about that?
- What is the lottery prize? Is an adventure a prize you would like to win?
- How do Katrina and Morty meet (the first OR the second time)? What do they think of each other?
- In chapter 8, Katrina and Morty finally make it to Zorgamazoo. What has happened there?
- How do Katrina and Morty find out the truth about what happened to the Zorgles and Zorgamazoo in Chapter 10, “A terrible tale”?
- Katrina, Morty and Winnie find themselves transported to the moon. How did they get there?
- What creatures and beings are trapped in the “Moonagerie Crypt”? Which are familiar to you and which are new?
- Dullbert Hohummer, the Third has a plan for saving Graybalon-Four and gathering “Tedium Steam.” What is it? Is he a hero or a villain?
- While our heroes are captured, they learn of the “old Bortlebee legends of danger and fate” and Morty feels inadequate and becomes “inconsolably blue.” Katrina tries to comfort him. How do you comfort a friend who is sad?
- The resourceful Katrina Katrell comes up with a plan to help everyone escape from the Octomabots and Graybalon-Four. But there are ups and downs. How do they all work together to finally escape?
- Katrina discovers Enchantium Gas, almost like music “you could hear with your eyes.” How do you create it?
- The story ends as Bortlebee reminds us that “Adventures... turn strangers to kin.” It can make a family out of a zorgle, a windigo, and a girl. Who do you consider your “kin”?

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS/EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. CHARACTER SKETCH BIOPOEM: *Zorgamazoo* is full of fascinating characters who are described in detail. Look for key words and phrases to create a character sketch for your favorite character in the form of a biopoem.

CHARACTERS

Katrina Katrell	Doctor Reginald LeFang	The Ogre	Sickly van Puke
Mortimer Yorgle	Winifred Windigo	The Behemoth	Cyril “the Slinger”
Bortlebee Yorgle	Thistle McPaw	Selena the Slash	Zipzorgle DeYoung
Mrs. Gremelda Krabone (AKA “Old Krabby”)	Dullbert Hohummer, the Third	Bugsy McCrook	

THE BIOPOEM FORMULA

- Line 1: First Name
Line 2: Four traits (characteristics) that describe the person
Line 3: Relative of or relationship ("sister," "father," "friend", etc.) to _____
Line 4: Lover of _____ (list three things or people that are loved)
Line 5: Who feels _____ (three items)
Line 6: Who needs _____ (three items)
Line 7: Who fears _____ (three items)
Line 8: Who gives _____ (one item fully explained)
Line 9: Who would like to see _____ (one item)
Line 10: Resident of _____
Line 11: Last Name



Here is one example of a biopoem about the protagonist of Natalie Babbitt’s classic fantasy novel, *Tuck Everlasting* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1975).

Winnie
caring, curious, sensitive, smart
companion of Mae, Tuck, Miles, Jesse
lover of family, friends, life
who feels afraid, adventurous, ambivalent
who needs an anchor, a challenge, a choice
who fears death, danger, decisions
who gives the gift of life with love
who would like to see the future
resident of Treegap
Foster

BROWN BAG BOOK REPORT:

This novel is full of unusual objects that would be fun to draw or make. Create a “brown bag book report” with home made items from the story like a lottery ticket, a marble labeled “Mortimer Y,” the map to Zorgamazoo, a sign labeled “Z G M O,” an ogre’s eyeball, pebbles from the Tunnel of Hush, etc. Then retell the story using these props, one at a time, to share the book with friends. Afterward, use the same props to create a library display to go with the book.

READERS THEATER:

This is the perfect book to read aloud using readers theater because it’s told in rhyme and has so many fun characters. Choose an action-packed chapter (like Chapter 16 “A Furious Fray”) to read aloud. Take turns reading different stanzas as narrators and have volunteers read the dialogue for characters of their choosing, including the Sphinx, Winnie, Morty, the Behemoth, Katrina, and the Ogre. Everyone can join in on the comic book words (“biff!,” “boff!,” “piffle!,” and “poff!”). For more audio fun, listen to the unabridged audiobook version narrated by Alan Cumming using many wonderful voices for all the different characters. In addition, you can listen to chapter 3 read by the author himself on the book’s website under “The Story” (along with a short introduction).

MAKING MACHINES:

If you like to make or build things, try drawing or creating one of the many machines (or a mock machine) described in detail in *Zorgamazoo*. There is the Hero Selection Divining Device, the horrible Octoabots, and the Hoarder of Boredom Machine, for example. Add these to a library book display. Or try dramatizing one of these machines with people standing in for each component. Volunteers can say each line or phrase out loud and make motions or sound effects. Combine these machines with a readers theater performance for extra fun! And if possible, film the performance!

WRITING POETRY AND PLAYING WITH PRINT:

If you like writing, you might want to try your hand at writing rhyming couplets, or—pairs of rhyming lines. You could try writing a review of the book in rhyme or an epilogue stanza to describe what might happen next to the *Zorgamazoo* characters. Or if you want to celebrate the author’s writing, partner with a friend to search for all the great gross and gruesome lines! For example:

“His nicknames was ‘Sickly’ or
‘SICKLY VAN PUKE’
and his nose always trickled with gobbledygook.” (p. 86)

Write or type the lines out and experiment with using unusual or enlarged type as they do in the book. Add your own pen and ink sketches in the style of Spanish illustrator, Victor Rivas.