

Adam Canfield of the Slash

By Michael Winerip

Annotation

Big news! Adam Canfield and his good friend, Jennifer, become co-editors of the school newspaper. Soon after, however, they uncover one of the biggest stories to ever hit their paper or the whole town. The other media outlets are all run by an unethical tycoon and the *Slash* is the only honest news source in the area. So should Adam and Jennifer print the story? Should they risk staining their permanent records as a result? This fresh, and often funny contemporary tale will spark lots of comment and have readers engaged in the sophisticated newsroom story. (Grades 5-8)

Author on the Internet

<http://michaelwinerip.com/>

Realia

Items: Newspaper, Mashed potato box, Note pad, Pens, Camera, Plastic black and white cow, Nerf size basketball goal that clips on a trash can

Statement: Adam and Jennifer are co-editors of the *Slash*. Follow their adventures in this humorous, engaging contemporary tale.

Food

Mashed potatoes, Single size iced-tea cartons, *Cheese Doodles*, *M&Ms*, Blueberry pancakes, Hot chocolate with whipped cream or marshmallows

Challenging Words

adamant	(p. 63 HB)	mandatory	(p. 104 HB)
astute	(p. 80 HB)	nixed	(p. 34 HB)
aura	(p. 97 HB)	punctuality	(p. 18 HB)
chaotic	(p. 100 HB)	qualm	(p. 182 HB)
devoured	(p. 96 HB)	quest	(p. 97 HB)
disguise	(p. 7 HB)	savvy	(p. 106 HB)
envision	(p. 88 HB)	submission	(p. 186 HB)
evergreen	(p. 6 HB)	transposition	(p. 102 HB)
fathom	(p. 194 HB)	unconventional	(p. 86 HB)
hubris	(p. 110 HB)	vague	(p. 49 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphor

- “Is that Marris a lizard or what?’ said Adam when he’d finally regained his composure.” (p. 32 HB)
- “Not really,’ said Mrs. Willard. ‘When my kids was little, she used to holler if they ran into her yard to fetch a ball. But she was a funny bird.’” (p. 126 HB)

Simile

- “That is neat,’ said Jennifer. ‘Last time I was in the Bunker, Marris grilled me like a hotdog on Memorial Day weekend.’” (p. 57 HB)
- “Get out of my garden, honey,’ and Adam runs faster, but his feet are like lead, and when he looks down, there’s a tiny dog locked on his ankle.” (p. 93 HB)

- “He looked like a character in the comics with three little dots over his head and a black cloud where his thought bubble should be.” (p. 136 HB)
- “It always amazed him how you could go to bed feeling like a million bucks and wake up needing change for a nickel.” (p. 297-298 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “Adam’s mind was made up. He was turning over a new leaf.” (p. 28 HB)
- “Phoebe stopped in her tracks.” (p. 57 HB)
- “Can I tell you something off the record?” (p. 57 HB)
- “‘Well, I’m a cheerleader,’ said Number 12. ‘So I’m used to smiling even in the face of defeat.’” (p. 72 HB)
- “Jennifer could nurse a grudge pretty good.” (p. 74 HB)
- “‘Brains aren’t everything,’ said Jennifer. ‘The boy has a good heart.’” (p. 80 HB)
- “Danny gave him a blank look. ‘My theory? Which one?’ he asked. ‘There are a million, none worth a cent.’” (p. 87 HB)
- “‘Every time has its good and bad,’ he said. ‘I think maybe it was a little less cutthroat; people might have been a little nicer to each other, more people stopping to smell the roses.’” (p. 88 HB)
- “‘Nearly half a million dollars,’ said Mrs. Willard, and glancing at Adam’s face, she added, ‘Knocked my socks off, too.’” (p. 128 HB)
- “‘I smell a rat,’ said Jennifer.” (p. 141 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Review the story with the class and then have class locate examples of Adam’s perseverance, Jennifer’s ethics, and Phoebe’s compassion.

Fine Arts:

- Find and display a copy of the *Aeneid* by Virgil, along with any pictures of Greek life 2,000 years ago. Discuss this time period with the class.

Foreign Languages: Latin

- Have students make banners, lists, or write on the board examples of Mr. Brooks’ Latin phrases such as the following: Tempus fugit – Time is fleeting; Veritas – truth; and Ave atque vale – Hail and Farewell.

Language Arts:

- Take students to the library media center to research famous newspaper reporters such as Benjamin Franklin, Nellie Bly, Fredrick Douglass and/or Woodward and Bernstein.
- Choose appropriate articles from the newspaper, removing the headlines. Have students read the article and develop their own headline. Compare to the one used by the newspaper in the story.
- Create a newspaper scavenger hunt that will help students identify standard sections of a newspaper such as the editorial page, weather, local news, comics, obituaries, sports, and national news.
- Have a number of books on hand such as *The Newspaper Kids #1* by Phillips and *Deadline: From News to Newspaper* by Gibbons. Help students develop a classroom newspaper. There is also software available to help with layout. Students love to take surveys on the most popular movies, songs, and entertainers. Try to avoid gossip columns!
- Have students write thank you notes to custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, service staff that we take for granted, but could not run a school without.

- Discuss personality traits and characterization techniques with class. Have students compare/contrast Adam and Jennifer.
- Discuss the use of figurative language with class, using examples from the story. (Refer to the Figurative Language section above.) Have students write their own examples that could be worked into this story.

Mathematics:

- Contact your local Humane Society or Animal Shelter. Find out how many dogs, cats, and other animals are rescued each year and how many are adopted. Using a spreadsheet program, have students create charts of their findings.
- Using an average sized homeless dog, create a word problem showing how many homeless dogs could result if that one dog is not spayed or neutered. (Average two litters a year, five puppies, three of which might be female who would begin having puppies at about a year old. How many puppies in 5 years?)

Science:

- Take three samples of the same food (e.g., mashed potatoes) and devise an experiment to compare/contrast the food samples. (Example: real mashed potatoes, pre-made refrigerated mashed potatoes, and instant mashed potatoes.) You might observe the color, consistency, weight, or a blind taste test. Have students graph the results.
- Invite to the class a representative from the Humane Society or animal shelter to come and talk about homeless animals.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Take students to the library media center to research and create a timeline for the invention of the newspaper.
- Take students to the library media center to research the inventor of the first printing press and answer the following questions: How is newsprint made? What kind of ink is used?
- Invite a reporter or editor to visit your class.
- Take students on a tour of your local newspaper.

Black Duck

by Janet Taylor Lisle

Annotation

Back in 1929, there was an infamous rum-running ship called the Black Duck. Prohibition was at its height and authorities in this small Rhode Island town are trying to track down the rumrunners that are using their docks and coastline to transport illegal goods. Fast forward to today. David, 14, wants to be a newspaper man and meets Ruben who was a young teenager in 1929. Together they explore the past, its ethical issues, and intrigue. Older readers will easily navigate the decade-alternating chapters, as well as be inspired by Jeddy's and Ruben's adventures. (Grades 7-10)

Author on the Internet

<http://janettaylorlisle.com/>

Realia

Item: Dollar bill torn in half

Statement: What would you do if you found this torn bill on a dead body? Help Ruben solve the mystery in the *Black Duck*.

Food

Crab stew, Clams, Clam chowder, Fried chicken, Potato salad

Challenging Words

braying	(p. 9 PB)	fume	(p. 29 PB)
brusque	(p. 59 PB)	glutinous	(p. 229 PB)
caliber	(p. 48 PB)	Hamlet	(p. 21 PB)
countrified	(p. 165 PB)	havoc	(p. 173 PB)
decrepit	(p. 125 PB)	revered	(p. 34 PB)
extortion	(p. 19 PB)	scurrilous	(p. 212 PB)
fastidiously	(p. 49 PB)	scuttling	(p. 47 PB)
ferret	(p. 7 PB)	sodden	(p. 18 PB)
fraudulence	(p. 38 PB)	stealthy	(p. 47 PB)
froth	(p. 44 PB)	unbeknownst	(p. 158 PB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “Chief McKenzie was breathing fire to put a stop to the Duck.” (p. 55 PB)

Similes

- “A stiff sou’wester was in charge that day, shoving the waves against the shore like a big impatient hand.” (p. 9 PB)
- “Her death stunned everyone in town, but it struck the McKenzies like an iron fist.” (p. 13 PB)
- “It was the sort of spring night that makes you want to leap like a wild animal.” (p. 46 PB)
- “I was trying my best not to look at his bad eye, which had no pupil and bulged from his head like a peeled egg.” (p. 70 PB)
- Other similes: pages 11, 26, 78, 100, 102, 107, and 185 PB.

Idioms and Expressions

- “The chairs are formal and hard as a rock, just as you would expect.” (p. 5 PB)
- “And you, too, Marina. Keep it under your bonnet.” (p. 33 PB)
- “Mr. Riley was mad as a wet hen.” (p. 102 PB)
- “The whole thing stinks to high heaven,’ he said.” (p. 123 PB)
- “Slippery as an eel. I keep warning the big boys, don’t trust him.” (p. 182 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss with class the moral questions and situations the characters experienced in the story. Have students write an essay about a situation in which they have had to make a difficult decision.

Fine Arts:

- Have students create a political cartoon about Prohibition – either pro or con.
- Take students to the library media center to research and create a display/collage of women’s fashions of the 1920’s. (www.geocities.com/flapper_culture/)
- Take students to the library media center to research and create a display with recordings of the growth of jazz music in the 1920’s.

Language Arts:

- Organize class into small groups and have them publish a newspaper article written from the point of view of a smuggler, a gangster, a member of the Coast Guard, etc.
- Have students research and create a dictionary of Idioms of the 1920’s.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Read and discuss with class the Eighteenth Amendment, the Prohibition Act, and their impact on communities. Then have class stage a mock trial of someone who was caught smuggling, serving as defenders and prosecutors with witnesses offering both perspectives. Have a jury decide the verdict. (<http://prohibition.osu.edu/>)
- Take class to the library media center to research and write a report on the rise of the Mafia during the 1920’s.

