

# *The 100-year-old Secret*

By Tracy Barrett

## **Annotation**

Imagine finding out that you're related to Sherlock Holmes! Xena and Xander, a brother and sister who have just moved to England from Florida, are playing in front of their hotel when they are handed a note written in disappearing ink. Following the clues written in the note, they come into possession of Sherlock Holmes' "Unsolved Cases" notebook. With the help of Watson's great-great-great-grandson Andrew, they set out to solve the cases their famous ancestor couldn't.

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://www.tracybarrett.com>

## **Realia**

Item: Purple hat, framed artwork with metal wire on back and gilding, paint brushes, soccer ball, stud finder.

## **Food**

Crumpets, ploughman's lunch, scones, bangers and mash, fish and chips.

## **Challenging Words**

appealing	(p. 1 HB)	unresolved	(p. 33 HB)
calloused	(p. 2 HB)	intriguing	(p. 39 HB)
martial	(p. 3 HB)	agoraphobia	(p. 44 HB)
tousled	(p. 4 HB)	inquiringly	(p. 53 HB)
consultations	(p. 4 HB)	blitz	(p. 76 HB)
smugness	(p. 4 HB)	scrimmage	(p. 83 HB)
preoccupied	(p. 6 HB)	crest	(p. 87 HB)
illustrious	(p. 9 HB)	eliminated	(p. 103 HB)
ploughman	(p. 9 HB)	pax	(p. 154 HB)
descended	(p. 19 HB)	flourish	(p. 154 HB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Idioms**

- "Way to go, cowboy,' Xena said." (p. 23 PB)
- "And you passed with flying colors." (p. 28 PB)
- "Xander gave Xena a huge jack-o'-lantern smile" (p. 73 PB)
- "Sophie died as a baby, poor lamb." (p. 77 PB)
- "Hey, it was worth a shot,' he said." (p. 136 PB)

## Curriculum Connections

Sherlockian.net for all things Sherlock Holmes  
<http://www.sherlockian.net/>

Sir Arthur Canon Doyle Biography  
<http://www.sherlockholmesonline.org/biography/index.htm>

Sherlock Holmes Society of London  
[http://www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/world/conan\\_doyle.php](http://www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/world/conan_doyle.php)

### Character Education

- The Holmes children often skirt around the truth, even though they try not to lie outright. Is this acceptable?
- The Holmes children get caught trespassing. How do you think they might have managed to get where they needed to be without trespassing?

### Fine Arts

Victoria and Albert Museum <http://www.vam.ac.uk/>

Related benchmarks:

VA.3.S.3.4:

- Discuss how the artist making reproductions worked within copyright guidelines.

VA.4.H.2.3:

- Discuss why the community felt it was important that “Girl in a Purple Hat” be found and reunited with the rest of Batheson’s works.

VA.5.H.1.1:

- Discuss Batheson’s inspirations, and his use of models in his work.

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks:

LA.3.2.1.2:

- Discuss how story elements were used to solve the mystery.

LA.4.4.2.2:

- Examine how Sherlock Holmes did this in his unsolved cases notebook.

LA.5.1.6.10:

- Compare British words to American English, i.e., lift for elevator, Tube for subway.

### Social Studies/Geography

Related benchmarks: SS.3.G.1.1

- Identify the destinations of the Holmes family in their cultural day trips.

# *The Magic Half*

by Annie Barrows

## **Annotation**

Have you ever wished you could travel in time? Soon after moving into their new house, Miri is sent to her room for hitting her annoying brother. Spotting a piece of glass taped to her bedroom wall, she realizes it is a single glasses lens. Looking through it, Miri finds herself back in her room in 1935 where she meets a girl called Molly who believes that Miri has come to rescue her from her abusive family.

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://www.anniebarrows.com>

## **Realia**

Item: Eyeglass lens, shovel, heavy (cast iron) frying pan, wallpaper with pink roses

## **Food**

Cereal, fried chicken

## **Challenging Words**

burrowing	(p. 2 PB)	descended	(p. 57 PB)
wafted	(p. 2 PB)	clattered	(p. 97 PB)
mayhem	(p. 3 PB)	abruptly	(p. 103 PB)
vigorously	(p. 8 PB)	ballistic	(p. 104 PB)
grandeur	(p. 12 PB)	squabbled	(p. 113 PB)
gossamer	(p. 13 PB)	tortoiseshell	(p. 114 PB)
blowzy	(p. 15 PB)	hoisted	(p. 117 PB)
sweltering	(p. 25 PB)	contraption	(p. 120 PB)
solemn	(p. 39 PB)	sweltering	(p. 131 PB)
furtive	(p. 44 PB)	catatonic	(p. 137 PB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Similes**

- "She was hiding in the barn—and now it all came pouring and tumbling back, like water out of a faucet." p. 74
- "If you leave this land to Molly, you know that Pat Gardner will swoop down on her like a duck on a junebug the moment he gets wind that you're gone." p. 158

### **Idioms and Expressions**

- "Her brothers were finally babysitting their little sisters, and she was glad to see that they were being driven out of their minds." p. 11-12.
- "Old biddy's lost her marbles." P. 160
- "He's been meaner than a rattlesnake ever since he was born." p. 187

## Curriculum Connections

Official teacher's guide <http://www.anniebarrows.com/magichalf/educators/> Produced by a professional education consultant, the author provides a nice list of educational activities to use with the book.

### Character Education

- Controlling your temper is an important life skill, her parents tell Miri after she smacked her brother with a shovel. p. 84.

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks:

LA.3.1.6.9:

- Identify and discuss words that Miri uses that have a different meaning in Molly's time, like cool.

LA.4.1.7.4:

- Discuss how Miri and Molly determine what exactly has to be done, and in the correct order, to ensure that Horst can't interfere with their time travels.

LA.5.2.1.8:

- Compare the language and unique phrases Molly and Horst use in their 1930s setting and their choice of idioms.

### Mathematics

- [http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-54463\\_19268\\_20778-52530--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-54463_19268_20778-52530--,00.html)  
Compare prices during the Great Depression with prices today.
- Read what Annie Barrows has to say about twins and statistics:  
<http://www.anniebarrows.com/magichalf/stuff/>

### Science

Related benchmarks: SC.4.P.9.1

- Determine what metals are typically used in jewelry making, and determine what changes might have occurred in the jewelry in Horst's box over 75 years.

### Social Studies/Geography

Related benchmarks:

SS.3.E.1.2

- <http://moneyfactory.gov/damagedcurrencyclaim.html> If enough of the original money still exists and is identifiable, the boys can send it off and get replacement bills for it.
- <http://www.42explore2.com/depresn.htm> A great starting point for information about the Great Depression for children.

