

A Reader's Theater adaptation of Henry Neff's *The Hound of Rowan*, book 1 of *The Tapestry*

by Dorcas Hand

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©*The Hound of Rowan* by Henry Neff, published Random House Children's Books, 2007.

Characters

Mr. McDaniels

Max McDaniels

Mrs. Millen

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

Narrator 3

Narrator 4

Narrator 5

Narrator 1: Max yawned as his father tossed a pair of socks into an overnight bag. Zipping it closed, he lumbered down the hallway. He returned a minute later with a handful of television cables and video game controllers.

Mr. McDaniels: Not that I don't trust you...

Narrator 2: The tangled mess was stuffed into the bag and zipped up tight.

Max (moaning): What am I supposed to do all day?

Mr. McD (growling): Being grounded is a punishment. You're the one yawning – feel free to sleep all day.

Narrator 3: Max had to admit that didn't sound half bad. He had spent much of the night peering out of his window. The idea that the dead-eyed man might have Max's

name and address and could be coming at any moment kept him occupied until dawn. By daylight, his fears seemed silly.

Narrator 4: As the taxi honked outside, Max had a sudden urge to tell his father about the man at the museum. He swallowed his words. At this point, it would seem little better than a last gasp to avoid punishment.

Mr. McD: I'll only be gone a day. The number for the Raleighs is on the fridge. They'll expect you for dinner by six, and you can sleep over there. Be good. I'll see you tomorrow.

Narrator 5: Max locked the door, and curiosity led him back upstairs to examine the letter he found in his pocket at the museum the day before.

Narrator 3: The letter that read:

Dear Mr. Max McDaniels

Our records indicate that you registered as a Potential this afternoon at 3:37 CST, US. Congratulations, Mr. McDaniels. You must be a very remarkable young man, and we look forward to making your acquaintance. One of our regional representatives will be contacting you shortly. Until that time, we would appreciate your absolute silence and utmost discretion in this matter.

Best Regards,

Gabrielle Richter

Executive Director

Narrator 2: When Max's stomach began to growl, he finally put the letter aside and went downstairs to make a sandwich.

Narrator 4: He was descending the stairs when he saw a shadow moving beneath the front door. Max stopped as he heard three soft knocks. He remained still, poised between steps, when the knocks sounded again.

Mrs. Millen: Hello? Anybody home?

Narrator 1: Max exhaled. It was not the man from the museum. Tiptoeing to a side window, he glimpsed a plump, elderly woman holding a suitcase and looking at her watch. Her cane was propped against the door. Catching sight of Max, she smiled brightly and waved.

Mrs. Millen: Hello. Are you Max McDaniels? I'm Mrs. Millen. I believe you received a letter that I would be visiting you?

Narrator 5: Max smiled and waved back.

Mrs. Millen: May I come in?

Narrator 3: Max slid back the brass bolt and opened the door. Mrs. Millen stood on the doorstep, beaming and extending her hand.

Mrs. Millen: It's very nice to meet you, Max. I was hoping I could have a few words with you about the letter you received.

Max: Sure. Nice to meet you, too.

Narrator 4: Max led Mrs. Millen to the dining room. She politely declined when he offered to carry her suitcase, leaning heavily on her cane as she swung it along. With a grateful sigh, she settled into a chair, sending up a waft of perfume. She smiled and removed her glasses to massage her red, puffy eyes as Max took a seat across from her.

Mrs. Millen: Well, before we begin, might I have the pleasure of meeting your parents? Are they at home?

Max: My dad's out on business.

Mrs. Millen: And your mother?

Max: She's not home either.

Mrs. Millen: Well, that certainly makes my job a bit easier.

Max (worried): How do you mean?

Narrator 2: Max glanced at her suitcase, puzzled by the long shallow scratches that scored its side.

Mrs. Millen: Oh, well, parents are often very set in their ways. For example, most parents can't really understand strange events at the Art Institute, now can they? You did have quite a day yesterday, didn't you, Max.

Max: Yeah – I mean yes. I did. I saw lots of weird things. And I found a room – a room I couldn't find again after I'd left it. While I was in the room, I saw a tapestry.

Mrs. Millen: Was it a pretty tapestry?

Max: Not at first. It was ugly.

Narrator 5: Max paused. His experience now seemed very personal. He hesitated to share it with her.

Mrs. Millen: Yes? It was ugly? An old, ratty tapestry? Go on, dear. I know it seems secret and silly, but it's all right to share it with me. Believe me, Max, you'll feel better if you do.

Narrator 4: Mrs. Millen smiled and leaned forward expectantly. Max suddenly felt sleepy.

Max: It started to glow. There were words and pictures and music.

Mrs. Millen: And what were those words, Max? Tell me, what *pictures* did you see?

Narrator 3: Mrs. Millen spoke in hushed, urgent tones. Max felt his neck begin to itch. He paused to look at her closely.

Narrator 2: Her face was round and strangely taut. Although her smile stayed fixed, her pupils began to dilate. Max was fascinated by them as they grew. They reminded him of a polar bear he had seen at the zoo. He had never forgotten the way its flat, black eyes had followed him hungrily from across the protective barrier.

Narrator 1: Max blinked in alarm. There was no barrier here.

Max: I have to go to the bathroom.

Mrs. Millen: Yes, yes, certainly – but first tell me what you saw in the tapestry.

Max: Maybe we should talk when my dad gets home.

Mrs. Millen: Hoo-hoo-hoo! You are one cautious bright little boy! You might just be the one we want.

Narrator 2: Sweat broke out on Max's forehead; his throat itched. He glanced at her cane, realizing he could run. No one had ever been able to catch him when he ran, and Mrs. Millen was old.

Max: I think you should go now. I'm not feeling well.

Mrs. Millen: Of course, my dear. *But you're coming with me.*

Narrator 3: The smile never left her lips as her hand shot across the table to seize Max's wrist. Max yelped and shot backward, squirming painfully out of her astonishingly strong grasp and falling off his chair.

Narrator 4: At the same time, Max heard something crash upstairs in his room. Heavy footsteps were coming down the stairs. Someone else was in the house.

Narrator 5: To find out what happens next, you'll have to read *The Hound of Rowan*, the first book in the *Tapestry* series.

All: It's a great read. And if you like this one, the [Bluebonnet website](#) has a list of books like it.