Eggs

by Jerry Spinelli

Annotation

Nine-year-old David's mom is killed in a freak car accident. He is sent to Pennsylvania to live with his grandmother and soon meets thirteen-year-old Primrose whose mother is ill. Primrose decides to live in an abandoned van because space is at a premium in their one bedroom apartment. Their unlikely friendship thrusts shy David into adventures that include a competitive search for night crawlers, a late-night treasure hunt in the neighbor's trash, and an overnight hike toward Philadelphia. This fast-paced and engaging story provides memorable moments for its readers. (Grades 5-8)

Author on the Internet

http://www.jerryspinelli.com/newbery_001.htm

Realia

Item: Half-dozen carton of eggs decorated like Easter eggs

Statement: Trying to avoid his grandmother, David Limpert goes on an Easter egg hunt, and finds something much more interesting than eggs. Read *Eggs* to find out what happens.

Food

Eggs, Mango Madness, Peanut butter and jelly sandwich, Carrots, Chili dogs, Sour cream and onion chips, Beef sticks, *Klondike Bars*, Pizza, *Dunkin' Donuts* coffee, *Dairy Queen* milkshakes, Hoagies, Chocolate malt balls, Pretzels

Challenging Words

abode	(p. 75 PB)	palisade	(p. 212 PB)
demonstration	(p. 33 PB)	pantomimed	(p. 69 PB)
fumbled	(p. 7 PB)	poleaxed	(p. 85 PB)
invincible	(p. 24 PB)	preposterous	(p. 70 PB)
limpid	(p. 24 PB)	sauntered	(p. 24 PB)
lurching	(p. 12 PB)	scavengers	(p. 62 PB)
nonchalantly	(p. 132 PB)	speculated	(p. 79 PB)
overwhelmed	(p. 52 PB)	trudging	(p. 12 PB)
painfully	(p. 6 PB)	unintentionally	(p. 83 PB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “A button of thread –a daddy longlegs–came walking across the leaves onto a cheek.” (p. 18 PB)
- “It was his! A sky-blue miracle in his hand.” (p. 15 PB)
- “She was a shadow within thin tinted shells of eggs, speaking to him in sounds he did not understand.” (p. 20 PB)
- “Her humming had been the night-light of his life.” (p. 47 PB)
- “Primrose had jammed her forefingers into the corners of her mouth and stretched her face into such a preposterous shape that David could absolutely not help himself: a laugh grenade exploded from his mouth and nose. (p. 70 PB)
- “And so he did not take their squabbling seriously. He laughed, as there was no depth to their attacks. They were throwing stones – yes – but they were skipping them across the surface of each other's water. (pp. 80-81 PB)

- Others metaphors: pages 95, 112, 113, 134, 155, 187, 192, and 194 PB.

Similes

- “The white of the egg-sun had slimed and dried down to the door handle. It looked like the silvery trail of a giant slug.” (p. 8 PB)
- “One thing that he had learned already: the marking on the egg has come from the red lipstick on the lips of the open, O-shaped mouth that had held the egg like a golf ball tee.” (p. 17 PB)
- “The humped eyelids with their glittery purple were like tiny twin eggs, bird’s eggs.” (p. 18 PB)
- “The paint was peeling so bad on the place it looked like a camouflage jacket.” (p. 44 PB)
- “In the heat between them a dragonfly hovered like a miniature helicopter, then darted off.” (p. 45 PB)
- “Wet blood-red stalks came at David like a nightmare, bumping his nose and slipping across his cheeks; damp leaves licked his ears.” (p. 99 PB)
- “Primrose jumped to her feet to shed him, but he clung like a saddle, his arms around her neck, legs around her waist.” (p. 100 PB)
- “Her tongue, like a nightcrawler, slid out, poked around her upper lip till the yellow spot was gone – *htthh* – back into its hole.” (p. 115 PB)
- “August waved shimmering images above the roads he pedaled on. August thundered like falling chairs in a distant room.” (p. 145 PB)
- Sometimes in the night, when fireflies outside his bedroom window blinked and jiggled like stars on strings, when sleep curled furrily about him, sometimes then he thought he could feel his mother getting closer.” (p. 146 PB)
- Others similes: pages 44, 96, 97, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104, 112, 116, 122, 123, 135, 149, 155, 168, 171, 175, 191-192, 200, 201, 206, 208, and 217 PB

Idioms and Expressions

- “For a moment the boy looked like he’d been poleaxed.” (p. 85 HB)
- “A quarter apiece,” said the girl, always turning the screw. (p. 90 PB)
- “Asking herself: Could I really pull it off?” (p. 131 HB)
- “She thought about trying it on Refrigerator John, but chickened out.” (p. 132 HB)
- “To break the tension she gave his nose a motherly tweak and whispered, ‘Don’t have a cow. We’re just pretending.’” (p. 137 HB)
- “Believe what you want. It’s a free country.” (p. 198 HB)
- “I wasn’t even tired. You were out like a light.” (p. 205 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss the concept of respect with the class. How is respect shown to another person? Is it conveyed through words, actions, behaviors? Focus on David, his grandmother, Primrose, and her mother. Do the characters respect each other? How is it shown?
- Remind students that David lives by the rules, while Primrose seems to disregard them. Ask students if they think that Primrose has any rules of her own?
- Initiate a discussion on neighborhood vandalism. Ask students how they would deal with this issue in their community. Compile their ideas and display on a bulletin board.

Fine Arts:

- Have students find “scavenged objects” and bring them into the class. Organize class into small groups and have them arrange the objects into displays. Follow up this activity with a class “flea market” or have a recycling expert speak to the class.
- David enjoys reading the comic *Beetle Bailey*, and reads aloud to Primrose from an Archie comic book. Have students search the local newspapers/Internet for comics they enjoy reading, and

bring them into class. Small groups share the comics, discuss what they like about them, and create their own to reflect something personal in their life.

- Read excerpts from *Eggs* in which the author paints a vivid picture with descriptive language (e.g., page 208). Have students visually interpret these scenes using watercolor paints. Display the finished paintings in the library media center with copies of the book and/or the quotes that inspired the students' work.

Language Arts:

- Take class to the media center. Have students find the books David listens to during the Summer Story Time: *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*; *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*; *Green Eggs and Ham*; *Make Way for Ducklings*; *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Have students read the stories to a younger audience.
- Remind students that the author, Jerry Spinelli, wrote the Newbery medal winner, *Maniac Magee*, and have students read this novel also. Have students complete a Venn diagram comparing the main characters of both *Eggs* and *Maniac Magee*.
- Read to students several of the similes from the book. Review the characteristics of a simile and then have the students write ten original ones to share with the class.

Science:

- Organize class into small groups to research the eggs of birds, reptiles, and fish, including information such as the incubation period and behaviors of the parents.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Remind students about the following facts: David's mother died in Minnesota; his father works 200 miles away in Connecticut; and David lives with his mother in Pennsylvania. Have students study a scaled map to see the difference in distance between David's early life with his mother, and his current life with his grandmother.

The Extraordinary Adventures of Alfred Kropp

By Rick Yancey

Annotation

The legendary sword, Excalibur, is stolen by Alfred, 15, and his uncle from a CEO who just happens to be a descendent of the Knights of the Round Table. The uncle turns out to be Mogart, a knight-gone-bad, who wants to use the sword's magical powers to take over the world. Fortunately, another descendent of the Round Table, Bennacio, helps Alfred in his quest to bring back the sword and save the world from Mogart. A whirlwind adventure ensues including gunfights and car chases. Fans of *The Lightning Thief* will welcome this white-knuckle, page-turning read. (Grades 6-8)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.rickyancey.com/>

Realia

Item: Toy sword (*Excalibur*)

Statement: Alfred Kropp joins the quest to return *Excalibur* to its master. Read *The Extraordinary Adventures of Alfred Kropp* to find out if the quest was successful!

Food

Beignets, Cheese, Grapes, Corn dogs, Chewing gum, Toast with strawberry jam, and Blueberry muffins

Challenging Words

acquiesced	(p. 108 HB)	inquisitive	(p. 28 HB)
astronomical	(p. 29 HB)	insignificant	(p. 148 HB)
banishment	(p. 121 HB)	mustered	(p. 89 HB)
consummate	(p. 30 HB)	negotiate	(p. 54 HB)
contingent	(p. 108 HB)	rebuke	(p. 141 HB)
desolate	(p. 123 HB)	reluctance	(p. 148 HB)
impetuous	(p. 149 HB)	reverberated	(p. 54 HB)
incorruptible	(p. 30 HB)	wincing	(p. 109 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “He rolled down the window and wind tore into the car, whipping his hair into a white tornado.” (p. 159 HB)
- “Tall and stoop-shouldered, with a hound-dog face and very long earlobes, he reminded me of a sad-eyed Basset.” (p. 327 HB)

Similes

- “She was very old and had a very long, sharp nose, and her office smelled like vanilla.” (p. 4 HB)
- “Ah, come on. They’ll bounce off you like like-pygmyes! Gnats! Little pygmy gnats!” (p. 8 HB)
- “The whole team had gathered around us by this point, like gawkers at the scene of a terrible accident.” (p. 10 HB)

- “The glass was dark tinted, and against the night sky it looked like a fat, glittering black thumb pointing up.” (p. 13 HB)
- “He nodded. He was on about his third cup of coffee and his nod was quick and sharp, like a bobble-head’s.” (p. 36 HB)
- “The desk was hinged on the front side, like the lid to the biggest music box ever made.” (p. 49 HB)
- “I pushed back from the desk with a little yelp as the desk itself began to rise, like an invisible magician was levitating it.” (p. 51 HB)
- “Grinning like a kid playing pirate, I swung it around a few times.” (p. 52 HB)
- Others similes: pages 53, 54, 58, 59, 92, 93, 98, 105, 107, 132, 134, 145, 146, 150, 152, 153, 160, 169, 179, 186, 187, 197, 199, 232, 254, 259, 294, and 309.

Idioms and Expressions

- “Maybe after you hear my story you won’t think I’m much of a hero anyway, since most of my heroics (if you want to call them that) resulted from my being a screwup.” (p. 1 HB)
- “He never had much money growing up and, by the time Mr. Arthur Myers came along with his once-in-a-lifetime deal, my uncle was forty years old and sick of being poor.” (p. 2 HB)
- “‘Alfred,’ he said. ‘Look at the movers and shakers of this world.’” (p. 4 HB)
- “For the love of the Blessed Virgin, you’re some kinda force of nature!” (p. 8 HB)
- “I think it’s pretty narrow-minded to assume just because I’m big, I should be playing football.” (p. 12 HB)
- “That’s it, smarty-pants, make jokes.” (p. 14 HB)
- “He went around telling everybody how he was going to ‘get Kropp,’ so I spent my days looking over my shoulder, waiting for the getting to start.” (p. 17 HB)
- “But I met with him and it turns out he’s the real McCoy, and he needs my help.” (p. 20 HB)
- “You interrupt me and every thought in my head just flies away! Whoosh! Right out the window!” (p. 22 HB)
- “The whole thing struck me as a shady deal.” (p. 24 HB)
- “I mean, I’m not too quick on the uptake – I can’t even memorize a football playbook – and this whole thing smells fishy to me.” (p. 26 HB)
- “Lay down his life?’ I asked. “Uncle Farrell, he’s saying you might have to lay down your life.” (p. 30 HB)
- “We’ve been worried sick!” (p. 94 HB)
- Others located on pages 144, 153, 180, 187, 192, 221, 242, and 325.

