



THE
Storyteller
EVAN TURK

ROSSOMAT
Visual Literacy &
Discussion Questions

"Teaching youth is like carving in stone."
—Moroccan Proverb



ROSSOMAT Visual Literacy

Award-winning illustrator Evan Turk included incredible detail in the spreads for the picture book **The Storyteller**. In Arabic, illustration is called *rossom* or *rossomat* (plural). Explore the visual literacy or meaning behind the borders, colors, and styles of the illustrations with your readers.

Outside Border

Journey back through the book and look at just the outside borders. Why do you think Evan Turk chose blue and gold for these borders? Why does the intricacy of the pattern and the amount of blue increase as the book progresses?

The Sandstorm and the Last Storyteller

Both the sandstorm and the storyteller are depicted in a golden color. Why? Observe the shapes of the sandstorm. Compare those rounded shapes to the geometric patterned designs that appear on the pages of the stories about the lost princess, the weavers, and the Glorious Blue Water Bird.

The Lost Princess, the Weavers, and the Glorious Blue Water Bird

Why does Evan Turk choose to contrast the round shapes of the desert with the geometry in the stories? Do threads and weaving influence the design? Is weaving a form of storytelling?

Water, Storytelling, and Hope

Water, storytelling, and hope are all depicted in blue. Why do you think Evan chose that color, and how are these three things related? Can you explore how the blue increases as the story progresses? Can you explore how blue is shared from one to many?

The Endless Drought

The story of the family who owned the Glorious Blue Water Bird is told on the page with a green font and a green border. What could the green stand for? Notice that there is blue mixed in with the green border. Why is blue a part of that story?

The Glorious Blue Water Bird

Look at the border for this story. Why would the border be brown and spiky? What happens to the border when the blue thread is introduced? Why?

The Miraculous Yarn

The story of the princess starts with a black font and a black border. Watch how the border changes. What is happening to the border and why? Why did the princess's story move from black to blue?

Frames and Carpets

On the illustration above, see if your readers can retell the stories with only the frames as reminders.

Show the slideshow of carpets on the "Our Carpets" pages of AnzalWeavers.com. Compare the carpets to Evan Turk's frames. Evan visited the Anzal Weavers in Morocco. Explore that visit and its influence on Evan's work in the "Weaver as Storyteller" post on TheStorytellerBook.com. Look for it on the "The Art of 'The Storyteller'" page.

The Halka

The *halka* is the circle or audience that surrounds a storyteller. Did you notice that all of the characters from the stories surround the storyteller boy on the last spread? The old storyteller himself is even watching! Often storytellers will use people in the crowd to portray characters and create their stories.

Why is the border of this last spread completely blue?

More Resources

Evan Turk shares more about his process and the symbolism of his work under the "Explore Themes" pages of "The Art of 'The Storyteller'" and "Symbolism" at TheStorytellerBook.com.

For a growing list of resources and activities, visit the "Inspiration & Resources" page of that site.

Indigo, Tea & Fire

A highlight on the "The Art of 'The Storyteller'" page is the video called *The Art of 'The Storyteller' by Evan Turk*. The video is a demonstration of Evan using indigo, sugared tea, and heat to create a sample illustration for the book.

Note on Moroccan Arabic

Any words on this sheet in *bold italic* can be heard on an audio pronunciation guide on the "Inspiration & Resources" page of TheStorytellerBook.com.