SS.4.A.7.2:

- Discuss the challenges that Floridians faced during the Great Depression, which of those challenges also applied to Molly?

SS.5.E.1.3:

- Choose five items that exist now that would not have existed in Molly's time (television, radio, iPod, etc) and write a description of each in simple terms that would explain to Molly how they operate and how they are used.

# ***NERDS: National Espionage, Rescue, and Defense Society***

by Michael Buckley

## **Annotation**

Jackson Jones is a very popular 5<sup>th</sup> grader, until he gets braces with headgear. Overnight is labeled a nerd and shunned by his previous friends. Trying to solve the puzzle of a group of kids he labels the “nerd herd”, Jackson discovers that they are really secret agents whose weaknesses have become strengths with the help of technology “upgrades”. Can Jackson and the “nerd herd” manage to save the world and make it through 5<sup>th</sup> grade?

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://www.michaelbuckleyonline.com/s/Howdy.html>

## **Realia**

Item: map of the continents, book on Pangea, retainer or jar of paste

Statement: Were the continents ever joined together in one solid piece. What if the continents were fused back into one piece? What superpower could you get from a common household product? Read NERDS to discover how “normal” school kids use their superpowers to save the world from an evil plot to re-unify the continents into one landmass.

## **Food**

Juice boxes, sugary treats like candy, donuts,

## **Challenging Words**

depose	(p. xv PB)	mercenaries	(p. 164 PB)
misshapen	(p. 1 PB)	schematics	(p. 206 PB)
reminiscing	(p. 10 PB)	bludgeon	(p. 220 PB)
ostracized	(p. 17 PB)	sai	(p. 224 PB)
aerodynamic	(p. 20 PB)	freelancing	(p. 247 PB)
sarcophagus	(p. 26 PB)	noxious	(p. 258 PB)
lair	(p. 34 PB)	agility	(p. 264 PB)
diabolical	(p. 35 PB)	cataclysm	(p. 295 PB)
clandestine	(p. 67 PB)		
incorrigible	(p. 138 PB)		

## **Figurative Language**

### **Metaphors**

- “Julio was a walking ball of energy spiked by the dozens of cookies, candy bars, and sugary sodas he consumed each day.”
- “Jackson was swimming through a secret and soon he would be able to see it through all the way to the bottom.”
- “You’re what my father would call a showboat.”
- “What he couldn’t have imagined was the braces in his mouth springing to life.”

- “They were dim, with ominous shadows that slithered about in the moonlight.”
- “Uh, We’re kind of stuck!” Jackson cried from inside the parachute burrito.”

### **Similes**

- “His signal sent the nerds scattering like frightened cattle.”
- “The nerds flopped around on the ground like fish, trying unsuccessfully to stuff their underwear back into their pants.”
- “Worse, a metal halo that Gupta called “headgear” was attached to Jackson’s bicuspid, and protruded out of his mouth and encircled his head like Saturn’s rings.”
- “But then, like a ray of sunshine from the heavens above, the “nerd herd” stumbled into his life”.
- “His braces locked together like a vice, requiring a visit from the fire department with their “jaws of life”.”
- “The other kids fled the school like pigs at a barbeque, but the herd was not among them.”

### **Alliteration**

The Hyena learned judo in Juneau, aikido in Akron, jujitsu in Jamestown, tae kwon do in Tallahassee, sambo in San Diego, kendo in Kansas City, Jogo do Pau in Jersey City, and kung fu in Kissimmee.

### **Idioms and Expressions**

- “He hardly had time to thank his lucky stars before the floor tilted upward, revealing another hole.”
- “She turned one of her inhalers on him and a blast of energy hit him in the belly, knocking the wind out of him.”

## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Character Education**

Related benchmarks: LA.3.4.1.1

- Choose a scene that involves an incident of bullying and rewrite the victim’s response to lessen the impact of the bully (for example, use ignoring or positive self-talk in order to put the bully in his place)

### **Fine Arts**

Related benchmarks: VA.4.C.2.3

- Choose a superpower and draw a new character to join the nerd herd. Make sure your drawing illustrates the superpower.

### **Language Arts**

Related benchmarks: LA.5.2.2.1

- Discuss the authors periodic use of verifications and security checks directed to the reader throughout the book. Justify whether those tactics caused you to feel more or less interested in the story and plot.

### **Mathematics**

- Calculate the distance between your hometown and the places visited by the nerd herd.

### **Science**

Related benchmarks: SC.4.P.8.4.

- Research the concept of a tractor beam. Determine if they really exist in science.
- Determine which scientific tools function because of magnetization.

**Social Studies/Geography**

Related benchmarks: SS.3.G.1.3

- Locate information on Pangea and formulate an opinion on its existence.
- Create a 3-dimensional map of the world's continents.

# Extra Credit

by Andrew Clements

## Annotation

Abby Carson is about to fail 6<sup>th</sup> grade unless she can do well on an extra credit project which involves writing to a pen-pal in another country. From the list of countries the teacher provides, Abby chooses Afghanistan and starts a correspondence with a girl called Amira. However, the letters are really being written by Amira's brother who is the best writer in the village. When he lets Abby know the truth it causes serious problems in his community.

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.andrewclements.com>

## Realia

Item: *Frog and Toad are Friends* by Arnold Lobel

Statement: Have you ever had a pen pal? Imagine having a pen pal from a culture that seems very different from your own but turns out to be very similar. Find out what happens to Abby and Sadeed as they exchange letters in *Extra Credit*.

## Food

Grilled cheese, Canned pears, Rice, Lamb stew, Flatbread

## Challenging Words

bazaar	(p. 7 HB)	dictate	(p. 55 HB)
crevice	(p. 9 HB)	Co-op	(p. 57 HB)
summit	(p. 13 HB)	translating	(p. 57 HB)
periodic table	(p. 27 HB)	parcels	(p. 58 HB)
bailouts	(p. 35 HB)	stout	(p. 60 HB)
charpoy	(p. 42 HB)	vendors	(p. 61 HB)
taunted	(p. 50 HB)	skewer	(p. 61 HB)
chitchat	(p. 50 HB)	haggling	(p. 62 HB)
coax	(p. 53 HB)	warren	(p. 67 HB)
kneading	(p. 53 HB)	trousers	(p. 91 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Similes

- “And now he fastened onto this one like a bulldog.” (p. 24 HB)
- “And about the girl hanging on the wall like a spider.” (p. 62 HB)
- “The whole letter seemed sort of flat and lifeless – like soda without fizz.” (p. 111 HB)
- “He felt sure his face looked red as pomegranate juice.” (p. 130 HB)
- “I should have kicked and fought like a leopard.” (p. 137 HB)

### Idioms and Expressions

- “It would be easier teaching a dog to drive a motorbike.” (p. 50 HB)
- “Your head is full of rocks – I give up!” (p. 53 HB)

- “The thought bounced around his mind for several minutes.” (p. 60 HB)
- “As Abby finished reading Sadeed’s letter, her heart was racing.” (p. 117 HB)
- ““And why dangle red meat in front of an angry bear?”” (p. 142 HB)

## **Curriculum Connections**

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>

### **Fine Arts**

Related benchmarks: VA.4.S.1.3

Have students create a drawing that includes elements from the story with the setting of Afghanistan. Use the CIA website listed above, encyclopedias and books from the school media center about Afghanistan for visuals.