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Read the following passage to class: “But I was just making excuses. Once you’re about ten, maybe eleven tops, ‘I’m just a kid’ doesn’t cut it when it comes to your core ideas like the difference between right and wrong.” Ask the students if they agree with Alfred. Why or why not?
- Brainstorm with students what it means to be a knight. What are the personal characteristics of a knight? (Refer to pages 174, 188, and 242.) Characteristics may include valor, integrity, honesty, and commitment.
- Ask students to comment on the importance of the following quote from Bennacio: “But we fall only that we might rise, Alfred. All of us fall; all of us, as you say, screw up. Falling is not important. It is how we get up after the fall that’s important.” (p. 242)

Foreign Language:

- Refer students to pages 250 and 290 for French vocabulary words: moi, rendezvous, chateau, and très magnifique. Ask the students to define the words and then have them locate other French words that have been integrated into the English language.

Language Arts:

- Organize class into small groups, assign one topic to each group, and have them research the literary allusions included in the story, including Pandora's box, Mother Goose, Samson, Camelot, Lancelot, and King Arthur. Each group can report back to the entire class.
- Initiate a discussion with the class on the quest theme, identifying genre, types of characters, settings, and plots. Ask students to identify other stories that include this theme. Have students complete a Venn diagram comparing *The Extraordinary Adventures of Alfred Kropp* with another quest story.
- Remind students that the author uses a "mini quest" for Alfred to find out the real meaning of the acronym OIPEP. Have students make up their own meaning based on the actions of this group in the story.
- Read the following passage to class: "Looking at Mogart, I realized the plain truth was that he wasn't my greatest enemy. My greatest enemy was the fifteen-year-old homeless loser holding the Sword of Kings." (p. 305) Ask students why this self-revelation was so important to the story. How does this statement contribute to the quest theme?

Physical Education:

- Read several passages from the story describing the fencing scenes. Have students research fencing, both historical and modern applications.

Science:

- Ask students why the author would compare his oath to gravity in the following quote: "Long ago, Alfred, I took a solemn oath as binding as gravity. I know of no other way." (p. 224) What are the characteristics of gravity to which the author is alluding? Have students rewrite this simile using another physical property.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Locate Spain, France, and England on a world map and explain to students that they will be researching these countries, including the history, economics, art, culture, and politics. Divide class into small groups and assign one of the countries and a related topic to each group. Have students complete a *PowerPoint* presentation and present it to the class.
- Show students an historic timeline of England, noting when the mythical King Arthur lived. Have students research this time period, including the culture, economics, and politics of the period. Expand the research to include Stonehenge and current interpretations of its purpose in ancient times.
- Remind students that the archangel gave the sword to Arthur so he could "unite mankind." (p. 278) Ask students what their version of the world would be if this goal could be realized today. How would that goal play out in global economics and politics?

Hurt Go Happy

By Ginny Rorby

Annotation

Joey Willis, 13, has been deaf since age six. Her mother has refused to allow her to learn American Sign Language; consequently, Joey can only read lips to follow a conversation. As Joey gets older, her frustrations also grow. Then one day her world opens up when she meets Dr. Charles Mansell and his baby chimpanzee, Sukari, who sign with each other to communicate. Joey secretly begins to learn sign language from her new friends and her world blossoms with possibilities. Unfortunately, just the opposite happens with Sukari. This gripping animal-human relationship story will be a favorite of many readers. (Grades 6-9)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.ginnyrorby.com/>

Realia

Items: Mushrooms of various varieties

Statement: In *Hurt Go Happy*, Joey's life is changed when she goes mushroom-hunting and has a chance meeting with an elderly man and his baby chimpanzee. Read this fascinating story to see what happens.

Food

Raisins, Coke

Challenging Words

Cerebral Palsy	(p. 41 PB)	interpret	(p. 34 PB)
chanterelles	(p. 17 PB)	mantra	(p. 81 PB)
deliberately	(p. 94 PB)	Meningitis	(p. 32 PB)
dog legged	(p. 127 PB)	mimic	(p. 68 PB)
duff	(p. 18 PB)	ominous	(p. 127 PB)
fester	(p. 104 PB)	overwhelmed	(p. 159 PB)
flinched	(p. 70 PB)	Pygmy	(p.33 PB)
girdled	(p. 17 PB)	sweltering	(p. 12 PB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "Smells were keys to Joey, unlocking memories." (p. 120 PB)

Similes

- "Even Joey, who was nearly as deaf as a post, had heard the explosion of the transformer on the pole in the yard that made her mother flinch and her brother clap his hands over his ears a moment before the lights went out." (p. 9 PB)
- "For the first time in five days, sunlight slanted through the trees along the trail behind the house, though raindrops still clung to the redwood leaves, sparkling like Christmas lights." (p. 10 PB)
- "Joey's legs twitched beneath the bedcovers like a dog's in a dream-chase." (p. 36 PB)

- “Her heart burned like a broken blister.” (p. 177 PB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “Mom just threw in the towel.” (p. 104 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Foreign Language:

- Have students visit the American Sign Language University at <http://www.lifeprint.com/asl101>. The link to “First 100 Words” gives graphic and pictorial demonstrations of signs for common words.

Language Arts:

- Conduct a classroom debate on the controversial issue of animal testing for which *Hurt Go Happy* provides a basis with which to start this discussion. Have students research the subject. Assign pro and con positions and conduct debates. Some web sites to use for research are the following:

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/animal-testing/>

http://www.idebate.org/debatabase/topic_details.php?topicID=7

http://www.hsus.org/animals_in_research/animal_testing/

<http://www.stopanimaltests.com/>

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/cos-205.html>

Science:

- Read *Hurt Go Happy* during the study of primates. Follow up this activity with student research, using the following web site that provides information on great apes and relates to events in the story: <http://www.greatapetrust.org>. While researching “Great Apes,” students will find basic information on the characteristics of primates and a description of how closely apes are related to humans. Under “Scientific Research” students will learn more about research on the great apes in their natural habitat and in captivity. The links to studies on the development of human language in great apes will be especially interesting after reading Sukari’s story in *Hurt Go Happy*. The studies include video segments of apes using various methods of communication, including sign language.

Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life

by Wendy Mass

Annotation

What is the meaning of life? Jeremy Fink and his best friend Lizzy are on a quest to open the box delivered to Jeremy one month before his thirteenth birthday. The box is entitled, "The Meaning of Life: For Jeremy Fink to Open on His 13th Birthday." However, the four keys needed to open the box are not delivered with it. The adventure begins as Jeremy and Lizzy travel across Manhattan searching for the keys at flea markets and office buildings. Along the way, they begin to discover the meaning of life and themselves along with it. Action, adventure, and humor make this tale a winner. (Grades 5-7)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.wendymass.com/>

Realia

Items: Keys (box optional) or playing cards

Statement: Keys and playing cards are a huge part of the lives of the two main characters, Jeremy and Lizzy, and keys also factor into the climax of the book. Read *Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life* to find out why these keys are so important. (As a follow-up activity to reading the book, have a group of students hide keys around the library media center with clues as part of a scavenger hunt. Extra keys or cards could be included in the activity as decoys.)

Food

Mutant candy, *Peppermint Patties*, Bottle of water, Peanut butter sandwiches, Pies (rutabaga?), Watermelon jelly beans, Blueberry and chocolate Vitamuffins, Milk, *Skittles*, *Razzles*, *Snickers*, Fried *Twinkies* and *Snickers*, *Starbursts*, Soy cheese and chicken wrap, Curried chicken and rice, Orange juice, Chocolate crumb cake, Apples, Hamburgers, Veggie burgers, Stuffed peppers, Scrambled eggs with mini *M&Ms*, Banana, Swedish fish, Cauliflower, Asparagus, Beets, Fun Dip

Challenging Words

anticipation	(p. 263 PB)	obnoxious	(p. 164 PB)
bizarre	(p. 267 PB)	observations	(p. 226 PB)
commute	(p. 73 PB)	permeated	(p. 128 PB)
cryptically	(p. 198 PB)	philatelist	(p. 287 PB)
decipher	(p. 280 PB)	primordial	(p. 188 PB)
determination	(p. 283 PB)	scrutinize	(p. 35 PB)
exasperation	(p. 147 PB)	sentimental	(p. 235 PB)
generates	(p. 53 PB)	skirting	(p. 94 PB)
haphazardly	(p. 3 PB)	traditional	(p. 227 PB)
mnemonic	(p. 137 PB)	wretched	(p. 242 PB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- "Hamster is a hyper, orange goldfish who swims back and forth all day like he's in an Olympic relay race." (p. 19 PB)
- "My throat feels like a snake is wound around it, but I manage to ask, 'He believed that palm reader on the boardwalk, didn't he?' " (p. 22 PB)

- "She heaves a sigh of relief and then holds it high above her head like she's the winning boxer in a prize fight." (p. 82 PB)
- "It's like a ghost town of an office." (p. 87 PB)
- "It feels like an elephant is sitting on my chest." (p. 158 PB)
- "My head is still busy removing layer after layer of events like those little nesting dolls where every time you take one doll apart, a smaller one is inside." (p. 278 PB)

Idioms and Expressions

- "Can't you use your talents for good instead of evil?" (p. 3 PB)
- "One man's trash is another man's treasure." (p. 45 PB)
- "You've heard the expression 'Go with the flow,'right?" (p. 151 PB)
- "Roll up your sleeves, and I'll give you a quick lesson in the history of the universe." (p. 186 PB)
- "The bright-eyed and bushy-tailed thing you just said." (p. 247 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Start a class discussion on what life means to each student and how they could physically represent their lives through objects.

Fine Arts:

- Have students create their own boxes and keys. A follow-up activity could include having students start putting objects in their 'life' boxes.

