

# Activity Guide

## Junior Book Award Nominees 2007-2008



**This guide prepared by members of the  
Junior Book Award Committee**

Henry Hall, Chair  
Tambra Pingle, Vice Chair  
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Kelly Brown  
Kathleen Butler  
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Susan Prettyman  
James Washick  
C. Alex Webster  
Shannon Wham  
Beverly Windham  
Marci Yates

**Bound**  
**Donna Jo Napoli**  
**Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2004**  
**186 pages**

**Summary**

In a story based on Chinese Cinderella, a fourteen-year-old stepchild, Xing-Xing, endures a life of neglect and servitude at the hands of her step-mother finding solace in the company of a lovely fish who embodies her own dead mother.

**If you liked this book, try...**

- Ties that Bind, Ties that Break by Lensey Namioka
- Moss Gown by William H. Hooks (Cinderella with a Southern flair)
- Cinderella tales from around the world

**Curriculum Connections (see websites below)**

- **Language Arts**--Vocabulary, Cinderella Stories, Third Person Narratives
- **Social Studies**--Females in society, Chinese Ming Dynasty, Asian studies, Coming of Age
- **Art**—Drawing, Oriental Art
- **Science**—Foot Binding, Aquaculture: Carp (Koi)

**Web Sites**

- <http://www.donnajonapoli.com/>. Information of the author and a listing of her books.
- <http://www.downhomebooks.com/napoli.htm>. An extensive interview with the author.
- <http://www.teenreads.com/authors/au-napoli-donna.asp>. An interview with the author
- [http://www.teenspoint.org/reading\\_matters/columns2.asp?column\\_id=1417&column\\_type=tpauthpr\\_ofile](http://www.teenspoint.org/reading_matters/columns2.asp?column_id=1417&column_type=tpauthpr_ofile). An excellent article summarizing the author's life and work.
- <http://www.unc.edu/~rwillkers/resource-china.htm>. A listing of stories and picture books based on Chinese themes and places. Includes a summary of Yen-Shen, A Cinderella Story.
- [http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/china/late\\_imperial\\_china/ming.html](http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/china/late_imperial_china/ming.html). A brief summary of the Ming dynasty, its rise and its accomplishments.
- <http://www.chinapage.com>. Immerse yourself in all things Chinese.
- <http://www.kidskonnnect.com/China/ChinaHome.html>. Complex site that serves middle school and lower.
- [http://www.vcnet.com/koi\\_net/](http://www.vcnet.com/koi_net/). Beginner's guide to carp (Koi) farming.

**Booktalk**

Immerse yourself in the traditions, landscapes and culture of the Chinese Ming Dynasty in the book **Bound** by a champion storyteller, Donna Napoli. **Bound** is promoted as a Cinderella Story because it features a strong female character who, oppressed by a step-mother, triumphs over all difficulties and marries a powerful royal. The Cinderella Story, however, is a loom for Napoli on which she weaves beautiful and astonishing threads of the Ming culture. Lovely descriptions of Ming pottery, painting, food, and festivals fill the book. Traditions of ancient Chinese food, medicines and spirituality are woven throughout.

Xing Xing (pronounced Shing Shing), is the main character who, controlled and manipulated by her stepmother calls on the spirits of her mother and father for support. Her strong father, long dead, is still powerful in the lives of our main characters Xing Xing, her sister Wei Ping of the bound feet, and her driven, devilish stepmother. Father, a famous potter, has taught Xing Xing about the three perfections:

painting, poetry and calligraphy. He has allowed his sparkling daughter, the child of his first wife, to be educated by a famous painter who lives nearby. She is capable of beautiful Haiku and perfect calligraphy.

Xing Xing loving mother has died more recently leaving the girl in the cruel hands of the jealous stepmother. Xing Xing's happy memory of her mother gives her hope for her own future. She feels the spirit of her mother in a beautiful white carp with red tipped fins, "destined to become a dragon." She speaks with her mother constantly and waits for her direction as difficulties mount.

It is the stepmother who brings darkness to this story. She is jealous of her husband's first wife who was dainty and produced a beautiful daughter while she herself has produced only a plain daughter. Her remedy is to diminish Xing Xing and prepare her own daughter for a good marriage by binding her feet like the wealthy of her time. She is a cruel adversary who sends Xing Xing on a dangerous mission alone to get medicine for Wei Ping's rotting feet.

In Ming culture the spirit of one's ancestors directs decisions in daily life. As Xing Xing's story unfolds both father and mother spirits play a role in guiding her. The education provided by her father helps her understand and cope with a quest journey. Her discovery of a letter from her mother written just before death is one of the most beautiful moments in the story.

Mother left Xing Xing not only the letter but also beautiful garments and elegant gold slippers for her small feet. In the final stages of the story the day of the cave festival arrives. True to our Cinderella tale, sister, Wei Ping, is dressed in the best clothing her mother can sew. She hopes to meet and marry a man with a belly as big as Buddha. Xing Xing just wants to attend the festival and see the spectacles. Of course the tale ends happily, as Cinderella stories do, not only for the heroine and her prince, but also for the reader who has enjoyed an enchanting visit to ancient China.

**Interest Level:** Grades 5 - 8

**Prepared by:** Susan Prettyman

**Chicken Boy**  
**Frances O’Roark Dowell**  
**Atheneum, 2005**  
**202 pages**

**Summary**

Since the death of his mother, Tobin’s family and school life have been in disarray, but after he starts raising chickens with his seventh grade classmate, Henry, everything starts to fall into place.

**If you liked this book, try...**

- Crash by Jerry Spinelli
- Defiance by Valerie Hobbs
- Flipped by Wendelin Van Draanen
- Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech
- Dovey Coe by Frances O’Rourke Dowell
- The Secret Life of Girls by Frances O’Rourke Dowell

**Curriculum Connections**

- **Language Arts:** Rewrite parts of the story from a different point of view, like one of Tobin’s siblings or maybe even Miss Blue.
- **Social Studies:** Map the distribution and origins of the different poultry breeds like the Ameracuna.
- **Science:** Design a science fair project about raising chicks.

**Web Sites**

- <http://www.francesdowell.com/>. Author’s official website.
- <http://www.the-coop.org/>. The Coop is an amazing chicken breeding and poultry site.
- <http://www.ithaca.edu/staff/jhenderson/chooks/chooks.html>. Chicken breed chart (includes the “Easter Egg Chickens”).
- <http://kidsaid.com/dougypage.html>. The Dougy Center for Grieving Children.