### **Language Arts**

Related benchmarks: LA.3.3.1.2, LA.5.3.5.3

Set up pen pals for your students with another teacher that you know in a different geographic and cultural setting than your own.

### **Social Studies/Geography**

Related benchmarks: SS.3.G.1.4

Use Google Earth or your classroom’s pull down maps to show students the four types of maps identified in the benchmark: physical, political, elevation, and population.

Have students use an atlas to compare the settings in *Extra Credit* – Illinois (United States) and (Kabul) Afghanistan for each of the four purposes.

# Out of My Mind

by Sharon M. Draper

## Annotation

How would you feel if you were trapped inside your head, not able to communicate with anyone? Meet Melody, a very clever 5<sup>th</sup> grader who has cerebral palsy and cannot speak or control her movements. New technology finally enables her to “talk”, but will her family and school friends be able to look past her disability to see Melody for who she really is?

## Author on the Internet

<http://sharondraper.com>

## Realia

Item: Elvira CD by the Oak Ridge Boys next to a laptop computer

A talking computer named Elvira might set your heart on fire too. After 11 years of not being able to talk Melody Brooks' heart is set on fire for the computer that can keep her from going Out of her Mind.

## Food

Lemonade and lemons, a can of Mello Yello, butterscotch candy, goldfish crackers.

## Challenging Words

Iridescent	(p. 1 HB)	Defiance	(p. 153 HB)
Profoundly	(p. 22 HB)	Rally	(p. 155 HB)
Tersely	(p. 55 HB)	Indignation	(p. 159 HB)
Hurled	(p. 62 HB)	Tidbits	(p. 160 HB)
Inclusion	(p. 90 HB)	Lexicology	(p. 163 HB)
Dignity	(p. 103 HB)	Convulsion	(p. 166 HB)
Ecology	(p. 115 HB)	Fritz	(p. 231 HB)
Accumulate	(p. 127 HB)	Devastated	(p. 264 HB)
Sashaying	(p. 140 HB)	Trauma	(p. 280 HB)
Exasperation	(p. 151 HB)	Ballistic	(p. 292 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- Country {music} is lemons – not sour, but sugar sweet and tangy. (p. 6 HB)
- “If Mrs. V is, well, like a tree, then my mom is a twig next to her.” (p. 39 HB)
- “Mom has those daggers in her eyes- the sharp points she shoots at people who say dumb things about me – but she stays quiet.” (p. 120 HB)
- The morning started out like crystal, but the day has turned to broken glass. (p. 261 HB)

## Similes

- “Words have always swirled around me like snowflakes – each one delicate and different, each one melting untouched in my hands.” (p. 1 HB)
- “From the time I was really little – maybe just a few months old- words were like sweet, liquid gifts, and I drank them like lemonade.” (p. 2 HB)
- “My arms and legs get all tight and lash out like tree limbs in a storm.” (p. 15 HB)
- “When my seat belt comes undone- and it does every once in a while- I slide out of that wheelchair like a piece of wet spaghetti.” (p. 19 HB)
- “She looks like a doll that you see in a box on a shelf, except she’s prettier.” (p. 30 HB)
- “It leaned like a drunk who needed the wall to hold it up.” (31 HB)
- “If Mrs. V is, well, like a tree, then my mom is a twig next to her.” (p. 39 HB)
- “I was on my back, stuck like a turtle.” (p. 2 HB)
- “Penny zoomed around like a little windup toy.” (p. 77 HB)
- “I plow through the crowds in my electric chair like a power mower in thick grass.” (p. 102 HB)
- “I get so excited that my legs start kicking and my arms start flailing and I look like some kind of crazy human helicopter.” (p. 129 HB)
- “She screeches like a blue jay when she laughs.” (p. 177 HB)

## Idioms and Expressions

- “Nobody gets it. Nobody. Drives me crazy.” (p. 15 HB)
- “She was losing it.” (p. 24 HB)
- “Was she nuts? (p. 42 HB)
- “Kids crack up.” (p. 125 HB)
- “Girl, you really got it goin’ on! Music and everything!” (p. 140 HB)
- “Who put salt in your Kool-Aid, Miss Thing?’ Mrs. V asked.” (p. 156 HB)
- “Break a leg,’ Amanda tells her. “ (p. 203 HB)
- “Finally, Connor’s dad, the last to go up, looked at me, looked at the stairs, and the lightbulb came on.” (p. 230 HB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks: LA.5.3.1.2, LA.5.4.2.3

- Students will create their own talking boards. How does this limit your communication abilities?
- Sit in a wheelchair for a school day. Create a classroom journal that each student will write in after their day in the charity. Students will then write about the difficulties they encountered, feelings and frustrations.

### Language Arts or Social Studies

- Have a school wide Quiz Bowl Competition. Sample questions, rules and procedures are available online:
- <http://www.quizbowlquestions.com/>

## **Science**

Using a variety of resources, students will research and write a report on Cerebral Palsy. Students may visit and buddy with a special needs class at the school. Refer to the following websites for information about Cerebral Palsy.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001734/>

[http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/cerebral\\_palsy/cerebral\\_palsy.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/cerebral_palsy/cerebral_palsy.htm)

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/cerebral-palsy/DS00302>

## **Physical Education/Health**

- Conduct a wheelchair game day. Student must complete all of the tasks while sitting in the wheelchair. Refer to the following site for game ideas:

[http://www.ehow.com/list\\_5996699\\_games-kids-wheelchairs.html](http://www.ehow.com/list_5996699_games-kids-wheelchairs.html)

- Collect student volunteers for the Special Olympics.

