

**EDDIE RED UNDERCOVER: MYSTERY ON MUSEUM MILE**

## by Marcia Wells

Illustrations by Marcos Calo

## Louisiana Young Readers’ Choice Nominee 2017

**Grade 3-5**

Submitted by Jessica Barrilleaux, Student Worker

State Library of Louisiana

**Title**: *Eddie Red Undercover: Mystery on Museum Mile*

**Author**: Marcia Wells

**Illustrator**: Marcos Calo

**Publisher**: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

**Pages**: 256

**SUMMARY**

Edmund Lonnrot is gifted; he has a photographic memory and the artistic skill to reproduce anything and anyone he’s seen on paper. Just as his father is breaking some bad news to him – that the family might no longer be able to afford the awesome but expensive school he attends – he sees a crime take place. When the NYPD interview him as a witness and discover his abilities, they recruit him to help them solve one of their toughest and oldest cases. Given the codename Eddie Red, Edmund thinks this might be just the opportunity he needs to earn enough money for tuition and to avoid having to leave his friends, favorite teachers, and classes behind.

Being an undercover police consultant is not as glamorous as it seems though. Edmund spends his days in museums and in front of the television, sketching boring pottery and watching surveillance tapes while waiting for potential suspects to appear. His parents insist on going undercover as well – to make sure he’s safe, they say – but they distract him and stand out, even in disguise. In self-defense lessons at the police station, he expects to learn kung fu, but instead he’s told that he should run away if he’s ever in danger. His grades begin to slip; he doesn’t have time to spend with his best friend; and, on top of it all, the police won’t give him any information about the case he’s supposed to be solving! The situation is not what he imagined, but can Edmund make it work in his favor anyway?

**AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY**

Marcia Wells has a master’s degree in Spanish literature and has taught writing, Spanish, and math to middle school students for the past fifteen years. When she’s not visiting relatives in New York City and planning adventures for Eddie Red, she’s at home with her husband, kids, and other farm animals in Vermont.

Biographical information taken from the author’s website at

<http://marciawellsauthor.com/marcia/>

Accessed 25 February 2016.

**ILLUSTRATOR BIOGRAPHY**

Spanish born Marcos Calo began his career working for various Spanish animation studios as a concept artist for CGI movies. During that time he also worked freelance doing illustration, commercial work and occasionally comic books. Marcos usually works digitally, although he still likes to start his drawings on paper first.

Biographical information taken from the publisher’s website at

<http://www.hmhco.com/bookstore/authors/Marcos-Calo/15689927>

Accessed 25 February 2016.

**AWARDS**

2015 Edgar Award nominee

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Author website <http://marciawellsauthor.com/>

Illustrator website <http://www.marcoscalo.com/>

**OTHER TITLES BY AUTHOR**

*Eddie Red Undercover: Mystery in Mayan Mexico* (2015)

*Eddie Red Undercover: Doom in Grant’s Tomb* (2016)

**OTHER TITLES BY ILLUSTRATOR**

Greetings from Somewhere series by Harper Paris (2014-2016)

Monsterrific Tales series by David Lubar (2013-2014)

Field Trip Mysteries series by Steve Brezenoff (2009-2013)

**RELATED TITLES**

*Chasing Vermeer* by Blue Balliett

*Encyclopedia Brown Cracks the Case* by Donald J. Sobol

*From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E.L. Konigsburg

**CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS**

**Health and Physical Education:**

* Eddie’s self-defense lesson did not go as he expected; learn more at [http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/self-defense.html#](http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/self-defense.html). If possible, have a local police officer speak to the class on the subject.
* Practice guided meditation or yoga to boost memory <https://student.societyforscience.org/article/meditation-may-boost-teen-memory>

**Art:**

Test your photographic memory: Show an image (a face or something less complex) for a set period of time before asking students to reproduce it. Repeat the exercise with shorter and shorter periods of time for each new image. What are the results? Discuss the importance of referencing a subject while drawing and the impact this has on accuracy.

**Language Arts:**

Divide students into pairs or small groups. Ask one student to act as police officer, interviewing the other student or the group as witnesses of a crime. What type of information is most useful to the officer? What type of question gets to this information most efficiently? Use the following lesson plan for further discussion of forming questions <http://www.wayland.k12.ma.us/UserFiles/Servers/Server_1036352/File/Curriculum/Units%20of%20Study/Unit%20of%20Study%20-%20Asking%20Questions.pdf>

**Science:**

Selective attention and short term memory: Show the “invisible gorilla” video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJG698U2Mvo>. Do any students notice the gorilla initially? Would Eddie? Discuss everyday illusions and why we might not remember everything even when paying attention. The following link contains numerous brain games for further exploration of the concept: <https://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/chmemory.html>

**Math:**

Eddie is motivated to help the NYPD because he hopes they will pay for his school tuition. Research the cost of an elite school in New York City (or estimate the required amount of money) and create word problems for the class. For example, if Eddie is paid a weekly amount, how many weeks would he need to work to pay for school?

**Social Studies:**

Imagine this story takes place in another city with another city’s museums, maybe your home town or New Orleans. Look up information about Museum Mile in NY and compare and contrast that to another city’s museums that are located relatively near each other.

* Go to Google Maps and search for “Museum Mile, New York, NY”. It will pull up a map showing pin drops for each museum mentioned in the book.
* <http://www.ny.com/museums/mile.html>
* <http://museummilefestival.org/index.php/museums/>

**Vocabulary:**

Engrossed

Exaggeration

Factoid

Witness

Idyllic

Kiosk

Outweighed

Psychiatric

Radiate

Scrutinize

Surveillance

Suspicion

Tedious

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What are the positives and negatives of Eddie’s choice to be a police consultant? Use specific examples from the book. Do the positives outweigh the negatives?
2. Imagine the book takes place in another setting, such as your hometown. How might this change affect the story? Make direct comparisons to the book.
3. What type of special skill do you have that might be useful in a police investigation? Based on the tasks the NYPD give to Eddie, what might you be assigned to do with your skill? What might be your codename? If you can’t think of a skill you can make one up.
4. Analyze the cover image of the book. How does it hint at the content of the story? What does each element tell you specifically?
5. Is it responsible of Eddie to share the police case with Jonah? Which effects of this are helpful and which are dangerous?

**RELATED WEB SITES**

**Eddie’s Art World**

<http://marciawellsauthor.com/eddies-art-gallery>

A virtual tour of the museums and artwork from Eddie’s adventure.

**An Interview with Illustrator Marcos Calo**

<https://marcia-wells.squarespace.com/marcos-interview>

A transcript of Marcia Wells interviewing Marcos Calo about his work on the Eddie Red Undercover series.

**Museum Mile**

<https://marcia-wells.squarespace.com/marcos-interview>

Explore the websites of museums located along Museum Mile.