**Booktalk**

You probably know someone like Tobin – big chip on his shoulder and lots of attitude. Family is full of juvenile delinquents and he’s a chip off the old block. But Henry doesn’t know Tobin’s family history and he sees something different in Tobin. He sees someone worth knowing, worth being a friend to. So, when Henry invites Tobin over to meet Miss Blue and the rest of Henry’s flock of chickens, everything changes for Tobin. He begins to believe in himself again and to realize that he has some good features after all. As he and Henry work on their poultry - based science fair project, Henry learns about Tobin. He learns how Tobin’s mother died, how his home life stinks, how his grandmother is crazy, and most of all, how much Tobin has come to love those chickens.

**Interest level:** Grades 5-8

**Prepared by:** Shannon Wham

**The Cloud Chamber**  
**Joyce Maynard**  
**Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2005**  
**274 pages**

**SUMMARY**

In 1966, when his father's attempted suicide causes the ostracism of the family in their small Montana community, fourteen-year-old Nate copes with his sadness and anger by trying to win the school science fair.

**If you liked this book, try...**

- Last Shot: A Final Four Mystery by John Feinstein
- What I Call Life by Jill Wolfson
- The Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan
- The Usual Rules by Joyce Maynard

**CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

- **Language Arts:** Read A Letter to Young Writers and write a letter to the author.
- **Guidance:** Research depression, bankruptcy, and mental hospitals – their past and present facilities and impact on society through their development, and how they are represented within the book.
- **Author study:** Research Joyce Maynard.
- **Social Studies:** Research dairy farms and their impact on society.
- **Science:** Science project, especially the cloud chamber – research and perform the experiment.

**WEBSITES**

- <http://www.joycemaynard.com>. A Letter to Young Writers and A Message from Joyce.
- <http://wiredforbooks.org/joycemaynard>. Listen to her 1992 interview.
- <http://www.myetv.org/education/StreamLineSC/>. (Streamline SC Programming) search – dairy farms and science projects.

**BOOKTALK**

(p.208) “Then it started: first just one small streak, then more tiny, spidery tracks of light. Sharp, sputtering flashes zapped through the swirling mist along the base of the chamber. What they had caused to take place seemed like magic, except Nate knew it wasn't magic at all; it was science.” (and/or p. 14 – “His dad used to tell him...This was the dad who taught him to love science and the stars.”)

Science is what Nate's dad taught him to love and if Nate can win first prize with his cloud chamber project, then he will go to the state finals near the hospital where his dad is locked away. What happened to his dad is not Nate's fault, but he wonders why the police keep coming back and questioning his mother... do they think she shot him?

**Interest level:** Grades 5-8

**Prepared by:** Kelly Brown

**Cryptid Hunters**  
**Roland Smith**  
**Hyperion Books for Children, 2005**  
**348 pages**

**SUMMARY**

After their parents' disappearance, twins Marty and Grace are claimed by a previously unknown uncle, join in his search for cryptids (legendary creatures like Bigfoot and the Loch Ness Monster), which is a dinosaur, hidden in the Congo. Things go terribly wrong, however, when an accident plunges Marty and Grace into the middle of the jungle. Soon the henchmen of the evil Noah Blackwood are pursuing the twins.

**If you liked this book, try...**

- Congo: Exploration, Reform, and a Brutal Legacy by Bruce Fish
- Congo by Michael Crichton
- Jurassic Park and The Lost World by Michael Crichton

**CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

- **Social Studies:** Locate the setting of the events in Cryptid Hunters. How is the habitat there different from our habitat in North America?
- **Careers:** What is the life of a photojournalist like? What does a paleontologist do? In what ways are those careers alike?
- **Language arts:** Do some research on cryptids. What are cryptids and who studies them?

**WEBSITES**

- <http://www.awf.org/content/heartland/detail/1288>. Information about protecting the jungles of the Congo.
- <http://cryptozoo.monstrous.com/>. Learn all about hunters of cyptids.

**BOOKTALK**

Do you know about cryptids, creatures like Big Foot who some people believe to exist? When Marty and Grace's explorer parents vanish in the Amazon, they go to live with their Uncle Wolfe, who is a hunter of cryptids. He lives on his own private island and hunts mythical creatures such as Yetis, Kraken, and Chupacabras. Though he doesn't intend to bring the twins on his dinosaur hunt in the Congo, they go anyway. How they arrive in the jungle is one of the most original ways of travel imaginable. A poodle, a chimpanzee named Bo, and their own fancy technology, accompanies them. In the deep, dark jungle of the Congo, Marty and Grace must reunite with their uncle, find a special mythic dinosaur, and avoid the evil Dr. Blackwood. The cast of characters includes Pygmies who continually frustrate the bad guys. If you want to know what deep, dark secret that has given Grace nightmares all her life-and what it has to do with a dinosaur—read Cryptid Hunters by Roland Smith.

**Interest level:** Grades 5-8

**Prepared by:** Henry Hall

## **Day of Tears: A Novel in Dialogue**

**Julius Lester**

**Hyperion Books for Children, 2005**

**171 pages**

### **SUMMARY**

A story of the Butler family during the time of slavery, Day of Tears explores the dynamics of that period in America's history. Emma is a slave girl who takes care of Pierce Butler's daughters, Sarah and Frances, since their good-hearted mother left home. The family is divided over the issue of slavery—Sarah and her mother oppose its inhumanity, while Frances and her father believe in this lifestyle and treatment of blacks. In an effort to pay of his gambling debts, Butler has the biggest slave auction in American history. Throughout the auction, the skies weep nonstop...it is truly a day of tears.

### **If you liked this book, try...**

- The Old African by Julius Lester
- Copper Sun by Sharon Draper
- Shades of Simon Gray by Joyce McDonald
- Kindred by Octavia Butler
- Bull Run by Paul Fleishman
- The Color of Fire by Ann Rinaldi
- Fortunes Bones by Marilyn Nelson

### **CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

- **Language Arts:** study of dialogue, shifting points of view, flashbacks and flash forwards.
- **Reader's Theater**
- **Social Studies:** 8<sup>th</sup> grade South Carolina history, multiple perspectives of issues surrounding slavery.

### **WEBSITES**

- <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1569.html> Fanny Kemble and Pierce Butler
- [http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/jb/reform/slaveauc\\_1](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/jb/reform/slaveauc_1) The Largest Slave Auction

### **BOOKTALK**

Julius Lester's Day of Tears tells the story of the biggest slave auction in American history. It is the story of Emma, a slave girl who takes care of Master Pierce Butler's two daughters. Frances and Sarah's mother has left their father and their plantation because she opposes slavery. Emma tries to raise the girls to be kind-hearted like their mother, even though she is really only a child herself. To pay off his extreme gambling debts, Butler decides to sell off some of his slaves. Even though Butler promises her parents not to sell Emma, his greed and desperation cause him to consider it. Will he sell Emma? What could happen to her? How would his daughters react? How would Emma's parents react?