<http://www.specialolympics.org/>

<http://www.specialolympicsflorida.org/component/eventlist/eventlist>

## **Music**

Related benchmarks: MU.5.O.3.1

Students will attempt to visual the colors of music. Melody has Synesthesia – the condition in which a person may be able to hear colors or visualize flavors when music is played. The music teacher could dim the lights and have all the students listen to a variety of musical pieces and have the students write down what color the music makes them think of in their heads.

Refer to the following websites for more information about Synesthesia:

<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/syne.html>

<http://web.mit.edu/synesthesia/www/>

<http://synesthete.org/>

# *Umbrella Summer*

By Lisa Graff

## **Annotation**

Ever since her brother's death Annie has been extra careful. After all, nobody knew that her brother was sick until it was too late. Being so careful has stopped Annie doing a lot of the things she used to enjoy, like racing her bike and eating hot dogs. What will it take for Annie to stop worrying and start to lead a normal life?

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://www.lisagraff.com>

## **Realia**

### **Item: Band-Aids**

Statement: In *Umbrella Summer*, Annie wears band-aids all over her to cover every little scratch.

Item: Umbrella

Statement: Mrs. Finch tells Annie that she needs to close her umbrella.

Item: Medical Book

Statement: Annie takes a medical book from Mrs. Harper so that she can learn about illnesses and diseases.

## **Food**

Hot dogs, chocolate chip cookies, and tea.

## **Challenging Words**

despondent	(p. 38 PB)	poltergeists	(p. 191 PB)
emaciate	(p. 36 PB)	pristine	(p. 209 PB)
fragile	(p. 88 PB)	savor	(p. 94 PB)
guffaw	(p. 94 PB)	stealth	(p. 20 PB)
lactose	(p. 33 PB)	steep	(p. 92 PB)
lethargic	(p. 46 PB)	stupefying	(p. 170 PB)
lurk	(p. 62 PB)	taxidermy	(p. 16 PB)
paranormal	(p. 191PB)	trek	(p. 49 PB)
peaked	(p. 41 PB)	waterborne	(p. 60 PB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Similes**

- “Round about eleven I started to notice the sun huge in the sky like a yellow beach ball, and I realized I wasn't wearing any sunscreen.” (p. 25 PB)

- “But she looked mostly like a regular old lady, plain as a box of tooth picks, except for her short white hair that came to pointed curls like the tops of the lemon meringue pie Rebecca’s mom sometimes made.” (p. 67 PB)
- “Which wasn’t too surprising, really, because Coconut Babies tasted like the inside of a shoe and no one ever wanted to eat them.” (p. 69 PB)
- “It was the only one left,” I said, my voice soft as snow.” (p. 75 PB)
- “And all of a sudden I thought of something so awful, it made my stomach churn inside me like clothes in a dryer.” (p. 79 PB)
- “It was Doug Zimmerman, teeth showing sharp like a tiger’s and his green bandanna covering his whole forehead and all of his hair.” (p.82 PB)
- “She screamed loud as a fire truck, but I didn’t care, I just soaked her toes to hair.” (p. 126 PB)
- “Probably she’d storm over to my house angry as a scorpion and tell me I was out of the troop for good, and make me hand over my outfit and my three measly badges too.” (p. 188 PB)

### Idioms

- “He should’ve gotten that stuff out three weeks ago, because it was already the first day of July and I was sweating worse than a pig in a roller derby.” ( p. 5 PB)
- “But I guess better late than never, that’s what my mom always said.” (p. 5 PB)
- “That would’ve driven me nuts, but Tommy didn’t seem to mind.” (p. 8 PB)
- “I liked bowling better because I always had to come, and when it came to video games I stunk worse than old asparagus.” (p. 8 PB)
- “She was boring as socks in a drawer, with short white hair that was cut close to her head in an old lady haircut, and maroon slacks with creases so straight you could’ve used them for rulers.” ( p. 59 PB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education

- Annie has a hard time dealing with her brother’s death. Have students discuss ways you can deal with the death of someone in your family (talking to a counselor, joining therapy groups, keeping a journal, etc.).
- Rebecca got upset with Annie because she could not stay at her hamster’s funeral. Discuss why each of the girls felt the way they did. Define empathy and discuss why it is important when dealing with others.

### Language Arts/Literature:

Related benchmarks:

LA.5.4.1.2

- Share with students examples of similes found in the book. (See examples above.) Ask students to create ten original similes and share with class.

LA.5.4.3.1

- In this book, Mrs. Finch tells Annie about a custom in Italy where a person who dies family and friends write a sort of story about him or her. Have students write a story about someone they knew that died telling nice things about them, how great they were, and how much they loved them.

LA.5.2.1.9

- Ask students why they feel reading Charlotte’s Web might help Annie deal with her brother’s death. What books might they pick that would help them in a time of stress?

**Social Studies/Geography:**

- Students will research tropical fish and draw a picture of one of their favorite fish
- Annie says her favorite subject is social studies because they studied the cuisines of the world and then had a party. Have students research different cuisines of the world and then make a dish from that country. (examples: Swedish meatballs, latke, and cannolis)

**Health**

- In the story, Annie is always afraid of being injured. Have students do research on first aid emphasizing how and when to use first aid.
- Students will identify those supplies that would be important to include in a first aid kit.

# The Secret of Zoom

by Lynne Jonell

## Annotation

Locked up in the house and forbidden to talk to strangers, especially the children from the nearby orphanage, Christina is bored. All she wants to do is explore outside her house and go to school with other children. One day, a boy from the orphanage named Taft manages to talk to her and helps her find a secret tunnel that lets her escape. With the help of Taft, Christina discovers what really is happening at the orphanage and how her family is involved in the sinister events on Starkian Mountain.

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.lynnejonell.com>

## Realia

Item: Toy airplane

Statement: Can Christina figure out how to fly an airplane by only singing and thinking about it? Read *The Secret of Zoom* to find out.

