



# Welcome to Katie Morag's Isle of Struay

Who is Mairi Hedderwick?

Introducing character, setting and plot

Finding out about characters

Ideas



## The Isle of Coll



Lots of holiday makers visit the town where Mairi Hedderwick was born.



All the Katie Morag stories were written and illustrated by Mairi Hedderwick. She was born in Gourock, Scotland in 1939.



What can you tell about Gourock by looking at these pictures?

When she was 17 she went to the Isle of Coll to work as a mother's help.

She loved the island so much that when she got married and had a family she decided that they should all move to live on the Isle of Coll.



They lived in a house that was 3 miles away from any other house. There wasn't a road near to them and they had no electricity. When they needed water they had to get it from a well because there was no water in the house!



Look closely at this satellite picture. Can you tell what you are looking at?

It is an aerial view of Coll and Tiree!

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Did you know that the first of Mairi Hedderwick's Katie Morag books was published in 1984, more than 20 years ago! It was called Katie Morag Delivers the Mail.

The story introduces us to **Struay** and all the **characters** in the book.

The **setting** for the Katie Morag stories is a made up place that Mairi called **Struay** but when she was writing her stories they were all based on the Isle of Coll - she just gave the island a different name.

All stories have a **plot**. A plot is what happens in the story.

In this story Katie Morag's mum is fed up. Do you know why?

Mrs McColl is fed up because the baby is teething and everyone is getting under her feet. It's time for Katie Morag to help out.

Mairi Hedderwick has used lots of **imagination** to write her stories but lots of little things in her stories are based on her own experiences.

Some of Katie Morag's adventures are the very same adventures that Mairi had when she was a little girl or they are based on the adventures of Mairi's two children, Mark and Tamara. Mairi really did throw her teddy into the sea - not once but twice!

In Mairi's imagination, her children's toys are the toys Katie Morag plays with in the stories and Grannie Island's Rayburn stove is the one that Mairi had in her kitchen.




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There are a lot of characters in Mairi Hedderwick's stories. How can you find out about them?

Her illustrations tell us a lot about them so we can look at the illustrations for picture clues.

Words help us to know about the character too. Mairi Hedderwick uses lots of describing words to help us know what her characters are like.

It's easy to know what a character looks like, especially if there is a picture to show us, but how does Mairi Hedderwick describe what they are like as people?

What do you know about each of the characters? Who do you think is the main character in the stories?

The main character is Katie Morag of course but what do you know about her?



Now click to find out if you knew all these things about her.

We know that she is a little girl with red hair.

Her mum and dad own the island shop and post office.

She has little brother called Liam and a baby sister, Flora Ann.

Her birthday is on the same day as Grannie Island AND Grannie Mainland!

She has two cats, Mr Mistake and Fabbydoo.

She can be stubborn, stormy and tearful and she can be mischievous but she is also a very charming and determined little girl!

What do you know about Mr and Mrs McColl?



We know that they are Katie Morag's mum and dad and that Katie Morag sometimes helps them out.

They run the island post office and shop. Mr McColl is the shopkeeper and Mrs McColl is the postmistress.

They live in the busiest part of the island.

They don't have gas or an electric hob or oven to cook on. They have a range that they use for cooking they don't just use it for cooking!

Mr McColl has a brother called Matthew. Mr McColl visits him but Mrs McColl won't go to see him. Mr McColl calls his brother "a slovenly disgrace to the McColl family"

**What do you know about Grannie Island?**



She lives on the other side of the bay with all her animals and birds. Her house is the last house at the end of the road.



She wears dungarees and wellingtons and likes to be busy.

She drives a grey tractor and loves making soup. She calls it broth.

She is Mrs McColl's mum and Katie Morag's Grannie.

She's not very keen on Granma Mainland and her fancy ways!

She won a silver trophy for her prize sheep on Show Day. Can you remember its name?

Its name is Alecina

Not many people know about her husband, Captain Nils J Olsen a helicopter pilot.

**What do we know about Granma Mainland?**

She used to be a nurse and a secretary.

She doesn't live on the island. She lives far away from Struay, over the sea, in a flat in the city.

When Grannie Island was ill, Granma Mainland was amazed when she found out that Grannie Island doesn't have a Hoover or a washing machine.



We know a lot about Granma Mainland because of what Grannie Island says about her.

Grannie Island says she has fancy ways. Why does she say this?

She likes fancy clothes and jewellery.

In the story, Grannie Island is ill, it says that Grannie Island hated Granma Mainland's fancy cooking and even more all her tidying.

She gets married to Neilly Beag and he calls her a smart wee Bobby Dazzler!

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**What do we know about Neilly Beag?**

Neilly Beag is the baker.

Friday is baking day on the Isle of Struay. Neilly Beag and the ferryman's wife are the best bakers on the island so Katie Morag makes sure she visits them on Fridays!



Katie Morag always comes to see him on Fridays.

Do you know why?

He likes a bit of peace and quiet and don't like it when the ferryman and his wife stay up late.



He grows herbs in his window box and chops them up to put in his soups and stews on baking day.

a smart wee Bobby Dazzler!

What does he call Granma Mainland?

**Can you guess who these characters are?**

I love gardening.

My garden is like a maze.

Sometimes I even get lost in it!

Who am I?



Mrs Bayview of course!

People say I'm quite eccentric, they think I sometimes do strange things.

Who am I?

I have a sculpture garden and my grass is often very long.

I was a bit cross with Katie Morag when she was delivering the mail.

The Lady Artist of course!



There are two of us and we are best friends

Who are we?

One of us is fat and ginger coloured. The other is small, white and blind in one eye.

Fabbydoo and Mr Mistake of course!



During the day we spend most of our time sleeping and stretching on Katie Morag's bed.

At night you won't find us in the house because we like to prowl around the island hunting for mice.

I live in a hut on the other side of the island.

Who am I?

People say I am a hermit.

I am Katie Morag's uncle Matthew.



Once a month my brother (Mr McColl) comes to see if I am alright.

His wife (Mrs McColl) won't visit me. Mr McColl calls me 'a slovenly disgrace to the McColl family' but I'm glad Katie Morag wants to visit me again.

Try looking at the different Katie Morag books, or you could look at other favourite stories.

You could start by making a list of all the characters in the book. Then you could ask yourself....

What do the characters look like? How do I know?

What sort of characters are they?

How do I know what they are like?

What do I feel about them?



Choose a character from a story you know well.

Write the character's name and the title of the story the character is in. Draw a picture of the character and write 3 or 4 words that describe what sort of character it is.

Pick out of the story some things the character **did** which show what the character is like.

Pick out of the story some things the character **said** which shows what the character is like.



Welcome to the Isle of Struay

Learning targets:

- To talk about characters in a book.
- To identify and discuss characters - appearance, behaviour, qualities
- To speculate on how characters should behave
- To evaluate behaviour in stories
- To study (leading to writing) character profiles describing characteristics and behaviour.

Notes on the Katie Morag stories

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