Told in flashbacks and flash-forwards in shifting points of view and dialogue, Julius Lester's Day of Tears gives the reader multiple views on slavery and the events of the novel. Showing how God feels about what is going on down below, the skies continually weep over the slave auction...it truly was a Day of Tears.

**Interest level:** Grades 5-8

**Prepared by:** Brandy Caroway

**Double Identity**  
**Margaret Peterson Haddix**  
**Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2005**  
**218 pages**

**SUMMARY**

Thirteen-year-old Bethany's parents have always been overprotective, but when they suddenly drop out of sight with no explanation, leaving her with an aunt she never knew existed, Bethany uncovers shocking secrets that make her question everything she thought she knew about herself and her family.

**If you liked this book, try...**

- The House of the Scorpion by Nancy Farmer
- The House on the Gulf by Margaret Peterson Haddix
- Avril Crump and Her Amazing Clones by Angela Woolfe
- Taylor Five by Ann Halam
- Star Split by Kathryn Lasky
- Shadow Children series by Margaret Peterson Haddix
- Escape From Memory by Margaret Peterson Haddix

**CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

- **Science:** Explore the difference between how genetic information is passed on to “offspring” in cloning from how this information is traditionally passed from parents to children. Explore the idea of nature vs. nurture and use it to explain the ways in which Bethany is different from Elizabeth.
- **Language Arts:** While it’s not possible now, cloning of humans may one day be a reality. Do you think that this is a positive or negative thing? Write a letter to the president in which you argue either in favor of or against the idea of human cloning.  
Write and perform a play in which Bethany and Elizabeth meet and talk about how their lives were similar and/or different.

**WEBSITES**

- <http://www.ology.amnh.org/genetics/>. American Museum of Natural History, “The Gene Scene.”
- <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/hottopics.htm#genes>. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Kids Pages.
- Visit [www.scdiscus.org](http://www.scdiscus.org) and go to Grolier Online for Kids for encyclopedia articles, websites, video, media, news articles, and magazine articles on cloning.

**BOOKTALK**

You know, I thought my life was pretty good. I had parents who made sure I had everything I wanted and who obviously loved me. We never had to worry about money. Sure, we moved around a lot when I was younger, and now that I think of it, it was kind of strange that I was never allowed to spend the night away from my parents. Oh, and I guess they never left me with babysitters, either. And then, last summer, my mother did start crying almost all the time. Really, it wasn’t too different from how she’d always been, though, just a little more crying, that’s all. But everything changed the day they put me in the car and we drove all day to a place I’d never heard of and left me with a lady they say is my aunt. I mean, I never knew I had an aunt! And then they left me; just drove off into the night. And now people I’ve never met act like they’ve seen me before – almost like they’re seeing a ghost! I wish someone would tell me what’s going on... But maybe some secrets are better left buried.

**INTEREST LEVEL:** Grades 5-8

**Prepared by:** Julie N. Hornick

**Eyes of the Emperor**  
**Graham Salisbury**  
**Wendy Lamb Books, 2005**  
**229 pages**

**SUMMARY**

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Eddy and his friends who are of Japanese descent, are ordered to help train Army K-9 dogs to attack Asians.

**If you liked this book, try...**

- Heroes Don't Run by Harry Mazer
- The Invisible Thread: An Autobiography by Yoshiko Uchida
- Remembering Manzanar : Life in a Japanese Relocation Camp by Michael L. Cooper
- Under the Blood Red Sun by Graham Salisbury

**Curriculum Connections**

- **Language Arts:** Have students write a letter to the editor of a Hawaiian newspaper, dated December 15, 1941, protesting the prejudice against Japanese Americans.
- **Social Studies:** Have students research and prepare a debate on the proposition "Japanese Americans owe their allegiance to a hostile power and pose a risk to our nation." Have 7<sup>th</sup> grade students research and prepare a visual display (on poster board or using a slide show) that presents images from various Japanese American internment camps.

**Web Sites**

- <http://americanhistory.si.edu/perfectunion/experience/index.html>. This site offers interactive galleries that focus on the treatment of Japanese Americans during WWII.
- <http://www.janm.org/exhibits/breed/title.htm>. Letters written by young Japanese American detainees are featured here.
- <http://www.uswardogs.org/>. For more information about the use of dogs in warfare, check this site.
- <http://www.sfmuseum.org/war/issei.html>. Here is a primary source account in the words of a Japanese American who fought on the European front in WWII.

**Booktalk**

Just weeks after 16-year-old Eddy changes his birth certificate so that he can join his friends Chik and Cobra in the Army, the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor. Eddy and his friends immediately encounter what will be building prejudice against their having the "eyes of the emperor." They have trouble finding a motorist willing to give them a ride back to their unit. Their loyalty constantly questioned, Eddy and his friends obey their orders, determined to prove themselves good American soldiers, even when assigned to let the dogs of the K-9 corps train on them because of their "Asian scent."

**Interest Level:** Grade 7 and up.

**Prepared by:** Margaret Harrison

**Hitch**  
**Jeanette Ingold**  
**Harcourt, Inc., 2005**  
**272 pages**

## **SUMMARY**

Because he needed to help his family during the Depression and because he didn't want to become an alcoholic like his father, Moss Trawnley joins the Civilian Conservation Corps and becomes a leader in the new camp in Montana.

### **If you liked this book, try...**

- [Airfield](#) by Jeanette Ingold (This is a prequel to [Hitch](#))
- [Hear that Whistle Blow](#) by Anne E. Schraff
- [Poor Is Just a Starting Place](#) by Leslie J. Wyatt
- [Riding the Rails: Teenagers on the Move during the Great Depression](#) by Errol Lincoln Uys

### **Curriculum Connections**

- **Language Arts:** Have students write a letter to Moss's boss at the airfield, urging him to let Moss keep his job. Have students write an essay describing the new camp that Moss helped build. Have students write a newspaper headline and article about the near collapse of the dam.
- **Social Studies** Have students brainstorm essential questions about the effects of the economic problems of the Great Depression on the lives of ordinary people and then use a problem-solving research model to answer those questions. Have 8<sup>th</sup> grade students interview people in their communities who lived through the Great Depression, with an emphasis on finding people to interview who worked in the CCC. Have 8<sup>th</sup> grade students prepare a visual display (on poster board or using PowerPoint) relating to the work accomplished by the CCC in South Carolina.
- **Science:** As part of examining the dynamics of watersheds or of studying ecology, have students chart the benefits and risks of dams economically and environmentally.

### **Web Sites**

- <http://www.cccalumni.org/>. This site is the main page for the National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps alumni.
- <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/rails/>. This feature at the PBS website details the lives of many teens who had to "ride the rails" during the Great Depression.
- [http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/our\\_america/great\\_depression/](http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/our_america/great_depression/). This page at the Scholastic site offers background information, activities of interest, and previews of two "diaries" in the Dear America and My Name is America series.
- <http://www.hoover.archives.gov/exhibits/Hooverstory/gallery06/gallery06.html>. This site offers more scholarly information about the Great Depression as well as some photos from the times.