## Food

Blueberry pie, baked chicken, chocolate cake

## Challenging Words

Dawdled	(p. 23 HB)	Ominous	(p. 53 HB)
Ponderously	(p. 23 HB)	Detritus	(p. 78 HB)
Sniveling	(p. 32 HB)	Tussocks	(p. 84 HB)
Prudently	(p. 36 HB)	Sonorous	(p. 128 HB)
Deviation	(p. 42 HB)	Catapulted	(p. 143 HB)
Protracted	(p. 42 HB)	Guffawed	(p. 145 HB)
Balustrade	(p. 47 HB)	Raucous	(p. 147 HB)
Incredulous	(p. 52 HB)	Resonance	(p. 151 HB)
Acoustics	(p. 52 HB)	Catalyst	(p. 152 HB)
Quantum	(p. 53 HB)	Thwart	(p. 175 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- “She stood still, her heart beating in her fingertips.” (p. 15 HB)
- “He tapped it against a rod and it rang out, silvery and piercing; the exact note Danny had just sung.” (p. 95 HB)

### Similes

- “So now everybody sings like a hyena, unless they’re new and don’t know.” (p. 39 HB)
- “The little plane, silvery in the moonlight, waited like a promise.” (p. 145 HB)
- “The pine tops spread out below the cliff like a restless dark sea, and far beyond, down in the valley, she could see the winking lights of Dorf, like a bowl of fallen stars.” (p. 168 HB)

## Idioms and Expressions

- “Sorry, boss!’ Barney called cheerfully. ‘My bad!’” (p. 95 HB)
- “Well, it sure as night crawlers wasn’t me.” (p. 144 HB)
- “If you were flying the plane,’ she continued, warming to her idea, ‘he’d go with you in a heartbeat, no fuss at all.” (p. 200 HB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education

- Students will brainstorm and create a poster illustrating ways to stop bullying.

<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/index.html>

### Art

Related benchmarks: VA.3.F.1.1, VA.4.S.1.2, VA.5.F.1.1

- Students will design and create their own model airplane.

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_5036356\\_build-model-airplanes-kids.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_5036356_build-model-airplanes-kids.html)

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_6631115\\_build-small-model-airplane-children.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_6631115_build-small-model-airplane-children.html)

### Music

Related benchmarks: MU.5.S.1.2, MU.3.S.1.1, MU.4.S.1.2

- Students will create their own melodies using a variety of musical instruments.

### Science

Related benchmarks: SC.5.P.9.1, SC.4.P.11.1, SC.4.P.11.2, SC.3.P.11.1

- Students will investigate how heat changes matter. Students will use a thermometer and measure the different melting temperatures for different materials.

[http://www.lpi.usra.edu/education/explore/ice/activities/investigations/melting\\_point/](http://www.lpi.usra.edu/education/explore/ice/activities/investigations/melting_point/)

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/experiments/chocolate.html>

<http://www.scienceprojectideas.co.uk/melting-points-for-different-solids.html>

Related benchmarks: SC.4.E.6.1, SC.4.E.6.2

- Collect and identify a variety of rocks. Students will assign each rock its own index card or notebook page. Let the child draw the rock and describe it, making sure to record its size, shape, smoothness, grain-size, color, and general feel.

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/geology.html>

<http://www.kidsgeo.com/geology-for-kids/>

Related benchmarks: SS.4.C.2.1

- Take a field trip to the local recycling center/sanitation department.

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/recycling/pages/educate.htm>

### Social Studies

Related benchmarks: SS.5.A.1.2

- Students will research and construct a timeline of the history of flight.

<http://www.ueet.nasa.gov/StudentSite/historyofflight.html>

### Physical Education/Health

Related benchmarks: PE.3.R.1.4, PE.3.R.2.3, PE.4.L.1.2

- Play different versions of Tag. (Kick the Can, Freeze tag, Blob tag, etc.)

<http://www.fungameskidsplay.com/taggames.htm>

# *Dying To Meet You*

by Kate Klise

## **Annotation**

Famous children's author I.B. Grumpy is finding it hard to write the latest book in his "Ghost Tamer" series. Deciding he needs peace, quiet, and a change of scenery, he rents an old Victorian mansion. When he arrives, he finds the house occupied by a young boy who has been abandoned by his parents, a cat and the ghost of an unpublished author. Will Grumpy be able to come to terms with the house's residents and finish writing his book?

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://kateandsarahklise.com>

## **Realia**

Item: Pencil and Paper

Statement: What kinds of stories do you read in a newspaper? Think about the kind of story you might read in a newspaper called *The Ghastly Times*. Find out all about *The Ghastly Times* by reading *Dying to Meet You*.

Item: Pencil, crayons and drawing paper

Statement: All families are different and they don't always look the same.

Ignatious B. Grumpy doesn't know it but he is going to become part of a family, find out how when you read *Dying to Meet You*.

## **Food**

Chicken paprikash, apple tarts.

## **Challenging Words**

ruminations	(p.7 PB)	cupola	(p. 45 PB)
hallucinations	(p.7 PB)	delusional	(p. 58 PB)
mayhem	(p. 9 PB)	stultifying	(p.59 PB)
cemetery	(p. 14 PB)	abysmal	(p. 59 PB)
remit	(p. 15 PB)	feral	(p. 60 PB)
rustic	(p. 17 PB)	relentless	(p. 85 PB)
hapless hamlet	(p. 27 PB)	repentantly	(p. 108 PB)
obligated	(p. 34 PB)	beseechingly	(p. 109 PB)
grievous	(p. 37 PB)	conciliatorily	(p. 112 PB)
communiqués	(p. 44 PB)	tomes	(p. 119 PB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Metaphors**

- "A tired looking sofa rested on one side of the room under an oil painting of a grim-faced woman." (p. 50 PB)

### **Similes**

- “You can’t imagine how pesky publishers can be when an author is late on a book deadline. They’re as bad as annoying children.” (p. 9 PB)
- “He crossed the front hall and entered a room that held only tattered furniture and an upright piano with yellowing keys that looked like teeth from the carcass of an ancient beast.” (p. 51 PB)
- “And then the food disappeared into thin air, as if an invisible mouth were eating.” (p. 80 PB)
- “The last thing I want is for young readers across America to find out their favorite author is nuttier than peanut brittle.” (p. 100 PB)

### **Idioms and Expressions**

- “Thank you for running interference again with Turner.” (p. 49 PB)
- “Now there’s a face that could wake the dead,’ Brown said.” (p. 50 PB)
- “Cat got your tongue?” (p. 83 PB)
- “It’s music to my ears, boys. Music to my ears...” (p. 140 PB)

## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Character Education**

Discuss with students the theme of friendship and what makes a friend. Talk about Dying to Meet You and whether or not the characters in the story are friends. What are some of the characteristics of friendship?? Have students give examples from the book.

### **Language Arts**

Related benchmarks:

LA.3.2.1.7

- Read the names of the characters from the book. Discuss what each one means and how it might fit the characters personality. Have students make up a name to fit their personality.

LA.3.4.2.4

- Discuss letter writing, parts of a letter and different types of letters. Talk about how letter writing played a part in *Dying to Meet You*. Have students choose a type of letter and write to someone.

LA.3.2.1.2

- Pay attention to the main character, Ignatius B. Grumpy. Notice how he changes in the story. Analyze his character, (i.e.; what does he think of children, does his name suit him, does he believe in ghosts) and give examples.