Language Arts:

- Have your students write a recap of their day or weekend based on the model of Jeremy and Lizzy who used a recap of their day to clarify things in their minds and to figure out how best to proceed. Have your students discuss whether or not they gain inspiration from the activity.
- Refer class to the fact that Jeremy and Lizzy were forced to take notes on their day's community service in a notebook, which is then signed but not read. Have students create their own journals that are private except for shared entries once a week.

Science

- Organize students into small groups and have them research a part of the Milky Way. Culminate the research activity by having the groups present interesting facts to the class.
- Assign students a time of their own on a regular basis to research the history of a commonplace object that forms a foundation of everyday life. Remind students that Jeremy researches the history of keys as part of his quest during H.O.J. (hour of Jeremy) time. Have students present their object to the class, perhaps without identifying the object until the end and having students guess what it is. Examples include: paper clips, pencils, erasers, chewing gum, and paper.
- Have students create a new mnemonic for the 8 planets excluding Pluto. Students could also create a new mnemonic that includes Pluto and Charon as separate from the 8 for a more advanced class. Jeremy recites the old one "My energetic mother just served us nine pizzas." (p. 137 PB)

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students create time capsules of random things from their lives including writings, objects, and/or collectibles. Then have them blind exchange them and try to determine characteristics about the person based on the objects.
- Download and print a subway map from a major metropolitan area and distribute them to the class. Have students practice directing other students between different locations.

Kimchi & Calamari

by Rose Kent

Annotation

Eighth-grader Joseph is confused about his heritage. He was born in Korea, but was adopted by an Italian-American family when he was a baby. When Joseph must write an essay on his heritage, he struggles with his desire to find his birth mother, his concern for his hard-working adoptive parents, and his own need to find himself and his identity. Tensions build as Joseph befriends an immigrant family from Korea and he seeks more information on his birth heritage. This contemporary and realistic story will engage readers through a light-hearted approach to a complex issue. (Grades 4-8)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.rosekent.com/>

Realia

Items: Chopsticks and forks

Statement: Joseph's birth heritage is Korean, but he was adopted by an Italian-American family. Read *Kimchi & Calamari* to find out how Joseph finally comes to terms with his unique and complicated identity and family.

Food

Fried calamari, Eggplant parmesan, Chocolate cake with cannoli frosting, *Pop-Tarts*, tiramisu, tortellini, linguini and broccoli sauce, *bulgogi*, bruschetta, Capicola ham, kimchi, rice, cookies, pizza, antipasto

Challenging Words

betraying	(p. 41 HB)	maracas	(p. 110 HB)
colander	(p. 110 HB)	nonfiction	(p. 125 HB)
concentrate	(p. 158 HB)	obstacles	(p. 164 HB)
connoisseur	(p. 153 HB)	persistent	(p. 35 HB)
delusions	(p. 157 HB)	plagiarism	(p. 119 HB)
equivalent	(p. 35 HB)	quartet	(p. 37 HB)
exhausted	(p. 36 HB)	stanchions	(p. 26 HB)
genealogy	(p. 18 HB)	sulked	(p. 115 HB)
immigrants	(p. 36 HB)	sympathetic	(p. 169 HB)
insulted	(p. 139 HB)	teleported	(p. 42 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “The world is your supersized soda waiting to be guzzled, right?” (p. 1 HB)
- “Nothing, that is, until she dropped a slab of cement on my head. It came in the form of a handout, but trust me, it caused quite the emotional concussion.” (p. 3 HB)
- “My friends say I never shut up and yet there I was, a poet out of words. An iPod without a Play button.” (p. 25 HB)
- “Kelly, on the other hand, has two straight rows of pearls in her mouth.” (p. 26-27 HB)
- “The Mad Meter suddenly switched on and started pulsing at an eighth-note tempo.” (p. 39 HB)
- “Gina kept pulling apart her Oreos, scooping the filling out with her pinkie fingernail, licking the cocolate shells, and clumping them in a pile. It looked nasty, but I have to admit I prefer the cream to those dry Frisbees.” (p. 115 HB)

- “I had adoption stuff on my mind, and meanwhile, Gina, the cutest tadpole from Mom and Dad’s gene pool, had her own identity crisis.” (p. 116 HB)
- “You know what, Dad? I think I’m an ethnic sandwich. One hunk of Joseph slapped between a slice of Italian bread and a mound of Korean sticky rice.” (pp. 154-155 HB)
- “I suggest you consider yourself a diamond, only cut differently,” Jae said.” (p. 159 HB)

Similes

- “She stood poised by the chalkboard, her hand clutching a pen in midair like the Statue of Liberty, and rambled on about digging out old photos and interviewing family members.” (p. 4 HB)
- “Almost on cue, the vein near Dad’s forehead started pulsating in a one-stroke pattern like drum rudiments. *Bum, bum, bum. Bum, bum, bum.* (p. 13 HB)
- “The sky was brilliant blue that night, so blue it almost looked fake, like pool water. (p. 16 HB)
- “My patchwork pillow needed some tender loving care: the seams didn’t match, and the stitching between patches zigzagged like jack-o’-lantern teeth.” (p. 24 HB)
- “Within minutes the Life Skills classroom was humming like a tenor sewing-machine orchestra.” (p. 25 HB)
- “Even her hair, what with how it was flipped back with silver clips like the stanchions on the Verrazano Bridge.” (p. 26 HB)
- Mom said the salmon was melt-in-your-mouth tender, but Dad complained that the waiters buzzed around the table like nervous bees.” (p. 27 HB)
- Others similes: pages 40, 41, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52, 54, 66, 70, 72, 78, 79, 83, 89, 91, 101, 102, 104, 118, 130, 133, 136, 140, 143, 146, 150, 151, 154, 155, 172, 173, 181, 188, 190, and 196 HB.

Idioms and Expressions

- “And I did like my gifts, especially the Spider-Man alarm clock that I’d been eyeing at the mall.” (p. 10 HB)
- “What’s that saying about too much information being dangerous?” (p. 17 HB)
- “Mom and Dad haven’t exactly engaged in a cloak-and-dagger adoption conspiracy.” (p. 19 HB)
- “Out of sight, out of mind, right?” (p. 23 HB)
- “She said they made millions of dollars by lip-synching other people’s music, but eventually the truth came out and they had to face their own music.” (p. 107 HB)
- “He has a heart bigger than the ladder on his truck, but he’s pigheaded.” (p. 120 HB)
- “I could just hear her bribing Mrs. Han: ‘You give my kid the Korean lowdown and I’ll perm you for half price.’” (p. 135 HB)
- “How could I enjoy *bulgogi* while feeling like a Korean knucklehead?” (p. 135 HB)
- “They have a funny accent, like Americans down South. And they are . . . how can I explain? Straight talkers, they speak their mind. You understand?” (pp. 142-143 HB)
- Others idioms and expressions: pages 42, 75, 92, 110, 122, 125, 182, 190, 198, 208, 210, and 215 HB.

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Initiate a discussion with class based on Yoda’s words “Do, or do not. There is no try.” (p. 175) What do those words mean? If students lived their lives by these words, what would that look like?
- Ask the students if they agree with the following statement by Mr. Han: “In Korea, young people show respect for elders. They understand that age has earned such respect. Not so here.” Why or why not?
- Lead a discussion on adoption and Joseph’s search for his birth family. Discuss the identity complications that Joseph must resolve as he matures toward adulthood.

Fine Arts:

- Play for the class a selection of classical music, including Vivaldi's compositions and Caruso's performances. Remind students that classical music and opera were played in both the Italian-American and Korean-American households. Ask the students why they think classical music has continued to have a global audience.
- Remind students that Joseph likes to read comic books, particularly the Spiderman stories. Bring in a selection of comic books featuring Wolverine, Storm, and Spiderman. Have students read these stories. Organize the class into small groups and have each group create their own comic book characters and story.

World Languages:

- Remind students that the characters in the story study several languages, including Spanish, Italian, and French. Ask students why and how world languages, including Korean, play an important role in the story. Have students list and define the words and phrases used in the story, such as *malocchio* (p. 11), *niente per niente* (p. 20), *ki-bun* (p. 102), *deliziosa cena* (p. 109), *capisce* (p. 121), *gamsa hamnida* (p. 145), *amore* (p. 181), and *en Italiano* (p. 182). Follow-up this activity with the students listing other words or phrases that these characters might use.

Language Arts:

- Remind students that the twins learned about antonyms in school and read the examples given in the story. Divide class into small groups and have them develop a list of antonyms to be shared with the class.
- Assign to class an assignment that duplicates Joseph's Celebrating Our Heritage essay (pp. 68 and 103-104). Choose a few of the best examples to be shared with the class.
- Collaborate with the library media specialist for a lesson on plagiarism. Co-teach the lesson in the library media center.
- Discuss with students the literary allusions that the author incorporates into the story: Lilliputian, *Brothers Karamazov*, Chicken Little, Shakespeare's *Othello*, Pandora's box, *The Great Gatsby*, Edgar Allen Poe, and Snow White. Have students research these topics and then discuss the author's purpose in using them.

Science

- Have half the class recreate on either a bulletin board or poster the constellations that Joseph had arranged on his ceiling with glow-in-the-dark stars. Remove some of the stars from the constellations and have the other half of the class repair them. (p. 19)
- Take class to the library media center to research the constellations and Pegasus. Have students share the mythology and history of the constellations.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Organize class into small groups and assign to each group a country and topic, such as Italy – economics, or Korea – history. Have groups present mediated, oral reports to the class.
- Remind students that the author mentions Watergate (p. 127) in the story and compares it to Joseph's "Essaygate" (p. 129). Ask students to complete a Venn diagram comparing/contrasting the two events.

The Kingdom Keepers

by Ridley Pearson

Annotation

What could be better than a high-tech adventure set in the famous Disney World theme park? Finn, 13, and several of his friends become holograms at the park and are pulled into a delightful nighttime adventure. Who is stealing costumes, shutting off the rides, and creating havoc in the park? Can these five young adventurers save the Magic Kingdom? Readers will need to buckle up for their adventure ride with this tale. (Grades 6-9)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.ridleypearson.com/>

Realia

Items: Pirate hat and/or Mickey Mouse ears

Statement: Four Orlando middle school students think their dreams have come true when each is selected to become the first holographic hosts of the Magic Kingdom! Those dreams, however, quickly turn into nightmares as they battle pirates and other evils. They eventually learn the true reason they were selected and the dangerous mission they must complete. Read the *Kingdom Keepers* to discover the secrets of the Magic Kingdom when the guests go home and the lights go out!