### **Booktalk**

After losing his job at the airfield in Texas during the Great Depression, Moss hops a freight train to Montana to find his father, who is supposed to be working to send money to support the family. But his father, who has no job, is drunk and homeless. After being arrested for vagrancy, Moss signs up for a "hitch" in the Civilian Conservation Corps. When discord and adversity arise within the camp, Moss reluctantly becomes a leader. But then danger looms, when it appears that a dam the CCC has built is about to collapse.

**Interest Level:** Grade 7 and up

**Prepared by:** Margaret Harrison

**In Darkness, Death**  
**Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler**  
**Puffin, 2005**  
**208 pages**

### **SUMMARY**

In eighteenth-century Japan, young Seikei becomes involved with a ninja as he helps Judge Ooka, his foster father, investigate the murder of a Samurai. (CIP)

### **If you liked this book, try...**

- [The Demon in the Teahouse](#) (Book1) by Dorothy Hoobler
- [The Sword That Cut The Burning Grass](#) (Book 4) by Dorothy Hoobler
- [The Ghost in the Tokaido Inn](#) (Book 2) by Dorothy Hoobler
- [Blue Fingers: A Ninja's Tale](#) by Cheryl Aylward Whitesel
- [Sword of the Samurai: Adventure Stories from Japan](#) by Eric A. Kimmel

### **CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

- **Language Arts:** Re-write a chapter of the book from the Ninja's point of view and review with the students the overall impact of this point of view on the actual story.
- **Social Studies:** Create a code of ethics for the classroom based on Samurai Honor
- **Art:** Re-create, either on paper or with fabric, the ornate clothing of the time while studying the importance and symbolism of the garments.

### **WEBSITES**

- <http://www.hooblerauthors.com/>. Home website of Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler:.
- <http://www.mysterywriters.org/pages/awards/winners05.htm>. Mystery Writers Award winners.
- <http://www.samurai-archives.com/cultcat.html>. Samurai culture.
- <http://www.samurai-archives.com/>. The Samurai Archives Japanese History Page.
- [http://www.entertheninja.com/ninja\\_fact/history.php](http://www.entertheninja.com/ninja_fact/history.php). Information on the history of the Ninja.

### **BOOKTALK**

When a Samurai Lord is murdered in his sleep behind locked doors, Samurai Judge Ooka and his foster son and Samurai apprentice Seikei take up the case. On the road to justice – fraught with dangers in the form of shape-shifting ninjas, disgruntled peasants, and power-hungry aristocracy– Seikei and his master must question both their own Samurai values and the politics that swirl around them from every angle. Their only clue: a bloodstained origami butterfly!

Winner of the Edgar Allen Poe Award, 2005, Edgar Award for Best YA Mystery, Best Books of 2004, Washington Post, Top 10 Mystery/Suspense for Youth, ALA Booklist – this mystery will not disappoint, but instead it will keep you coming back for more! Luckily, there are four (stand-alone) volumes in this series so far.

**Interest level:** Grades 5-8

**Prepared by:** Melanie Jackson

## **Last Shot: A Final Four Mystery**

**John Feinstein**

**Alfred A. Knopf, 2005**

**250 pages**

### **SUMMARY**

After winning a writing contest, eighth graders Stevie and Susan Carol are sent to cover the Final Four tournament, where they discover that a talented player is being blackmailed into throwing the final game.

### **If you liked this book, try...**

Travel Team by Mike Lupica

Last Dance: Behind the Scène at the Final Four by John Feinstein

Heat by Mike Lupica

Airborne by Kenneth Oppel

### **CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

- **Math:** Using the statistics of the student's favorite March Madness team take the measure of the central tendencies (mean, median, and mode.) Complete a line graph of the points of the selected team.
- **Social Studies:** [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) ; [www.buzzle.com](http://www.buzzle.com) Have 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students do research on "sports and gambling". What does the NCAA say about those students and players who are found quilting of gambling on college level sports? What are the penalties?
- **Language Arts:** Hold a class reporting contest. Have the students report on a school sport activity, team, or participant. The winner will be interviewed on the school's television station and get tickets to the college game.

### **WEBSITES**

- [www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4759902](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4759902). An interview with John Feinstein on National Public Radio.
- [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org). Official website of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.
- <http://www.ncaasports.com/>. Official website of NCAA Sports.

### **BOOKTALK**

For basketball fiend Steven Thomas, it's like a dream come true. He won a writing contest and now here he is in New Orleans, wearing a press pass around his neck, covering the biggest weekend in college sports. But the dream takes an ugly twist when Steven and his fellow winner are nosing around the Superdome and overhear someone warning Minnesota State University's star point guard that he'd better lose the final game.

**Interest level:** Grades 5-8

**Prepared by:** Marci Fletcher Yates

## The Liberation of Gabriel King

K. L. Going  
Putnam, 2005  
151 pages

### SUMMARY

In Georgia during the summer of 1976, Bagriel, a white boy who is being bullied, and Frita, an African American girl who is facing prejudice, decide to overcome their many fears.

### If you liked this book, try...

- Defiance by Valerie Hobbs
- The Old Willis Place by Mary Downing Hahn
- Project Mulberry by Linda Sue Park
- The Penderwick by Jeanne Birdsall

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- **Social Studies:** Research the 1970s and the Bicentennial. Write about life for students in the 70s and compare with today's students.
- **Language Art:** Complete an author study. Use the study questions/response in the website below (this is an excellent teacher resource). Create a list of things you fear then buddy up and create a solution. Create a vocabulary word study.
- **PE:** Design activities to encourage reliability on others.
- **Guidance:** Create a school study of words that hurt. Discuss bullies.

### WEBSITES

- <http://www.klgoing.com/index2.htm>. K. L. Going's website.
- <http://www.klgoing.com/liberationresource.htm>. Teacher Resource – Questions for discussion for each chapter of the book.
- <http://cynthialeitichsmith.blogspot.com/2005/09/author-update-k-l-going.html>. Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia (Bicentennial)

### BOOKTALK

We all have things that scare us. Bugs, ghosts, getting lost in the swamp, being pounded, wars, the next grade, killer robots...and Gabriel King is afraid of lots of things. His best friend, Frita comes up with a great plan – he is to write up a list of all the things that scare him and one by one, they will work on those fears. Good plan, right? (p. 1)“But things don't always work out the way you plan, and what I didn't count on was Frita. I didn't expect she'd decide I was one of the ones needed liberatin', or that the best way to do it would be to overcome all our fears. I didn't expect a lot of things, and I guess if I'm going to tell you about them, I best start at the beginning.”