### **Social Studies/Geography**

What is a family?? Describe and talk about different kinds of families. What does it take to form/make a family (blood?, love?)? Were the main characters in the story a family? Seymour loved to draw...have students draw a picture of their family.

# *Flight of the Phoenix*

by R.L. LaFevers

## **Annotation**

Nathaniel is a quiet boy who likes nothing better than to draw. When his parents are declared lost at sea, he finds himself sent to live with a cousin he never knew he had. It turns out that his Aunt Phil (short for Philomena) is a beastologist (someone who studies supposed mythological creatures) and so were Nathaniel's parents. Soon Nathaniel finds himself on a wild adventure. When Aunt Phil is kidnapped, it's up to Nathaniel to help the world's only phoenix egg hatch.

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://www.rllafevers.com/books.html>

## **Realia**

Item: ancient map, book with a cover that reads "The Book of Beasts", compass.

Statement: Mysterious maps, books and creatures abound in the first book of the Beastologist series. Wonderful adventures await young Nate Fludd and his globetrotting Aunt Phil, as they traverse the world and save mythical creatures from extinction. Read *Flight of the Phoenix* and begin the series with a bang!

## **Food**

Bacon and eggs, dates.

## **Challenging Words**

governess	(p. 5 PB)	cartographer	(p. 63 PB)
placid	(p. 9 PB)	oasis	(p. 66 PB)
crockery	(p. 15 PB)	Bedouin	(p. 57 PB)
mynas	(p. 16 PB)	trespassing	(p.79 PB)
congeals	(p. 17 PB)	hospitality	(p. 80 PB)
exasperation	(p. 27 PB)	sentry	(p. 84 PB)
rucksack	(p. 28 PB)	detected	(p.91 PB)
fuselage	(p. 41 PB)	rifling	(p. 98 PB)
monotony	(p. ? PB)	lustrous	(p. 126PB)
nomads	(p. 57 PB)	wyvern	(p. 132 PB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Metaphors**

- She was tall with lots of elbows and knees and angles poking about, which reminded him of a giraffe.
- He could make out a ribbon of road that was a little darker than the sand.
- The whole plane shuddered, and a fountain of sand flew up behind them.
- The notes were pure and lovely, but haunting as well, as if sadness might be just around the corner.

### **Similes**

- The house was slightly rundown, with rough stone walls and a thatched roof that jutted out at a steep angle, like a bristly mustache.
- Aunt Phil handed Nate a piece of dried goat meat that tasted like salty leather.’
- It was sticky and sweet, almost like a piece of toffee.
- The phoenix swooped into the oasis area, its tail feathers streaming behind like an orange comet.

### **Idioms and Expressions**

- “They’re old hands at this.”
- “Every family has its black sheep, and he’s ours.”
- “Nate found himself airborne, tumbling end over teakettle to land flat on his back in the sand.”

## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Fine Arts**

Related benchmark: VA.3.C.1.1

- Nate carries a sketchbook and frequently draws his surroundings to calm himself down. Carry a sketchbook for a week and draw things in your environment.

Related benchmark: VA.4.C.2.3

- Create a collage for a fantasy expedition.

Related benchmark: VA.5.C.2.2

- Analyze the mood of the artwork you have created in a sketchbook that you have carried for a week. Which pieces evoke a feeling of peace or happiness, which evoke anger or sadness?

### **Language Arts**

Related benchmark: LA.3.6.2

- Several mythical creatures are mentioned throughout *The Flight of the Phoenix*, choose one to research and present information to the group.

Related benchmark: LA.4.6.3

- Create a travel brochure for an expedition to the deserts in the Middle East

Related benchmark: LA.5.4.2

- Create a journal to correspond to Nate’s sketchbook. Include an itinerary of his travels beginning with Ms. Lumpton.

### **Science**

Related benchmark: SC.4.N.1

- Nate and his Aunt attempt to save mythical animals from extinction. Choose an endangered animal and research the plan to keep the species from extinction.

### **Social Studies/Geography**

Related benchmark: SS.3.G.1

- Using an online database, such as lands and people compare life in Florida to life in a Middle Eastern desert area.

Related benchmark: SS.4.G.1.4

- Using places mentioned in the book, locate them on a globe or map and answer comprehension questions regarding cardinal directions, latitude, longitude, etc.

# *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*

by Grace Lin

## **Annotation**

Minli's family is very poor, but her father is a wonderful storyteller and every night delights Minli with Chinese folktales. Minli's mother gets angry at her for spending one of her family's only two coins on a goldfish that a seller says will bring the family luck. So, Minli decides to set out to find the Old Man of the Moon and ask him to change her family's fortune.

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://www.gracelin.com>

## **Realia**

Item: Goldfish, picture of a dragon, red string

Statement: Can Minli really change her family's fortune? Do goldfish really talk? Why can't dragon fly? Who is the Old Man of the Moon? To find out the answers to those and many other questions read *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*.

## **Food**

White rice, peaches, cooked bamboo, pot of tea.

## **Challenging Words**

dishonor	(p. 7 PB)
impractical	(p. 9 PB)
enviously	(p. 15 PB)
magistrate	(p. 19 PB)
fortune	(p. 24 PB)
obedient	(p. 31 PB)
foolish	(p. 45 PB)
greedy	(p. 48 PB)
emissary	(p. 82 PB)
guardian	(p. 89 PB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Metaphors**

- "Perhaps the magistrate will see how his wealth weighs him down." (p. 52 PB)
- "As he stood like a green powdered statue, he felt as if the sky were laughing at him." (p.86 PB)
- "We all know that somewhere in one of the rivers of the land, there is a great and powerful waterfall; it is so high and so vast that it is as if water were gushing from a cut in the heavens." (p. 92 PB)

## **Similes**

- “As sight came into both my eyes, a warm feeling filled me – like drinking hot tea on a cold day.”

## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Character Education**

- Discuss what it means to be obedient. (p. 31 PB)
- Discuss what it means to be greedy. The monkey’s and the magistrate are both greedy. In what ways is their greediness the same? How is it different?

### **Fine Arts**

Related benchmark: VA.4.H.2.1

- Study some historical Chinese artwork from different kingdoms.

### **Language Arts**

Related benchmarks: LA.4.4.1.1

- Write your own history story about how something was made or formed.

### **Social Studies/Geography**

Related benchmarks: SS.5.G.1.4

- Draw a map that shows how Minli got to Never Ending Mountain from her house.