Food

Meat loaf, Green beans and bacon, Salad, Cornbread, Popcorn, Girl Scout Cookies, Tea

Challenging Words

admonished	(p.105 HB)	incredulous	(p. 191 HB)
ampersands	(p. 99 HB)	insolent	(p. 284 HB)
buoyant	(p. 2 HB)	majestically	(p. 4 HB)
conscript	(p. 62 HB)	mimicked	(p. 30 HB)
elaborately	(p. 61 HB)	pompous	(p. 14 HB)
grotesquely	(p. 37 HB)	skeptically	(p. 48 HB)
hologram	(p. 16 HB)	stanchions	(p. 32 HB)
hybrid	(p. 71 HB)	translucent	(p. 5 HB)
Imagineer	(p. 8 HB)	treacherous	(p. 162 HB)
impeding	(p. 111 HB)	trepidation	(p. 12 HB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- “Finn had to turn around to locate the moon. A half-moon, like a crooked smile, hung well above the horizon.” (p. 9 HB)
- “She was . . . glowing. A fuzzy light sputtered at the edges of her body and all around her head, like a halo.” (p. 60 HB)
- “Four glowing eyes, like cats’ eyes, shone from beyond a tree.” (p. 62 HB)
- Other similes: pages 62, 63, 65, 74, 120, 124, 125, 181 and 183 HB

Idioms and Expressions

- “You read the script a couple times into a microphone. They process the film or whatever, and, presto! You’re a hologram-host at the Magic Kingdom. With a college nest egg and lifetime complementary passes.” (p. 16 HB)
- “Finn spotted a couple of clean-cut young men approaching the Fastpass entrance, not thirty feet away, just on the other side of the hearse.” (p. 33 HB)
- “Amanda’s brow knit tightly, deep in thought.” (p. 34 HB)
- “The security tapes revealed nothing, showed no one inside the store. Mark my word: those padlocks were stolen – one minute on the shelf, the next, missing.” (pp. 73-74 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Organize students into groups of five. Let the students in each group decide what unique qualities they would bring if selected as a holographic host.
- Have students compare and contrast the character traits evidenced by the good and evil characters in the book. Then have students locate incidents in the book for each trait.

Fine Arts:

- Have students locate samples of M.C. Escher’s stairway creations in the library media center. Then have students share and discuss in small groups.
- Have students explore the actual works of Disney Imagineers via primary and secondary sources. Have students compare and contrast the Imagineers’ work in *Kingdom Keepers* versus real life.

Language Arts:

- Remind the students that Disney characters come alive in the book. Have students respond to the following prompt: what would happen if your favorite fictional character came to life?

Mathematics:

- Share with students the tessellations of M.C. Escher. Then have students create their own.

Science:

- Collaborate with the library media specialist and assign a research project on the science of holograms. Have students compare the scientific facts with the fictional portrayal in the book.
- Collaborate with the library media specialist and assign a research project on Einstein’s theories about the nature of atoms and the states of matter. Have students orally report their findings to the class.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Assign to students the study of the evolution of Disney’s theme parks. Have students answer the following question: How does the growth of the park compare to Walt Disney’s original vision?

Out of Patience

By Brian Meehl

Annotation

Jake Waters, 12, has a dream. He wants to be the first male in his family to escape the tiny town of Patience, Kansas, founded by his great-great-great-grandfather. Unfortunately, a curse was also placed on the city that involves buried treasure. In the meanwhile, Jake's dad, the town plumber, wants to establish the first American Toilet Museum. Jake is horrified! A mixture of humor and suspense will pull readers into this well-written, whimsical mystery. (Grades 5-8)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.randomhouse.com/author/results.pperl?authorid=61826>

Realia

Items: A toilet plunger (cursed, play a game of hot potato with it and trivia), a toilet seat made of wood or material

Statement: The Plunger of Destiny returned to Patience, Kansas, bringing with it the potential doom of the city and its occupants, but also the potential for a more pleasant smelling future. It also was the very first plunger used to unclog a water closet (AKA toilet). Brian Meehl's *Out of Patience* is a true example of potty humor and a complicated tale of a curse reminiscent of Louis Sachar's *Holes*, with a strong main character in Jake, and strong complementary characters in Siri and Howie as well as his father Jim. Read *Out of Patience* to learn about this curious tale.

Food

Left-over-spaghetti, Scrambled eggs, Quart of milk, Thunderstone home-made peach ice cream, Bottled water, Tandoori chicken, Lamb curry, Beef kabobs, Saffron rice, Yogurt, Chapati bread

Challenging Words

acrostic	(p. 113 PB)	oscillating	(p. 36 PB)
apocalypse	(p. 100 PB)	pragmatism	(p. 49 PB)
barrage	(p. 2 PB)	procured	(p. 264 PB)
contempt	(p. 224 PB)	putrid	(p. 51 PB)
depression	(p. 59 PB)	qualification	(p. 101 PB)
devious	(p.182 PB)	repairs	(p. 275 PB)
dispersed	(p. 175 PB)	reservoir	(p. 52 PB)
gauntlet	(p. 127 PB)	stifled	(p. 39 PB)
impurity	(p.157 PB)	synapse	(p. 112 PB)
leering	(p. 217 PB)	temperance	(p. 47 PB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- "Like most twelve-year-olds, Jake Waters was a collection of head bonks." (p. 1 PB)
- "It was the only street in town attracting new residents, but the welcome wagon was a hearse." (p. 6 PB)
- "The sky was just one thing, and it had shrunk. Now it looked more like a huge domed room, and the horizon was the baseboard wrapping around it." (p. 35 PB)

- “As the coffin house shook in the endless sonic boom, they squeezed out the beat in each other’s hand and sang.” (p. 245 PB)

Similes

- “His eyes shot upward as two more plungers sailed out the window, arcing toward him like rubber-tipped missiles.” (p. 1 PB)
- “Asking her a question was like doing a search on Wanda.com and getting a dozen pop-ups.” (p. 4 PB)
- “She glared at him. ‘Are you gonna help me with these or stand there like a stump?’” (p. 4 PB)
- “There were a few original wooden houses jutting up like bleached bones from another era.” (p. 11 PB)
- Other similes: pages 13, 39, 52, 95, 96, 133, 147, 151, 174, 177, 209, 232, 233, 242, and 244 PB.

Idioms and Expressions

- “His dream was to open what was going to put Patience, Kansas, back on the map.” (p. 8 PB)
- “The rose of the prairie had lost its bloom some time ago, but it wasn’t pushing up daisies quite yet.” (p. 102 PB)
- “As he rubbed his head and stared at the plunger lying on the yellow grass, lightning almost struck twice.” (p. 1 PB)
- “‘You know, Howie,’ Jim said, ‘there’s an expression that describes what you’re feeling. The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.’” (p. 192 PB)
- “‘I’m so sorry, Jake. I tried to hide it from him. Did I totally rip the lid off Pandora’s box?’” (p. 218 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss with students if they believe in destiny, curses, free will, and making their own luck.

Fine Arts:

- Have students craft their own plungers with bonus points for creative design and utility.
- Remind students about the parody of *Take Me Out to the Ballgame*, called *Take Me Out to the Stink Farm* featured on page 28. Offer students a variety of melodies from which to choose. Have students parody an existing song to describe one of the following topics:
 1. Your town
 2. Science concept
 3. Math concept
 4. Literary terms
 5. Favorite book (report?)
- Reread the ending of *Out of Patience* that features a Stradivarius violin. Have students research the history of this violin and share their findings with the class, incorporating recordings by musicians on the Stradivarius violin.

Language Arts:

- Read *Holes* by Louis Sachar to the class. Have students write a compare/contrast on the two books’ use of curses and on techniques used to interweave characters from different generations.
- Review with students the anagrams of Sandra and Andars Cass. Organize class into small groups and have them create original ones or locate other anagrams, using the model from the book of words that use the same letters, only jumbled up.
- Use as an example the fable on pages 129-130 about the fox and the fleas or use an Aesop’s fable. Explain to students that fables share an important message while telling a story. Have students write an original fable, remembering to keep them under a page for the greatest impact.

- Discuss with students how acrostics can be used as a memory aid, similar to the one in *Out of Patience* on page 212. Then have students create their own acrostics and use them to exchange messages with each other without saying the actual words.

Mathematics:

- Discuss statistical probability with the students. Have students track the statistics of a favorite ballplayer or team, computing the probability of different events occurring like hits, touchdowns, extra points and fumbles based on tracked statistics. (This project could be a season-long epic or a week-long glimpse.)

Physical Education:

- Organize the class into small groups and have each group create a sports game for a limited number of students, adapting an existing game complete with scoring, rules, and dispute procedures. Refer students to pages 21-22 that shows the KSF Workup League Rulebook.
- Divide class into two or more teams and have them play a World Series game of KSF Workup League following the rules from pages 21-22.

Science:

- Have students research the scientific principles behind the toilet flush and the plunger's effect.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students work in small groups to create their own brief book called "Florida: 100 Years of Freaky and Fascinating Facts," modeled after Siri's book on Kansas. Each group will need to find one fact from each year corresponding with numbers from zero to 99, or for a shorter project each group would find 25 facts and combine into a class book.
- Have students research the "Homestead Act of 1862" that features prominently in the founding of *Patience*. Students will explain the difference between a claim and a homestead, as well as compare/contrast with current squatter's laws in the United States.

Peak

by Roland Smith

Annotation

Climbing tall buildings or mountains is a passion of Peak Marcello. His latest adventure of scaling skyscrapers in New York has met with stern disapproval from his mom and the authorities. The judge puts him on probation and tells him to leave the city. His mom and step-dad send him to stay with his father who is scaling Mount Everest. Peak quickly finds himself in the thick of base camp operations as he waits for his shot at the summit. This thrilling mountaineering story will carry readers to new heights of adventure. (Grades 6-9)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.rolandsmith.com/>

Realia

Item: Climbing equipment, tent, blue spray paint can, yellow prayer flag with a blue mountain

Statement: Fourteen year old Peak gets the opportunity of a lifetime to become the youngest person to get to the top of Mount Everest or die trying in the action packed thriller *Peak* by Roland Smith.