**Interest level:** Grades 5-8

**Prepared by:** Kelly Brown

**The Lightning Thief**  
**Rick Riordan**  
**Miramax Books, 2005**  
**377 pages**

### **SUMMARY**

Percy, expelled from six schools for being unable to control his temper, learns the truth from his mother that his father is the Greek god Poseidon, and is sent to Camp Half Blood where he is befriended by a satyr and the demigod daughter of Athena who join him in a journey to the Underworld to retrieve Zeus's lightning bolt and prevent a catastrophic war.

### **If you liked this book, try. . .**

- A Gift from Zeus: Sixteen Favorite Myths by Jeanne Steig
- Corydon & the Island of Monsters by Tobias Druitt
- Lost in the Labyrinth: A novel by Patrice Kindl
- Starfall: Phaeton and the Chariot of the Sun by Michael Cadnum
- The Capture (Guardians of Ga'Hoole, Book 1) by Kathryn Lasky
- The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C. S. Lewis

### **CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

- **English/Language Arts:** Compare the Gods and Goddess in The Lightning Thief with the Greek Gods. Are the characters the same as what a reference book like D'Aulaires' Greek Myths imply? Use a graphic organizer to take notes with Lightning Thief information written in blue and reference book information in red.
- **Social Studies:** Collaborate with ELA teacher and media specialist to research the Gods and Goddesses and compare with Gods and Goddesses in the book. Which ones were left out? Write a scene adding a Greek God or other Greek mythological creature left out of the book and present to the rest of the class.
- **Art:** Use the Internet to research Gods and Goddesses – create a photo story of artwork created to pay homage to the Gods. Create your own artwork to represent Percy and add to the photostory.

### **WEBSITES**

- <http://www.rickriordan.com/children.htm>. Author-created website.
- <http://suzyred.com/2006lightningthief.html>. All about the book – with research sites.
- <http://www.thanasis.com/modern/>. Mythology in a modern society.
- <http://www.mythweb.com/encyc/index.html>. Encyclopedia of Greek Mythology.
- <http://www.adoptionclubhouse.org/>. Adoption Clubhouse.

### **BOOKTALK**

First – I would like to read this warning – before any of you attempt to begin reading this book... This is from the author, Rick Riordan, who is in seclusion at this moment, hiding from the beasts you will find between these covers.

“To prevent mass hysteria from sweeping the globe, I must deny the gods of Olympus are still among us and that mythological monsters walk the earth. Under no circumstances should you believe that you - Yes, you! - might be a son or daughter of the Greek gods.”

But if you ignore this warning and read this book, you will learn the truth. The gods of Olympus are alive and well in the 21st Century! They still fall in love with mortals and have children who are half-god, half-human, like the heroes of the old Greek myths. Could you be one of those children?

Join the adventures of Percy Jackson and his modern demigod friends as they fight mythological monsters and the forces of the titan lord Kronos. Will the world be taken over by the gods and their creatures or will Percy succeed in keeping the peace? Find out in The Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan.

**Interest level:** Grades 5-8

**Prepared by:** E. Kim Livingston

**The Princess Academy**  
**Shannon Hale**  
**Bloomsbury USA Children's Books, 2005**  
**250 pages**

**Summary**

While attending a strict academy for potential princesses with the other girls from her mountain village, fourteen-year-old Miri discovers unexpected talents and connections to her homeland.

**If you liked this book, try...**

- The Goose Girl by Shannon Hale
- River Secrets by Shannon Hale
- Princess Diaries (and other books in the series) by Meg Cabot

**CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

- **Science:** Miri is named after a fictional mountain flower that “conquered rock and climbed to face the sun” page 14. Use a field guide to study mountain flowers and decide which real flower is closest to the description of a miri flower.  
The linder that the people of Mount Eskel mine is used to build the most beautiful and important buildings in Danland. In the real world marble is used. Investigate the quarrying process of marble. Is it as dangerous as mining linder? What is the value of marble?
- **Social Studies:** The government of Danland is a monarchy. Study other monarchies, past and present and compare them to Princess Academy. Are there or has there ever been specific requirements that a future royal spouse must meet?
- **Language Arts:** Read several Cinderella stories; compare them to The Princess Academy. Like Cinderella, Miri is a motherless, hard-working girl who is hoping to be chosen by the prince. In the end Miri chooses her own prince. How is this the same or different from other versions?

**Web Sites**

- <http://www.squeetus.com/stage/main.html>. Shannon Hale’s blog.
- <http://www.embracingthechild.org/ahale.html>. An interview with Shannon Hale.
- <http://www.1888articles.com/use-these-timeless-principles-when-you-negotiate-0r4l62e8.html>. 7 principles of negotiations.
- <http://raysweb.net/wildflower/thumbnails.html>. Beautiful mountain flowers.

**Booktalk**

The Princess Academy is half Cinderella and half bachelor reality television show. Imagine if all the girls between the ages of 12 and 17 from one town are sent away to a boarding school and then told that the girl who earns the best grades gets to wear the most beautiful dress to the ball, and at the ball there will be a prince who will choose his bride from among the girls at the academy. You get exactly what you expect—jealousy, arguments, gossiping etc. What you don’t expect is what the girls learn, the principles of diplomacy, the laws of economics, how to work together to help their village and to save themselves and that the prince may not be worth all the trouble.

**Interest level:** Grades 6-9

**Prepared by:** Kathleen Butler

**The Revealers**  
**Doug Wilhelm**  
**Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003**  
**207 pages**

## **SUMMARY**

Tired of being bullied and picked on, three seventh-grade outcasts join forces and, using scientific methods and the power of the Internet, begin to create a new atmosphere at Parkland Middle School.

### **If you liked this book, try...**

- Blubber by Judy Blume
- Crash by Jerry Spinelli
- Double Dutch by Sharon Draper
- Loser by Jerry Spinelli
- Nothing Wrong with a Three-Legged Dog by Graham McNamee
- Raising the Shades by Doug Wilhelm
- The Skin I'm In by Sharon Flake

## **CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

- **LANGUAGE ARTS:** Have students brainstorm as many examples of bully behavior as they can. They should categorize the behaviors into verbal, written, and physical behaviors. Have students write on the following topics:
  - ♦ What is the difference between bullying and just giving fun or kidding around?
  - ♦ Write about a time when you were called a name that you did not like OR when you called someone else a name to hurt him/her. Describe your feelings.
  - ♦ How do labels hurt people in our society? Give examples of situations in which people would be hurt by labels or name-calling. Why do people call other people names or bully them in any way?
  - ♦ Write a story about someone who is bullied by another person. Explain the reasons behind the actions of the person doing the bullying. Also describe what happens as a result of the bullying for both people.
  - ♦ Write a new scene to add to the book's ending.
- **SOCIAL STUDIES:** Have students examine their own school society. Have them identify social groups in their school. Which groups are at the top of the hierarchy? Which ones are at the bottom? Do any students fit into more than one social group? Why or why not? What is an underground newspaper? How have underground newspapers had an impact on people's lives throughout history?
- **TECHNOLOGY:** Cyber bullying is the latest form of bullying. Have students research what they can do to protect themselves on the Internet and keep from being bullied.
- **SCIENCE:** Have students make a list of all the dinosaurs that Elliot and Catalina mention in the book. Students can then research them and create a Power Point presentation to explain what they learned. They can also discuss the similarities between the dinosaurs and certain human beings. Have students explain how the characters used the scientific method throughout the novel.