# *Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School and Other Scary Things*

by Lenore Look

## **Annotation**

Alvin is afraid of just about everything, except things that explode! In order to help him cope with life he arms himself with a PDK (Personal Disaster Kit). This comes in especially useful as his anxieties mean that while at school and at his piano lessons Alvin is unable to talk – he tries but just can't get words out. How will Alvin manage to make friends and get through second grade?

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://authors.simonandschuster.com/Lenore-Look/1289860>

## **Realia**

Item: cape, mask, colander

Statement: How can Superhero Firecracker Man conquer a bully, contagious diseases and a teacher who insists he talk in school? Find out what his alter ego Alvin does in *Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School and Other Scary Things*

## **Food**

Milk and brownies, hot fudge sundae.

## **Challenging Words**

Gungung	(p. 2 HB)	Spectator	(p. 94 HB)
Tourniquet	(p. 9 HB)	Psychotherapist	(p. 112 HB)
Mayhem	(p. 20 HB)	Droning	(p. 118 HB)
Severely	(p. 29 HB)	Reeky	(p. 118 HB)
Uncommunicative	(p. 41 HB)	Curr(ish)	(p. 118 HB)
Tonsillitis	(p. 55 HB)	Cyclops	(p. 132 HB)
Phobia	(p. 56 HB)	Impatiently	(p. 137 HB)
Contagious	(p. 57 HB)	Splintering	(p. 148 HB)
Epidemic	(p. 65 HB)	Menacingly	(p. 151 HB)
Commandeered	(p. 71 HB)	Ferocious	(p. 161 HB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Metaphors**

- “It is as though Jules’s house is a big magnet and I am an iron filing, and every time I so much as step out of my house, I am yanked toward it, just like that.”
- “it had turned Jules’s head into a potato covered with red eyes. Some eyes were crying, others were crusty like sugar on a cookie.”
- “Then we went right into the mouth of the house that sags sadly to the right. Inside, it was a dark and stormy night.”

- “The tree reached its crooked fingers toward me. The garden hose slithered and hissed.”

### **Similes**

- “I know them from reading with my dad every night while my mom runs on the treadmill like a hamster on a wheel.”
- “I am as silent as a side of beef.”
- “‘You’re like a piece of frozen sausage fallen off the truck,’ my brother, Calvin, likes to say.”
- “So now when he plays, he sounds like Brahms even though his fingers are as thick as bratwurst.”
- “The leaves looked like fireworks exploding in the golden afternoon light.”
- “And the shadows stretch like inky tentacles across the road. And her house looks like a face that sags sadly to the right.”
- “I wanted to cry like the end of a rain pipe on a rainy day>”

### **Idioms and Expressions**

- “Summer wasn’t quite over, but fall was already showing off with pretty leaves.
- “Out of sight, out of mind.”
- “Oooh. It really fried my rice.”
- “A plate of brownies sat obediently on the coffee table, a glass of milk beside it.”
- “I was as mad as a salmon swimming upstream.”

## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Character Education**

- Think about the qualities of a good friend, compare and contrast your list with the type of friend Flea and Pinky were to Alvin.

### **Fine Arts**

Related Benchmarks:

VA.3.O.2.1

- Draw yourself as a superhero.

MU.3.C.3.1

- Brainstorm the songs which help you get in a better mood when you are angry? Compare them to see if they have similar tempos or are the same genre of music.

VA.3.C.1.1

- Use a box to create your own P.D.K.-Personal Disaster Kit. Share with your class why you chose the items you did.

### **Foreign Languages**

- List elements of Alvin’s Chinese culture found in the book. Compare them with items from your own culture.

### **Language Arts**

Related benchmarks:

LA.3.4.1.1

- Alvin created his superhero Firecracker Man. If you were a superhero, what would your name be? Describe the powers and any weaknesses you would have.

LA.3.2.1.3, LA.3.2.1.5

- Find poems by authors William Shakespeare and Henry David Thoreau. Compare how their language differs from how poets write today?

LA.3.6.2.1

- Use the internet to find the real homes of the authors who lived near Concord, Massachusetts. Discover if they are still alive and who lives in the houses now.

LA.3.3.5.2

- Create your own chart with the steps to making a new friend.

### **Mathematics**

- Find out when Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Davis Thoreau were born and died. Subtract to see how old they were when they died as well as how old they would be today.

### **Science**

- Using the ingredients on page 160, make your own volcano. Record the results of its eruption.
- Research real volcanoes which erupted and the effects on land around them.

### **Social Studies/Geography**

Related benchmark: SS.5.A.5.5

- Research the battle of Concord and reenact it with your class.

# *How Oliver Olson Changed the World*

by Claudia Mills

## **Annotation**

Oliver's parents are overprotective; he isn't allowed to go to a sleepover or ride his bike out of the cul-de-sac, and they insist on helping him with all his homework. Oliver gets partnered with Crystal to create a diorama of the solar system, and has to come up with an idea to change the world. Will he do what his parents want or will he finally find the courage to assert his independence?

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://www.claudiamillsauthor.com>

## **Realia**

Item: mobile of planets, Styrofoam balls, telescopes,

Statement: Can Oliver and Crystal get Pluto back into the Solar System as a planet? Should history be changed? Should parents be allowed to "help" do homework? To find out the answers to those and many other questions read *How Oliver Olson Changed the World?*

## **Food**

Apples, protein bar, carrot sticks, tomato juice.

## **Challenging Words**

stout	(p. 4 HB)
cul-de-sac	(p. 6 HB)
diorama	(p. 14 HB)
pliers	(p. 51 HB)
majestic	(p. 58 HB)
mythology	(p. 68 HB)
applauded	(p. 89 HB)
legislature	(p. 89 HB)
modestly	(p. 95 HB)
constellations	(p. 100 HB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Metaphors**

- "Oliver sighed heavily." (p. 16)
- "For once Crystal didn't say anything, but begging was written all over her face." (p. 99)

## Similes

- “Say the sun is as big as a tennis ball.” (p. 18)
- “That morning his dad looked like the sun himself, beaming as he got ready to go outside and tinker with the lawn mower instead of hanging Styrofoam balls inside a computer carton.” (pp. 44-45)
- “He looked down at the rest of his protein bar, lying leaden on his plate like the largest, heaviest moon of Jupiter.” (p. 63)

## Idioms and Expressions

- “Those words didn’t sound like something that would pop into someone’s head on the spur of the moment.” (p. 7)
- “If everyone else jumped off a cliff, would you jump off too?” (p. 42)

## Curriculum Connections

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks:

LA.4.4.3.1

- Write a persuasive essay choosing whether or not Pluto should be a planet.  
[www.readingrockets.org/strategies/persuasive\\_writing](http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/persuasive_writing)

LA.4.6.4.1

- Choose one of the planets in our solar system and produce a multi-media report.