Food

Freeze-dried beef Stroganoff (or other dried meal package), Noodles, Energy bars, Thermos of hot tea, Water

Challenging Words

arraigned	(p. 9 HB)	optimistic	(p. 16 HB)
asphyxiation	(p. 57 HB)	parenthetical	(p. 1 HB)
auspicious	(p. 93 HB)	precarious	(p. 3 HB)
bovines	(p. 108 HB)	pristine	(p. 73 HB)
cagey	(p. 49 HB)	rappel	(p. 63 HB)
contraband	(p. 65 HB)	resolve	(p. 5 HB)
dapper	(p. 18 HB)	sabotage	(p. 139 HB)
duress	(p. 20 HB)	sauntered	(p. 97 HB)
elicited	(p. 16 HB)	scaffolds	(p. 7 HB)
enunciating	(p. 13 HB)	summit	(p. 49 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “I guess Vincent thinks readers are fish.” (p. 1 HB)
- “The rock rats were on their way up.” (p. 32 HB)
- “Josh wriggled out of her tentacles and held her at arm’s length so she couldn’t snag him again.” (p. 82 HB)
- “If Shek catches you, you’re toast.” (p. 137 HB)
- “Whatever his fate, I didn’t have a lot of time to worry about it because our trip down to Base Camp was a nightmare.” (p. 173 HB)

Similes

- “Two hundred sixty-four feet up, or about a hundred precarious fingerholds (providing my fingers didn’t break off like icicles).” (p. 3 HB)

- “(I had seen my mom agitated before, but I had never seen her like this. She was pacing the small holding cell like a caged leopard.)” (p. 15 HB)
- “It occurred to me that I should thank him, but by then, he was halfway down the hallway, tearing the tie off his neck like it was an anaconda.” (p. 26 HB)
- My father looked like a bodybuilder, but he was as flexible as a gymnast.” (p. 32 HB)
- She was lean, with dreadlocks tickling her powerful shoulders, muscles in her arms and legs like knotted ropes, and abs like speed bumps.” (pp. 32-33 HB)
- Holly Angelo looked like a redheaded scarecrow dressed in pink goose down. She was over six feet tall with limbs like a daddy longlegs. As soon as she saw Josh she wrapped her arms around him with a shriek so loud every head for a quarter mile popped out of its tent like turtles coming out of their shells.” (p. 82 HB)
- Other similes: pages 93, 94, 100, 101, 111, 112, 121, 147, 153, 158, 161, 198, 199, 203, 210, 216, 219, 223, and 227 HB.

Idioms and Expressions

- “Depends on how much bail is and whether your parents can cough up the dough.” (p. 10 HB)
- “By the third day at JDC I was climbing the wall (literally) until my counselor (that’s what they call the guards here) told me to stop.” (p. 10 HB)
- “‘Two peas in a pod,’ as Mom and Rolf called them, or ‘Pea-Pea’ as I called them, which always made them giggle.” (p. 14 HB)
- “They’re going to eat you up and spit you out. Rolf has cashed in every favor he has in the city, but I don’t think any of it is going to work.” (p. 15 HB)
- “You’re circling the drain, Peak, and you don’t even know it.” (p. 15 HB)
- “The city wants to make an example out of you.” (p. 16 HB)
- “‘Buck up,’ she said with strained cheerfulness.” (p. 16 HB)
- “When you’re at the end of your rope there’s no one better than Joshua Wood.” (p. 27 HB)
- “My mother told me once that Josh always slept like a baby because he had no conscience to keep him awake.” (p. 46 HB)
- “‘Are we square?’
I wasn’t sure about the famous part, and I wasn’t happy about his reason for bringing me to Everest, but I did want to get to the top.
‘We’re square,’ I said.” (p. 81 HB)
- “If Shek catches you, you’re toast.” (p. 137 HB)
- “Compared to what I had just been through, it was a breeze.” (p. 226 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss with the students if Peak’s climbing and tagging the skyscrapers was wrong and why. Should Peak be held responsible for the one boy attempting to copy him and dying? Did Peak regret what he had done? Ask the students about regretting things that have been said or done. Does it help to regret something? Who or what is affected?
- Discuss whether Peak made the right decision to go with his father, Joshua Wood. Was Josh a good father? Ask the students if they think Josh loves Peak? Does Rolf, the stepfather, love Peak? Have the students support their decision by referencing different actions of each character in the book.

Fine Arts:

- Have students create mini documentaries on local areas of interest. Students will need to do research and write scripts. The following questions should be answered in the project: 1) What makes this item unique? 2) What can be done to preserve it for future generations? 3) Is current interest ruining the natural beauty? 4) Does it have any historical interest?

Foreign Languages:

- Have students research the languages spoken on Mount Everest and the surrounding countries. People come from all over the world to climb Everest so have the students create a list of greetings and important words to know.

Language Arts:

- Have students complete journal activities after reading the chapters. Students can write about what surprised them or what they think will happen next. Included below are some suggestions for journal activities as the student begin reading *Peak*.
 - √ The importance of a name. Do you know what your name means? Why did your parents pick this name for you?
 - √ What unexpected consequences did Peak endure because of his tagging? Why is tagging illegal? Should Peak be held accountable for someone dying because they copied what he did?
 - √ When does Peak regret climbing the skyscraper? What is so special about Peak's relationship with Patrice and Paula? How is Peak's relationship with Rolf, his stepfather? What about his relationship with his father, Joshua Wood?

Mathematics:

- Have students calculate how many miles Peak flew from New York to Kathmandu. Did he fly east or west? What would the shortest distance be?
- Assign the students the task of determining how quickly Peak should move through the death zone. Students can also attempt to determine how many miles (or convert to kilometers) each "zone" on Everest encompasses.

Science:

- Have students study the effects of extreme cold on the human body. Also research how much oxygen is available at different altitudes.
- Research the physical characteristics of mountains. How was Mount Everest formed? Why is it so tall? What animals can utilize this habitat?

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students locate Mount Everest on a world map and then research the counties that it encompasses. Students may answer questions such as the following: 1) What countries is it near? 2) What continent is it on? 3) What are the most important industries near it? 4) What are the national holidays and other important customs of the countries?
- Research the political history of China, Nepal, and Tibet. Who are the indigenous people of Mount Everest? How does the political history affect modern tourism?
- Assign the students a Vacation Expedition. Using various websites, have the students research how much a plane ticket to Mount Everest would cost. When would be the best time to visit? What is the exchange rate for currency? What currency would you need? What documents and medical requirements are needed to visit? The following websites could be useful:

Universal Currency Converter <http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

Travel: <http://www.orbitz.com/>; <http://www.expedia.com/Default.asp>;

<http://www.delta.com/index.jsp>; <http://www.travel-himalayas.com/himalayan-mountains-peaks/mount-everest.html>;

<http://www.iexplore.com/ksmap/Everest>;

http://www.virtualtourist.com/travel/Asia/Nepal/Sagarmatha_Zone/Mount_Everest-2271981/TravelGuide-Mount_Everest.html

Additional curriculum suggestions are available at <http://rolandsmith.com/>

Other websites of interest:

<http://booktalk.tandemlibrarybooks.com/viewBook.aspx?bookId=327>

http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/assets/downloads/cc_sa_peak.pdf

http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/assets/downloads/cc_lp_peak.pdf

Red Kayak

by Priscilla Cummings

Annotation

A prank turns into tragedy when a toddler dies after his parents' kayak sinks in the Chesapeake Bay. Brady soon learns that his best friends had masterminded the prank. Revealing this terrible secret would involve his friends in the drowning, and, consequently, he is torn with guilt and fear. Brady wrestles with the decision of whether to tell the secret or not and must ultimately come to terms with his own responsibility for the tragedy. Mature readers will appreciate this suspenseful tale of deception and intrigue. (Grades 6-9)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.priscillacummings.com/>

Realia

Items: Plastic blue crab (available at party store or dollar stores), toy ambulance, plastic toy drill, butterflies or butterfly poster, magazine picture of a little girl a few months old

Statement: Responsibility, courage, and trustworthiness are all words that describe Brady, but he must earn those characteristics through a lot of soul searching. Read the *Red Kayak* to learn about Brady's journey to manhood.

Food

Green tea with ginseng

Challenging Words

callous	(p. 12 PB)	parka	(p. 7 PB)
chortled	(p. 10 PB)	petitioning	(p. 78 PB)
compelling	(p. 203 PB)	piling	(p. 29 PB)
corrode	(p. 4 PB)	pots	(p. 3 PB)
debris	(p. 78 PB)	scowl	(p. 11 PB)
harbored	(p. 199 PB)	sediment	(p. 53 PB)
harried	(p. 48 PB)	skiff	(p. 22 PB)
hassock	(p. 41 PB)	starboard	(p. 23 PB)
jimmies	(p. 4 PB)	stealthily	(p. 13 PB)
molt	(p. 74 PB)	stern	(p. 22 PB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “Together, we waded through the ocean of yellow chicks, both of us stopping here and there to pick up the dead or dying ones, adding them to the bag..” (p. 102-103 PB)

Similes

- “Deceptive, how other times the same water can seem as smooth as glass.” (p. 5 PB)
- “At that point, I threw the ball so hard it landed in the marsh near the water. Tilly took off after it like a shot and disappeared into the tall grass.” (p. 11 PB)
- “Oyster shells crunched under the weight of the ambulance, and white dust trailed behind it like smoke.” (p. 13 PB)

- “He had one of those haircuts that looked like somebody put a bowl on his head and cut around it. His eyes were like two big blueberries.” (p. 17 PB)
- “With precision, she hopped over the front seat and sat like an obedient soldier midboat, where there was more room.” (p. 22 PB)
- “I used to make a goo-goo face that got her so excited she wheeled her arms and legs around like a windmill.” (p. 23 PB)
- “But he looked terrible lying there on the damp wooden floor of my boat, his face pale as a sheet, his eyes half shut and his lips as blue as a fresh bruise.” (p. 30 PB)
- Other similes: pages 84, 100, and 132 PB.

Idioms and Expressions

- “While he was talking, I tried to picture in my mind what had happened and felt all over again how scared they must have been.” (p. 40 PB)
- “Despite my mother, he stood his ground on that one.” (p. 57 PB)
- “So we can move on to the next one. If we didn’t, we would be totally burned out.” (p. 64 PB)
- “It was surreal, but I’ll tell you, I about died laughing.” (p. 83 PB)
- “I kicked the shovel because I knew I’d stirred things up.” (p. 88 PB)
- “Out of the blue, I smiled.” (p. 96 PB)
- “Digger was down in the dumps that day about his grandfather having to let go of the place, and we could see how it was eating him up.” (p. 97 PB)
- “While I was getting the mower ready, he came out to the garage and shook my hand, but I didn’t think he had his heart in it.” (p. 149 PB)
- Other idioms and expressions: pages 174, 180, 186, 192, and 204 PB.