## **WEB SITES**

- <http://www.the-revealers.com/> Web site about the book
- [www.fsgkidsbooks.com/teachersguides/revealers.htm](http://www.fsgkidsbooks.com/teachersguides/revealers.htm) Information about the book
- [http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum\\_connections/winter\\_2005/The\\_Revealers.asp?cc\\_section=The\\_Revealers](http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/winter_2005/The_Revealers.asp?cc_section=The_Revealers) More information on the book and author

- [www.publicbroadcasting.net/vpr/news.newsmain?action=article&ARTICLE\\_ID=761051](http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/vpr/news.newsmain?action=article&ARTICLE_ID=761051) Interview with the author
- [www.clemson.edu/olweus/](http://www.clemson.edu/olweus/) Bullying Prevention Program
- [www.nobully.org.nz/](http://www.nobully.org.nz/) New Zealand No Bully Program
- [www.stopbullyingnow.com](http://www.stopbullyingnow.com) How to Stop Bullying

### **BOOKTALK**

Russell is being bullied, and now he feels afraid all the time. The only person who can understand is Elliot, the person everyone at school picks on. Richie learns a great deal from Elliot about being the victim of a bully. Then Richie, Elliot, and new student Catalina come up with a great idea to turn the tables on the bullies. They begin to use the school's KidNet to write letters about their experiences and reveal what is really going on at their school. When things begin to get out of control, can they really find a way to change things?

**Interest level:** Grades 5 – 8

**Prepared by:** Lauren Harrison

## The Safe-keeper's Secret

Sharon Shinn

Viking, 2004

222 pages

### SUMMARY

Fiona is the Safe-keeper in the small village of Tumbleham, where neighbors and strangers come one by one, in secret, to tell her things they do not dare tell anyone else.

### If you liked this book, try...

- The Dark is Rising Sequence by Susan Cooper: Silver on the Tree, The Grey King, Greenwitch, The Dark is Rising, and Over Sea, Under Stone
- The Chronicles of Prydain Series by Lloyd Alexander: The Book of Three, The Castle of Llyr, The Taran Wanderer, The High King

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- **Language Arts:** Before you finish the book, write what you think will be the ending of The Safe-Keeper's Secret. Who is Fiona's real father? What do you think will happen to Reed? What would happen if Reed turned out to be the son of a great man?
- **Social Studies:** Do some research about England during the Norman era. How was life different then than it is today? What were the differences in housing? In eating? In warfare? How was a king NOT like a president? What kind of power did "regular" people have? Why?

### WEBSITES

- <http://www.io.com/~sjohn/demog.htm>. Everyday life in feudal times.
- <http://wwwuser.cs.rose-hulman.edu/~thomass/shinn/>. Information about Sharon Shinn, the author.

### BOOKTALK

Damiana is a Safe-Keeper, someone whose job is to listen to the secrets people confide in her and then to keep them to herself. Fiona and Reed grow up as her children. Others in their village also have special gifts. One is Isadora, the Dream-Maker; another is Thomas the Truth-Teller. Everything goes well until Fiona and Reed are sent away to spend the summer with Damiana's sister. Reed lives with a merchant who teaches him about business, and Fiona learns about herbs. When they return home at the end of the summer, they find that their mother is dying. Before she dies, Damiana shares a secret with Fiona that she pledges to keep secret until the time she knows it is right to tell. If you like books with lots of mystery, fantasy and romance, then The Safe-Keeper by Sharon Shinn is for you!

**Interest level:** Grades 6-9

**Prepared by:** Henry Hall

**The Sea of Trolls**  
**Nancy Farmer**  
**Atheneum, 2004**  
**450 pages**

**Summary**

After Jack becomes apprenticed to a Druid bard, he and his little sister Lucy are captured by Viking Berserkers and taken to the home of King Ivar the Boneless and his half-troll queen, leading Jack to undertake a vital quest to Jotunheim, home of the trolls.

**If you liked this book, try:**

- The House of the Scorpion by Nancy Farmer
- The Ear, the Eye, and the Arm by Nancy Farmer
- The Bark of the Bog Owl by Jonathan Rogers
- Gregor the Overlander by Suzanne Collins
- Norwegian Troll Tales by Joanne Asala
- The Amulet of Samarkand by Jonathan Stroud

**Curriculum Connections**

- **Geography:** Ask students to compare/contrast the maps in the front of the book to current maps of the same locations.
- **Science:** There are numerous references to birds throughout the novel. After studying the text carefully for information, students could prepare a guide to the birds in the novel, being sure to make distinctions between facts and folklore/superstition concerning birds.
- **Language Arts:** Students could read more about the epic poem *Beowulf*. There are numerous translations available.
- **Social Studies:** Students might learn more about Vikings, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the Lindisfarne Bible, and other historical background of the novel. See the websites listed below.
- **Language Arts:** In the appendix, the author mentions several languages spoken by characters in the novel. Students could do research to learn more about Anglo-Saxon or Icelandic.

**Web Sites**

- <http://www.britannia.com/history/docs/asintro2.html> Anglo Saxon Chronicle
- <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/themes/euromanuscripts/lindisfarne.html> Lindisfarne Gospels
- <http://www.lone-star.net/literature/beowulf/> Beowulf
- <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/vikings/> A Companion to The Vikings
- [http://www.bookpage.com/0410bp/nancy\\_farmer.html](http://www.bookpage.com/0410bp/nancy_farmer.html) Interview with the Author

**Booktalk**

In England in the early medieval period, the village Bard chooses Jack to serve as his apprentice. When their village is attacked by Viking Berserkers, Jack and his little sister Lucy are kidnapped and taken to the court of Invar the Boneless and his evil half-troll wife, Frith. When one of Jack's spells goes awry, he must undertake a dangerous quest where he faces troll-bears, giant spiders, and dragons to find the way to reverse the spell and save his sister. This coming-of-age tale is interwoven with Norse and Celtic mythology, Old English lore, and the story of Beowulf.

