



THOMAS AND THE DRAGON QUEEN

written by

Shutta Crum

published by

Alfred A. Knopf, 2010

Thomas and the Dragon Queen was a gift. I wrote this book quickly—the first draft was done within a six week period! After that, of course, came months of revision. My goal was to write something simple, pure and heartfelt. Also I wanted a book for the very youngest lovers of fantasy, so I strove to keep the book short and accessible. I think I accomplished that! The illustrations by Lee Wildish serve it well. I hope you enjoy Thomas's adventures. May your heart and hand be true!

"As was the way, it was done."

Anonymous Dragon Saying

Shutta

Questions for study/research:

1. Discuss the many interesting jobs done by the people who lived in the middle ages. Thomas's father was a leathersmith. What other kinds of "smiths" were there? Then discuss the fact that *Smith* is one of the most common names in the U.S. Many of our surnames were first used during the middle ages. Have your

students research the top ten most common last names in the U.S. Which ones are associated with professions?

2. Thomas had to swear an oath of fealty to his king. Are there other oaths we encounter in our lives? What about the "Pledge of Allegiance?" Others?
3. Thomas started out as a page, became a squire and then a knight. Each stage required a boy to learn certain tasks. What are those tasks? (See some of the links listed on the back of this guide.)
4. What about the role of girls in the Middle Ages? How were their abilities utilized?
5. A many-headed beast lives in the foul smelling pool near the sea. Research and discuss the Greek myth of the Hydra.
6. Thomas wins the respect of the Dragon Queen through bravery and honesty. Afterward they come to terms through communication and compromise. Discuss compromise. What are some historical examples of compromise?

Good links and resources

Shutta's website: www.shutta.com

Castle Life: (at the PBS site)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/lostempire/trebuchet/castle.html>

Life in the Middle Ages:

<http://www.learner.org/interactives/middleages/feudal.html>

http://historymedren.about.com/od/medievalchildren/Medieval_Children.htm

Dragon Theme: (puzzles, coloring sheets, etc.)

http://www.abcteach.com/directory/theme_units/dragons/

Peace & Compromise:

<http://www.teachpeacenow.org/>

Writing sites for kids:

<http://www.gennasworld.com/>

<http://mag.amazing-kids.org/>

What the critics say about
THOMAS AND THE DRAGON QUEEN:

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"... This endearing story is both heartwarming and full of surprises. Thomas learns that a boy cannot be judged by his size or his intentions, but by the decisions he makes and the trials he must overcome... a must-read." Starred review: *School Library Journal*, Aug. 2010

"... A sure-fire hit as a read-aloud, this is an engaging book featuring a hero filled with bravery, quick wits, and heart." *The Horn Book Magazine*, July/Aug 2010

"... A refreshing antidote to the tired fractured-fairy-tale genre, this good-hearted chapter book delivers an adventure that many young readers will enjoy. A fine choice for those early elementary-school students seeking longer chapter books." *Booklist Magazine*, June/July 2010

"... Crum's adventure kicks into high gear as Thomas sets off for the dragon's remote island. En route the earnest boy overcomes his self-doubt about his skills and bravery..." *Publishers Weekly*, July 2010

"... The quick pace, thrilling escapes, and subtly detailed medieval setting will all be appealing to early fantasy readers..." *Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books*, Sept. 2010