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Review the story with the students and initiate a discussion on compassion, responsibility, courage, and honesty. Have students cite examples of Brady exhibiting these traits.

Language Arts:

- Have students cite examples of personification (p. 5) and (p. 21) mentioned in the *Red Kayak* or other stories.
- Have students list the oxymorons in the *Red Kayak*. Then have students brainstorm a list of others.
- Review figurative language examples with students, citing examples of simile (p. 8 and 30) and idioms (pp. 55 and 60). Continue the lesson with students brainstorming other examples and listing them on the board.

Science:

- Take class to the library media center to research the types of crabs found in the Chesapeake Bay. Suggested topics include the following: what size they must be in order to keep for sale; when they molt; the name of their scientific classification; and their reproductive statistics. Also include information about the effect crabbing has on the environmental health of the bay.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Using an atlas, have students locate the Chesapeake Bay and list the states that border the bay. A follow-up activity could include a comparison of those states.
- Have students compare/contrast the Chesapeake Bay with the Hudson Bay.

Rules

by Cynthia Lord

Annotation

Catherine, 12, has an autistic brother that she alternately is ashamed of and loves. To deal with her brother's eccentricities, Catherine creates rules that her brother needs to follow. In the meanwhile, she befriends a nonverbal paraplegic boy who communicates by using a book of pictures, including a card for "whatever." Catherine's relationship with the boy, Jason, helps her better understand her complex feelings toward her brother. This uplifting, insightful Newbery Honor book is a warm read and a great discussion starter. (Grades 4-7)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.cynthialord.com/>

Realia

Items: Yellow rubber duck, audiocassette or videotape, sketchbook and colored pencils

Statement: "Sometimes people laugh when they like you. But sometimes people laugh to hurt you." "No toys in the fish tank." "Flush!" These are some of the "Rules for David." Read *Rules* to find out why Catherine has to write them down for her brother.

Food

Grape soda, Cookies

Challenging Words

accommodate	(p. 69 PB)	gauzy	(p. 52 PB)
autism	(p. 8 PB)	grimacing	(p. 81 PB)
cellar	(p. 6 PB)	murky	(p. 111 PB)
crimson	(p. 60 PB)	pilings	(p. 150 PB)
Down syndrome	(p. 16 PB)	realtor	(p. 4 PB)
embarrassing	(p. 60 PB)	thrashing	(p. 64 PB)
frustrating	(p. 78 PB)	wharf	(p. 151 PB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- "David stands with his sneaker toes on the top step, like it's a diving board and he's choosing whether to jump." (p. 3 PB)
- "David flickers his fingers up and down, like he's playing a piano in the air." (p. 6 PB)
- "Mrs. Frost drops her magazine and even the receptionist has stopped typing, her hands held above her keyboard like a conductor waiting to cue a symphony." (p. 27 PB)
- "David hears everything extra loud, Stephanie says. Milk being poured, shopping carts clanging at the grocery store, my pet guinea pigs squealing, the school bus braking as it pulls up to the corner, and the *whoosh* of the bus door opening – all those things and a million more make David cover his ears, fast as lightning." (p. 29 PB)
- "I jump up to stop his hands, flapping now like two fierce and angry birds." (p. 37 PB)
- "Talking to David can be like a treasure hunt. You have to look underneath the words to figure out what he is trying to say." (p. 38 PB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “‘David had a hard time last week,’ Mom says. ‘I need to make sure Stephanie can handle it. Why don’t we read?’” (p. 15 PB)
- “‘How’s his day been going?’ the therapist asks his mother.” (p. 23 PB)
- “‘If I were Jason, I’d want cards that said: ‘Get out of my face!’ and ‘Go away!’ and ‘This stinks a big one!’” (p. 24 PB)
- “‘Mom’s question hangs in the air.’” (p. 26 PB)
- “‘There’s a gazillion words and phrases I could choose, and none of them seem worth one of my two last cards.’” (p. 54 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss the rules of your classroom with students. Does everyone have a clear understanding of the rules and why they are needed? Talk about the rules in your school. Are they the same as the classroom? Ask students to talk to their family about their home rules. Does everyone have an understanding of why their family may have certain rules? At school, discuss family rules. How are they similar or different from other households?
- Discuss with class the many ways people are different. Have students write down ideas on how they would want to be treated and ways they would not want to be treated by others. Discuss how having a disability might make someone appear different. Have students talk about how they think everyone wants to be treated no matter the disability.

Fine Arts:

- Distribute pages from a sketchbook and colored pencils to students. Have them look at a familiar object in the classroom. Students can describe the object then try to draw it by looking at its lines, curves and shadows instead of the whole object.

Language Arts:

- Have students make communication books using their spelling words. Use index cards or have students make their own to draw and write the words. Students can add other words they need to communicate with classmates. Allow them time to communicate with partners.
- Visit your library or media center to rediscover *Frog and Toad* books by Arnold Lobel. Set up a buddy class so students can read them with younger students.
- Draw students’ attention to the way the words are printed when the receptionist at OT speaks. Discuss what the author is trying to convey with her choice of print. Discuss other ways a word could be printed to change its meaning or emphasis.

Science

- Have students go on a webquest on autism using *Kids Quest on Disabilities & Health* website: www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/kids/kautismpage.htm
- Use the Sunlink website www.sunlink.ucf.edu and *Kids Search Tools* (under Research on the left sidebar) to find more information on autism. Have students report on their findings.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students research the invention of Morse Code. Find the Morse Code chart using SUNLINK. Have students send messages to classmates using Morse Code.

The Sacrifice

by Kathleen Benner Duple

Annotation

The spread of fear and hatred is brought to life in this compelling historical fiction account during the Salem witch hunts in 1692. Abigail, 10, and her family are drawn into the hysteria when two girls from Salem are brought to their town, Andover, to identify witches. Abigail, her sister, and Aunt Elizabeth are accused of being witches and are sent to the rat-infested prison. Eventually, Abigail speaks out about the evil of these false accusations and helps bring the insanity to an end. Readers will identify with strong-willed Abigail and will quickly become engaged in this heartrending story. (Grades 6-9)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.kathleenduble.com/>

Realia

Item: Large oversized keys for a jail cell

Statement: These keys symbolize the prison cell that Abigail and her sister, Dorothy, shared. Discover why Abigail was falsely accused by reading *The Sacrifice*.

Food

Cider, Stew, Bread and sausage, Bean porridge, Bread pudding with molasses

Challenging Words

admonished	(p. 34 PB)	magistrates	(p. 99 PB)
bemoan	(p. 16 PB)	morrow	(p. 9 PB)
bodice	(p. 2 PB)	parishioners	(p. 22 PB)
chamber pot	(p. 12 PB)	pewter	(p. 7 & 33 PB)
congregants	(p. 84 PB)	repentant	(p. 3 PB)
damnation	(p. 29 PB)	reprimand	(p. 82 PB)
devilry	(p. 46 PB)	Sabbath	(p. 7 PB)
devout	(p. 23 PB)	stocks	(p. 3 PB)
foreboding	(p. 67 PB)	transgression	(p. 14 PB)
insolence	(p. 82 PB)	wager	(p. 5, 15, 45, 49 PB)

Figurative Language

Metaphors

- “Lies and more lies. And today Abigail Faulkner had had a hand in continuing the river of madness.” (p. 186 PB)

Similes

- “Paul ripped a hole in his best breeches last Sunday that seems as wide as the ocean itself.” (p. 73 PB)
- “As they approached the meetinghouse, their steps slowed, until at last it seemed to Abigail that they were like earthworms crawling toward their doom.” (p. 78 PB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “Abigail was given no tongue-lashing, Mama,’ Dorothy said.” (p. 46 PB)
- “Paul gave a short bark of a laugh.
‘Mind your tongue,’ Grandpappy said sharply, ‘or you’ll be seeing the strap of my belt. Off to bed with you.’” (p. 52 PB)
- “And in spite of her resentment of his fits, when Papa was fine, everything seemed right with the world.” (p. 75 PB)
- “But, if you do as I have told you, ‘tis only a matter of time, and we will all be free.” (p. 169 PB)
- “For a moment, Abigail pretended they were only out for a day in town, riding in the autumn sunshine with not a care in the world.” (p. 170 PB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Discuss with class the value of honesty and how lying impacted the lives of so many in this story.
- Have students decide what they would do in this difficult situation in the role of the mother, the father, and the daughters. Have students defend their point of view in a class discussion.

Fine Arts:

- Have students compare/contrast the lack of entertainment that Puritans had in 1692 to the variety of entertainment options offered to people today.

Language Arts:

- Explain to students that they will be exploring the different ways that Americans spoke in New England in 1692, researching the words and expressions in the book (e.g., Goody, Goodwife, naught, aye, pray tell me, seemly, stouthearted, nay, ‘twas, daresay, homespun, amongst).

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students locate the original New England colonies and specifically, Massachusetts, on a map. Discuss the changes to the area since that time.
- Take students to the library media center to research the Salem Witch trials and the convicted witches: Tituba of Salem Village, Sarah Good, and Sarah Osborne.
- Organize class into small groups and have them research the daily lives of people living in 1692 including the toys, food, religious rules for the Sabbath day, and homelife.
- Discuss with class the requirement for actual evidence in our modern judicial system compared to the accusatory nature of the trial depicted in this book.

Shakespeare's Secret

by Elise Broach

Annotation

Hero hates her Shakespearean-based name and endures teasing about it from her new classmates. Instead of hanging out with her unkind classmates, she befriends her elderly, eccentric next-door neighbor. Mrs. Roth shares the intriguing story of the missing "Murphy Diamond" that is supposed to be lost in the old house Hero's parents just bought. Mrs. Roth, Hero, and her new friend Danny set out to find the diamond. As their stealthy search continues, they discover that the diamond may have been owned by Edward de Vere, a nobleman believed by some to be the original author of Shakespeare's plays. Quotes from Shakespeare sprinkled throughout the text enrich the telling of this suspenseful, multilayered mystery. (Grades 6-9)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.elisebroach.com/>

Realia

Items: A copy of *Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare and a dime-store necklace preferably with a big "diamond" pendant

Statement: It's bad enough being shy and new at school. But with a funny first name and a cute older sister, Hero Netherfeld can't believe it when Danny Cordova, the most popular boy in the eighth grade, becomes her friend and ally in solving the mystery that surrounds her new house. As Hero, Danny, and neighbor Mrs. Roth look for clues in finding a priceless diamond belonging to Anne Boleyn, queen to England's King Henry VIII, they discover connections that may shed light on a historical mystery: Who really wrote the works of William Shakespeare? And more than history is revealed as they search for the diamond. As the clues shed light on what may be Shakespeare's secret, Hero and Danny discover family secrets closer to home.