**Interest Level:** Grades 6-9

**Prepared by:** Teresa Blankenship

**The Secret of Castle Cant: Being an Account of the Remarkable  
Adventures of Lucy Wickwright, Maidservant and Spy**

Author K. P. Bath, 2004

291 pages

### SUMMARY

Through a set of hilarious, but dangerous adventures, Lucy Wickwright, maidservant to the Baron of Cant, defeats the selfishness of her mistress, the fear of the Baron, the treachery of the evil Postal Commissioner Orloff, and the obsession of the rebel Arden Gutz. Lucy does not seek to change her life even though her life is difficult, working long hours with little gratitude, and enduring the unfairness of her servant status as the companion to the baron's daughter. This hard life does not embitter her; instead she seeks to do her best in the Herculean tasks set before her. Her intelligence, natural curiosity and plucky courage help her to protect not only herself, but her mistress too.

### If you liked this book, try...

- Series of Unfortunate Events series by Lemony Snicket
- The Whipping Boy by Sid Fleischman
- The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread by Kate DiCamillo
- Matilda by Roald Dahl

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- **Language Arts:** Think about the many unusual names you read about in this book. Pick out one from the many colorful characters in this story and answer the following questions: What does the character's name tell you about them? What are some characteristics of this person? Does the name of this character lead you to like them? Why or why not? Use a dictionary for archaic meanings to the names to help you answer these questions. There are many other fascinating language arts activities in the Educator's Guide produced by the publisher, Little Brown and Company [http://www.twbookmark.com/library/castlecant\\_teacherguide.pdf](http://www.twbookmark.com/library/castlecant_teacherguide.pdf).
- **Social Studies:** Take the Basic Course in heraldry. The website is now unavailable except through this web archive link [http://web.archive.org/web/20041012131536/http://www.heraldryunlimited.com/guide/home\\_page.htm](http://web.archive.org/web/20041012131536/http://www.heraldryunlimited.com/guide/home_page.htm). Now that you know the basics of heraldic design, you can design your own coat of arms using your personal story.
- **Science:** Find out about the invention of Bubble Gum-- <http://inventors.about.com/od/gstartinventions/a/gum.htm>. What makes gum so fascinating to people no matter where they come from? Is it realistic that the Postal Commissioner could make people obey him just to get chewing gum?

### WEBSITES

- <http://www.twbookmark.com/authors/78/3048/index.html>. Information about K. P. Bath, the author.
- [http://www.twbookmark.com/library/castlecant\\_teacherguide.pdf](http://www.twbookmark.com/library/castlecant_teacherguide.pdf). Information about the book including a downloadable teacher's guide at the bottom of the page.

### BOOKTALK

Lucy Wickwright finds herself quite accidentally in the center of political intrigue as the Baron of Cant becomes visibly weaker and weaker. But Lucy Wickwright is only the maidservant to the heir of the Barony of Cant. As the maidservant, not only is Lucy responsible for following the orders of the "Adored and Honorable" Pauline Esmeralda Simone-Thierry von Cant, but also she is responsible for any trouble Pauline's escapades produce. One such adventure involving wet laundry, a catapult, an execution

ceremony, and a chicken leads to Lucy's discovery of plots that endanger her mistress's future. One plot is lead by a revolutionary, Arden Gutz, who is quite handsome in Lucy's eyes, and another is lead by the Postal Commissioner Vladimir Orloff who wants to rule the barony through Pauline. Commissioner Orloff already has enormous power through his successful monopoly of chewing gum, especially since the upper class has become addicted to it. How does Lucy vanquish the greedy, the obsessed, and the just plain stupid and still stay loyal to Pauline? Read [The Secret of Castle Cant](#) to root for this clever, plucky girl, who once she sees the wrongs around her, does everything in her power to right them.

For another booktalk use the review by Hillary Williamson on the Bookloons website.

<http://www.bookloons.com/cgi-bin/Review.ASP?bookid=3512>

**Interest level:** Grades 5-8

**Prepared by:** Camellia L. Harris

**Shakespeare's Secret**  
**Elise Broach**  
**Henry Holt and Company, 2005**  
**248 Pages**

**Summary**

Named after a character in a Shakespeare play, misfit sixth-grader Hero becomes interested in exploring this unusual connection because of a valuable diamond supposedly hidden in her new house, an intriguing neighbor and the unexpected attention of the most popular boy in school.

**If you liked this book try:**

- Shakespeare's Scribe by Gary Blackwood
- The Last Treasure by Janet Anderson
- Shakespeare Stealer by Gary Blackwood

**CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

- **History:** Research Queen Elizabeth I, Anne Boleyn and Edward de Vere. Did William Shakespeare really author all of the work credited to him?
- **Language Arts:** Discuss the elements of good historical fiction. Analyze the qualities that this text contains. Read Much Ado About Nothing. Explore the meaning of your name. Does it have a special significance to your parents?

**WEBSITES**

- [www.shakespeare.about.com/od/authorshipdebate/a/shkwhowashe.htm](http://www.shakespeare.about.com/od/authorshipdebate/a/shkwhowashe.htm)
- [www.web.cn.edu/kwheeler/shake\\_did\\_write\\_plays.html](http://www.web.cn.edu/kwheeler/shake_did_write_plays.html)
- [www.funtrivia.com/quizzes/people/individual\\_authors/william\\_shakespeare.html](http://www.funtrivia.com/quizzes/people/individual_authors/william_shakespeare.html)

**Booktalk**

Hero, the daughter of a Shakespeare scholar, must make the adjustments of moving to a new school and suffering because of her name...She was named after a character in a Shakespeare play. After befriending her curious next door neighbor she learns that in her new house may actually be hidden a million-dollar diamond from a necklace belonging to Queen Elizabeth I.

**Interest level:** Grades 5-8

**Prepared by:** Dianna LaMance Deaderick

## Sixth-Grade Glommers, Norks, and Me

Lisa Papademetriou

Hyperion Books for Children, 2005

217 pages

### SUMMARY

When Allie Kimball begins sixth grade, she looks forward to spending time with her best friend Tamara at the same school. She discovers that middle school is populated with all kinds of strange creatures like Glommers and Norks. Allie's sense of humor and her creative new vocabulary help her deal with the change, heartbreak and adventures of middle school.

