

**Readings for 3/20**  
**Ms. Darlene's Class**

“A Fisherman Robbed”  
by Thornton Burgess

As for poor Plunger, he shook himself, screamed angrily once or twice, then appeared to think that it was wisest to make the best of a bad matter and that there were more fish where that one had come from, for he once more began to sail in circles over the Big River, searching for a fish near the surface. Peter watched him until he saw him catch another fish and fly away with it in triumph. King Eagle watched him, too, but having had a

good breakfast, he was quite willing to let Plunger enjoy his catch in peace.

Late that afternoon Peter visited the Old Orchard, for he just had to tell Jenny Wren all about what he had seen that morning.

“King Eagle is king simply because he is so big and fierce and strong,” sputtered Jenny. “He isn’t kingly in his habits, not the least bit. He never hesitates to rob those smaller than himself, just as you saw him rob Plunger. He is very fond of fish, and once in a while he catches one for himself when Plunger isn’t around to be robbed, but he isn’t a very good fisherman, and he isn’t the least bit

fussy about his fish. Plunger eats only fresh fish which he catches himself, but King Eagle will eat dead fish which he finds on the shore. He doesn't seem to care how long they have been dead either."

"Doesn't he eat anything but fish?" asked Peter innocently.

"Well," retorted Jenny Wren, her eyes twinkling, "I wouldn't advise you to run across the Green Meadows in sight of King Eagle. I am told he is very fond of Rabbit. In fact he is very fond of fresh meat of any kind. He even catches the babies of Lightfoot the Deer when he gets a chance. He is so swift of wing that even the

members of the Duck family fear him, for he is especially fond of fat Duck. Even Honker the Goose is not safe from him. King he may be, but he rules only through fear. He is a white-headed old robber. The best thing I can say of him is that he takes a mate for life and is loyal and true to her as long as she lives, and that is a great many years. By the way, Peter, did you know that she is bigger than he is, and that the young during the first year after leaving their nest, are bigger than their parents and do not have white heads? By the time they get white heads they are the same size as their parents.”

“That’s odd and it’s hard to believe,” said Peter.

“It is odd, but it is true just the same, whether you believe it or not,” retorted Jenny Wren, and whisked out of sight into her home.

“Our First Great Painter”  
by James Baldwin

Then he handed it back to his wife and said:

“Put it away. It may be that the hand of the Lord is in this.”

Several weeks afterward, there came a visitor to the home of the Wests. It was a good old Friend, whom everybody loved—a white-haired, pleasant-faced minister, whose words were always wise.

Benjamin’s parents showed him the picture. They told him how the lad was always trying to draw something.

And they asked what they should do about it.

The good minister looked at the picture for a long time. Then he called little Benjamin to him. He put his hands on the lad's head and said:

“This child has a wonderful gift. We cannot understand it nor the reason of it. Let us trust that great good may come from it, and that Benjamin West may grow up to be an honor to our country and the world.”

And the words of the old minister came true. The pictures of Benjamin West made him famous. He was the first great American painter.

“Stone Soup”  
by Marcia Brown

At last the soup was ready.

“All of you shall taste,” the soldiers said. “But first a table must be set.” Great tables were placed in the square. And all around were lighted torches. Such a soup! How good it smelled! Truly fit for a king.

But then the peasants asked themselves, “Would not such a soup require bread – and a roast – and cider?” Soon a banquet was spread and everyone sat down to eat.

Never had there been such a feast. Never had the peasants tasted such soup. And fancy, made from stones!

They ate and drank and ate and drank. After that they danced. They danced and sang far into the night.

At last they were tired. Then the three soldiers asked, “Is there not a loft where we could sleep?”

“Let three wise, splendid gentlemen sleep in a loft? Indeed! They must have the best beds in the village.”

So the first soldier slept in the priest’s house.

The second soldier slept in the baker's house.

And the third soldier slept in the mayor's house.

In the morning, the whole village gathered in the square to give them a send-off.

“Many thanks for what you have taught us,” the peasants said to the soldiers. “We shall never go hungry, now that we know how to make soup from stones.”

“Oh, it's all in knowing how,” said the soldiers, and off they went down the road.