Food

Cinnamon toast, Tea, Blueberry muffins, Cranberry muffins

Challenging Words

annulled	(p. 90 HB)	percolated	(p. 52 HB)
archivist	(p. 9 HB)	portraiture	(p. 190 HB)
belligerently	(p. 80 HB)	protocol	(p. 166 HB)
besmirched	(p. 154 HB)	prudence	(p. 57 HB)
blaze	(p. 13 HB)	pruning	(p. 11 HB)
chagrin	(p. 22 HB)	quandary	(p. 78 HB)
courtier	(p. 43 HB)	reclusive	(p. 33 HB)
digressed	(p. 43 HB)	regalia	(p. 170 HB)
docent	(p. 91 HB)	resurgence	(p. 146 HB)
etched	(p. 187 HB)	reverie	(p. 37 HB)
forego	(p. 59 HB)	senile	(p. 31 HB)
fretful	(p. 27 HB)	skeptically	(p. 41 HB)
futilely	(p. 54 HB)	slander	(p. 176 HB)
heirloom	(p. 33 HB)	staccato	(p. 23 HB)
illustrious	(p. 75 HB)	succumbing	(p. 80 HB)
impropriety	(p. 174 HB)	theorists	(p. 154 HB)
murmur	(p. 23 HB)	trill	(p. 13 HB)
obliviously	(p. 49 HB)	tweedy	(p. 10 HB)
octaves	(p. 8 HB)	ubiquitous	(p. 203 HB)
parched	(p. 55 HB)	unobtrusively	(p. 53 HB)

Figurative Language

Metaphor

- “She felt a wide pit open in her stomach, and all her nervous happiness vanished inside.” (p. 208 HB)

Similes

- “The words seemed to spill into the air and stay there, frozen, like the speech bubble in a cartoon.” (p. 24 HB)
- “It was exactly the kind of mindless label that stuck to a person like glue.” (p. 25 HB)
- “Hero waited, but the silence gathered in the kitchen, as heavy as the downpour outside the window.” (p. 74 HB)

Idioms and Expressions

- “You know, Hero, when you meet your classmates tomorrow, if you need something to break the ice, you might tell them that you are living in the Murphy diamond house.” (p. 19 HB)
- “The air was so soupy and hot that her thighs stuck to the vinyl seat.” (p. 21 HB)
- “But she felt completely empty, as if every ounce of thoughtfulness and courtesy had been sucked right out of her.” (p. 26 HB)
- “Well, I suppose we’ll have to throw in the towel.” (p. 30 HB)
- “The delicate pages crinkled under her fingers, and unfamiliar words jumped out at her.” (p. 83 HB)
- “She got her wish – his marriage to Catherine of Aragon was annulled – but she ruled only a few years before Henry’s eye wandered again.” (p. 90 HB)
- “He went for it hook, line and sinker.” (p. 147 HB)
- “Well. I suppose the cat’s out of the bag on that one.” (p. 182 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Character Education:

- Lead the students in a discussion of “friendship.” Have them find and analyze instances throughout the story of different kinds of friendships (e.g., Hero and Danny; Hero and the little boy, Aaron; Beatrice and the friends in her old school, plus her new friend Kelly; the intergenerational friendship between Hero and Mrs. Roth; the unusual friendship between Mrs. Roth with her ex-husband and his new wife; and at the end, the friendship that can be foreseen between the red-haired girl at school and Hero).
- Discuss with class how Beatrice and Hero find different ways of adjusting to their new surroundings. Have students discuss Beatrice’s ideas of making friends to “find a way in” (p. 157), applying it to their own circumstances.
- Have students find some of the ethical points brought up in the story: Danny’s suspension for having defended another student; he and Hero rifling through his dad’s cabinets; Danny entering the school bathroom to spray-paint over what some boys had written about Hero. Then continue the issue of ethics in the historical sense (e.g., Henry VIII’s false accusations against Anne Boleyn).

Fine Arts:

- Have students find and examine different portraits of Queen Elizabeth I. Discuss the styles of the paintings, specifically how paintings of monarchs always showed them in their finery. Finally, have them try to analyze the jewelry worn by Queen Elizabeth to see if they can find a necklace similar to the one described in the book.

Language Arts:

- Use the questions found on the following website to begin a book discussion group:
http://www.elisebroach.com/novels_ss_guide.htm

- Have students compare and contrast the ethical difference between plagiarism of another's work, and the idea that a person's position in his society at the time could have led someone like de Vere to publish his own work under someone else's name.
- Using the author's notes in the book as well as the information given by Hero's father, have students map the arguments for and against the theory of de Vere's having been the true author of the works of Shakespeare. Organize the class into pro/con groups for further research and then debate opposing views in class.
- Have students watch the 1993 version (available on DVD) (CAUTION: It is PG-13, preview and perhaps show segments only) of *Much Ado About Nothing* directed and produced by Kenneth Branagh. Invite them to make comparisons of the characters of Beatrice and Hero found in the play with those characters in the book.
- Assist students in identifying the elements of setting, plot, theme, and character development in the book. Have them write about how the search for the diamond affects and changes the characters of Hero and Danny.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students collect biographical information on Edward de Vere, Queen Elizabeth I, Anne Boleyn, King Henry VIII, or William Shakespeare, using a systematic process such as FINDS. Students can present their findings in a timeline, using software such as *Timeline Maker*, *Inspiration*, or *PowerPoint*. Presentations should include graphics and a bibliography of all resources used.
- Have students visit websites describing the Tower of London, where Elizabeth I may have used the diamond to write on the window. On a map of London, pinpoint the exact location of the tower. Some possible sites to review:

<http://www.toweroflondontour.com/>

<http://www.hrp.org.uk/toweroflondon/>

http://www.camelotintl.com/tower_site/index.html

<http://www.twingroves.district96.k12.il.us/RenAissance/TowerofLondon/TowerLondon.html>

(For a Language Arts tie-in, students may then write original essays about how they think it must have felt to have been a prisoner there, especially one unjustly accused of a crime and awaiting execution. As an extension activity, have students read *The Ravenmaster's Secret* by Elvira Woodruff.)

- Have students research court life during Elizabethan England. What was daily life like? Include foods, palace jobs and hierarchy, clothing, etc. Allow them to do a diorama or drawing depicting some aspect of their research and including a bibliography.
- Print out a timeline of the years between 1491 and 1616, from the birth of Henry VIII to the death of William Shakespeare, and have students fill it in with events that were happening simultaneously in the Americas (discovery by Columbus, conquest of the Aztecs & Incas, Spanish colonization of North America, etc.).

Whisper in the Dark

by Joseph Bruchac

Annotation

Maddie, 13, lives with her aunt in Providence, Rhode Island, after her parents' deaths. She learns she is a descendent of the Narragansetts, but she does not believe her Grandmother's retelling of the old stories, including the one about the Whisperer in the Dark. This Narragansett vampirelike creature has long, razor-sharp claws that he uses on his victims after they are paralyzed by fear. Suspense and terror build as Maddie receives strange hang-up calls and her dog shows up with deep cuts. Readers will race through the pages of this compelling supernatural/horror tale. (Grades 5-8)

Author on the Internet

<http://www.josephbruchac.com/>

Realia

Item: A telephone (Cell phones included)

Statement: We are so accustomed to using telephones; they are a constant and relied upon feature of our modern life. But what if this modern device brought communication with an ancient and terrifying evil? In *Whisper in the Dark*, read how a telephone call starts Maddy on a collision course with one of her ancestor's most feared legends.

Food

Ice cream sundaes, Hot dogs

Challenging Words

abolitionist	(p. 59 HB)	melancholy	(p. 53 HB)
amphitheatre	(p. 96 HB)	miscreant	(p. 109 HB)
catastrophe	(p. 134 HB)	monologue	(p. 50 HB)
composure	(p. xii HB)	morbid	(p. 16 HB)
forthcoming	(p. 103 HB)	motif	(p. 141 HB)
guerilla	(p. 11 HB)	mutilations	(p. 132 HB)
homicidal	(p. 138 HB)	rant	(p. 111 HB)
hysterical	(p. 52 HB)	rendevous	(p. 130 HB)
intuition	(p. 3 HB)	reverie	(p. 64 HB)
mansard roofs	(p. 52 HB)	suffocation	(p. 142 HB)

Figurative Language

Similes

- "I was in control. Maddy, the mistress of all she surveys. But for the last twenty-four hours, I'd been crumbling like an old wall whose mortar has been worn out." (p. 91 HB)
- "Then Cautantowwit shaped a man and a woman from the ash tree, and when those first people stepped forth they were as connected to the earth and as graceful and giving as the beautiful trees." (p. 92 HB)
- "Mr. Patel pulled the door open and shone the flashlight inside. Nothing. It was empty as the Count of Monte Cristo's cell after he tunneled his way out." (p. 146 HB)

- “I thought I had been tense before, but now my whole body was like a violin string overtightened to the point where it is about to snap.” (p. 149 HB)

Curriculum Connections

Fine Arts:

- Have students create alternate illustrations using Maddy’s descriptions of the Whisperer legend.

Language Arts:

- Have students create a RAFT based on the book. RAFT stands for R-role; A-audience; F-format; T-topic. For example: Role: Maddy; Audience: Grama Delia; Format: letter; Topic: What has been happening since Maddy received the first telephone call.
- Remind students that Maddy learned a lot about her ancestral legends from her Grama Delia. All of the legends, even the scary ones, have a moral or lesson to teach. Have students read other Narragansett and Native American legends and folk tales on the following Internet site:

<http://www.native-languages.org/narragansett-legends.htm>

After reading the examples, have students write a short legend based on their own culture, town, or school.

Social Studies/Geography:

- Take class to the library media center and have them research the history and culture of the Narragansett people, using the official Internet site that contains historical information as well as the current status of the tribe: www.narragansett-tribe.org.