### If you liked this book, try. . .

- [Click Here \(to Find Out How I Survived Seventh Grade\)](#) by Denise Vega
- [Define "Normal"](#) by Julie Ann Peters
- [My Own Worst Enemy](#) by Carol Sonenclar
- [The Misfits](#) by James Howe
- [The Revealers](#) by Doug Wilhelm

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- **English/Language Arts:** Mini-Dictionary - Think of five words that you and your friends have created that you think adults might not know. Write down the words along with the definitions.
- Find other specialized dictionaries in the Media Center or online. Using Amazon.com or Barnes and Nobles.com, students can find specialized dictionaries related to their hobbies, favorite school subject, etc.
- **Math:** In the book, Allie goes shopping with her mother to buy more grown-up "middle school clothes." This is a small group project. Using catalogs (online and print) and with a budget, make a list of middle school or high school (depending on grade level) clothes that you would like to purchase. Compare prices to write a class recommendation of the best places to buy middle school clothes. This could be extended to contact stores and ask stores for coupons or other incentives and print a shopping guide with coupons for students.
- **Technology:** Create a school-wide dictionary using a discussion in EChalk or other school-site that allows student to post a new word and definition. Postings could be printed and used to create a real school dictionary using MSPublisher or an online dictionary in Frontpage or even Word.
- **Guidance:** In the book, Allie creates names for different groups, and she hears some more hurtful names also. Use book as a source to create a T-chart of hurtful names and fun names. Discuss name-calling. Discuss the power of names – and how to tell if they are hurtful or not.

### WEBSITES

- <http://www.lisapapa.com/>. Author-created website.
- <http://www.hyperionbooksforchildren.com/authors/displayAI.asp?id=379&ai=a>. Biographical information about the author.
- <http://www.nonamecallingweek.org/binary->. No Name Calling Week.
- [data/NoNameCalling\\_ATTACHMENTS/file/78-1.pdf](data/NoNameCalling_ATTACHMENTS/file/78-1.pdf)
- <http://www.thesource4ym.com/teenlingo/>. Slang dictionary.

### BOOKTALK

Now I would like to demonstrate going Muppet. (*Flail arms wildly, let out high pitched scream like Elmo or Kermit the Frog.*) Now that I have your attention – listen up. I came up with that term, "going Muppet," in this book. I like to make up words and terms that really describe what I am talking about. My name is Allie,

and this is my book, Sixth-Grade Glommers, Norks, and Me. I wrote it when I started sixth grade with my best friend. We were going to the same middle school, and I was very excited. Then we were only in one class together – bummer. And then she started hanging out with this girl Renee, and all of a sudden I am a Sweaty Betty because I play soccer and things just got weird. But it is okay or it will be anyway. In the meantime, I'm studying this whole middle school thing – and I'm keeping away from the Glommers, you know those girls who can't go anywhere without a whole pack of girls with them and the norks – you know what that is right? And if you want to find out how this middle school thing turns out, try reading Sixth Grade Glommers, Norks, and Me by Lisa Papademetriou.

**Interest level:** Grades 3-6

**Prepared by:** E. Kim Livingston

## **Soul Surfer: A True Story of Faith, Family, and Fighting to Get Back on the Board**

**Bethany Hamilton**

**Pocket Books/MTV Books, 2004**

**213 pages**

### **SUMMARY**

Bethany Hamilton shares the story of her lifelong love of surfing and tells how she was able to recover and return to competition with the help of her family, friends, and faith, after losing her arm in a shark attack at the age of thirteen.

### **If you liked this book, try . . .**

- Ask Bethany: Faq's: Surfing, Faith & Friends (Soul Surfer Series) by Bethany Hamilton
- Bethany Hamilton: Follow Your Dreams! (Defining Moments) by Michael Sandler
- Dare To Dream! 25 Extraordinary Lives by Sandra McLeod Humphrey
- Devotions for the Soul Surfer: Daily Thoughts to Charge Your Life by Bethany Hamilton
- Guts by Gary Paulsen
- Shark Attack! Bethany Hamilton's Story of Survival by Matt Doeden

### **CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

- **Language Arts:** Biographies – definition, various formats, purpose, reliability and authenticity of author/sources. Surfing slang words – what are they and what do they mean?
- **Social Studies:** Hawaii and other surfing places – lifestyles, history of surfing, surfing champions, surfing news and events (tournaments, demonstrations, world class), surfing culture, the best places in the world to surf
- **Science:** Science of the ocean, waves, swimming, surfing. Sharks and shark attacks. Flora and fauna in Hawaii
- **Math:** Calculating height of waves, angles in which waves come onto the beach Shark attacks around the world – where do they most occur, what time of year; probability of getting attacked by sharks versus other life-threatening animal attacks (*e.g.*, bears, bees, snakes, spiders, alligators, etc.)

### **WEBSITES**

- <http://www.bethanyhamilton.com/>. Bethany Hamilton's website.
- <http://holoholo.org/surfnews/>. Hawaii Surfing News.
- [http://www.surfingmuseum.org/hall\\_of\\_fame.html](http://www.surfingmuseum.org/hall_of_fame.html). Huntington Beach Surfing Hall of Fame.
- <http://www.riptionary.com/>. Riptionary, Surfing Lingo Lexicon.
- <http://www.surfingaustralia.com/>. Surfing Australia.
- <http://www.surfingamerica.org/>. Surfing America.
- <http://www.surfing-waves.com/>. Surfing Waves (everything for the surfer).
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surfing>. Wikipedia's definition of surfing.

### **BOOKTALK**

“Imagine the one thing you love to do the most. Now image, out of nowhere, something happens and you realize you may never be able to do it again. *How do you feel?* Sad? Angry? Shellshocked? (175) We can ask ourselves this question; but, hopefully, none of us will ever have to answer it. Not so for 14 year old competitive surfer Bethany Hamilton.

It was 6:40 a.m. on Halloween morning in Kaua'i, Hawaii. The sun was just coming up and the day promised to be beautiful. The water was clear, blue, and warm. It had been raining for three days and Bethany, her best friend Alana, Alana's brother Byron and dad Holt, were all relaxing on their surfboards

waiting for some waves. Bethany's thoughts wander as she thinks, "I hope the surf picks up soon . . .(3)" since the rest of the day will be filled with tackling the dreaded homeschool curriculum set up by her mom.

In Bethany's words: "Suddenly, I was aware of a large gray object closing in on my left side (70). I felt a lot of pressure and a couple of lightning-fast tugs. Then I watched in shock as the water around me turned bright red . . . (3). I know the shore was a very long quarter of a mile, but one thought kept repeating over and over in my head: 'Get to the beach. Get to the beach. Please, God, help me. God, let me get to the beach'" (71-72).

In a split second, Bethany's life changed forever. After the 14' tiger shark attack that took Bethany's left arm off up to the shoulder, her life was dominated by surgeries, blood transfusions, physical therapy, and interviews from the world-wide media. Bethany's quick recovery was aided by never once losing faith in her God, as well as the faith and support from her family and friends.

Amazingly, and against doctors' advice, Bethany Hamilton was back on her board and giving the waves a chance the day before Thanksgiving! Now in 2007, Bethany is back in the competitive surfing world. Clearly, her faith, determination, and resilience are inspirational to young and old alike.

There is nothing *bogus* about Bethany, she is one *full on, soul surfin'* gal.

**Interest level:** Grades 6-9

**Prepared by:** Beverly Windham