### Science

Related benchmarks: SC.5.E.5.2, SC.5.E.5.3

- Research the solar system. Create your own diorama of the solar system.
- Research the history of space travel. Create a time line of events.  
[www.NASA.gov](http://www.NASA.gov)
- Plan a space evening. Invite students to attend with their parents. Various centers could include: telescope viewing, space and science fiction books and movies, computer/internet: <http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/index.html>, <http://kidsastronomy.com/>

### Music

Related benchmarks: MU.3.C.1.2, MU.3.C.3.1

- Research the musical piece: *The Planets* by Gustav Holst. Listen to the different movements. Discuss how the composer used different musical instruments to create different moods/images.

# Captain Nobody

by Dean Pitchford

## Annotation

Nobody pays much attention to 10 year old Newt. His older brother Chris is headed to football stardom and his parents are workaholics. When Chris is injured and ends up in a coma, Newt's friends try to take his mind off things by helping him get dressed for Halloween. Using some of Chris's old clothes they create Captain Nobody. Newt's new persona gives him confidence and he ends up doing some heroic things. Will he be able to find the courage to tell what he knows about the accident and help his brother?

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.deanpitchford.com>

## Realia

Item: Bag of assorted Halloween candy

Statement: How much Halloween candy could you bag by dressing up as your personal hero?

Find out what happens to Newt when he discovers his "inner other" – Captain Nobody. Captain Nobody could be EVERYONE'S hero.

## Food

Coffee, sausages, scrambled eggs; or tail-gate food

## Challenging Words

Rickety	(p. 1 PB)	Weary	(p. 121 PB)
Archenemies	(p. 4 PB)	Ambassador	(p. 122 PB)
Humongous	(p. 12 PB)	Ferocious	(p. 122 PB)
Commendable	(p. 13 PB)	Inevitable	(p. 124 PB)
Rivalry	(p. 42 PB)	Posse	(p. 127 PB)
Bittersweet	(p. 46 PB)	Recoiled	(p. 128 PB)
Torrent	(p. 47 PB)	Averted	(p. 134 PB)
Cellophane	(p. 52 PB)	Condemned	(p. 153 PB)
Ghastly	(p. 104 PB)	Predicament	(p. 156 PB)
Heist	(p. 113 PB)	Gyrations	(p. 165 PB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- "The torrent of phone calls had slowed to a trickle." (p. 47 PB)

### Similes

- "I found myself being squeezed out of my place, squished down the row, and squashed onto an end seat next to a very large lady, who jumped to her feet and shrieked like a fire engine during the opening kickoff." (pp. 27-28 PB)
- "You watch. I'm gonna snap Chris Newman like a day-old breadstick." (p. 28 PB)

- “Knocked him out colder than an ice cube.” (p. 42 PB)
- “If it rolls, you’re going down like Humpty Dumpty.” (p. 83 PB)
- “I screamed like a cheerleader in a horror film.” (p. 84 PB)
- “The more upset Mom gets, the faster she talks, and she was chittering away like a windup toy.” (p. 112 PB)
- “They look about as sturdy as celery.” (p. 154 PB)
- “They droned closer, like humongous, curious bumblebees.” (p. 164 PB)
- “Before I could object, my eyelids dropped like stones, and I slept.” (p. 179 PB)

## Idioms and Expressions

- “Merrimac has always beat the pants off Fillmore.” ( p. 4 PB)
- “The sausages were cooling in their grease. The eggs were getting watery. And I was getting ....steamed.” (p. 9 PB)
- “‘Hit the showers!’ I barked.” (p. 9 PB)
- “When he started to snore again, I hit the roof.” (p. 9 PB)
- “All right, let’s have it! Who’s today’s superfreak?” (p.13 PB)
- “‘Yeah! Our *inner other* is who we *would* be if we didn’t have to be *us*.’ Cecil was on a roll now. ‘Think of it like a ...a personal hero.’” (p. 16 PB)
- “You could have heard a pin drop.” (p. 133 PB)
- “In a nutshell.” (p. 160 PB)
- “Then Mom blew up.” (p. 173 PB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Fine Arts

Related benchmarks: VA.3.F.1.1, VA.4.F.1.1, VA.5.F.1.1,

- Using a variety of materials, students will create their own ‘personal hero’ costume. Brainstorm qualities required in a hero.
- <http://www.mesacc.edu/dept/d46/psy/dev/Fall01/hero/qualities.html>

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks:

- Using examples of signs and other advertising messages the students can correct grammar, spelling and punctuation mistakes.

### Science

Related benchmarks: SC.3.L.15.1, SC.4.L.16.3, SC.4.L.16.2

- Research ferrets and their characteristics. Have student research various animals to determine which animal mascot they would want to represent their school. Students may present the research and vote on a mascot.

### Physical Education/Health

- Teach the students the fundamentals for football.

# Dragon's Egg

by Sarah L. Thomson

## Annotation

Dragons are small farm animals that are kept for their eggs. Mella, just like her Grandmother, has the ability to look after the little dragons but dreams of the gigantic fire-breathing dragons that legend says once soared in the skies. Then one day in the forest she comes across a dying dragon and promises to take its egg to the hatching grounds in the mountains. Setting off with a squire called Roger; the two companions have to battle through many challenges and find that they may be the only ones who can stop a war!

## Author on the Internet

<http://home.earthlink.net/~slthomson/>

## Realia

Item: Plastic Egg

Statement: Would you be able to deliver this dragon's egg to the hatching grounds? Read Dragon's Egg to see if Mella and Roger succeed in their quest.

## Food

Apples, bread and cheese.

## Challenging Words

Tindery	(p. 5 HB)	Fastidiously	(p. 90 HB)
Dither	(p. 18 HB)	Attuned	(p. 106 HB)
Charlatan	(p. 19 HB)	Malice	(p. 120 HB)
Grovel	(p. 47 HB)	Deft	(p. 143 HB)
Churlish	(p. 48 HB)	Traipsed	(p. 172 HB)
Maundering	(p. 61 HB)	Indignant	(p. 198 HB)
Itinerant	(p. 77 HB)	Obsequious	(p. 215 HB)
Wastrels	(p. 77 HB)	Quelling	(p. 218 HB)
Slovenliness	(p. 86 HB)	Lament	(p. 243 HB)
Skinflint	(p. 88 HB)	Gallivanting	(p. 260 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- "Mama stood by the fire, watching with a hawk's eye as the eggs hissed and sizzled in the huge iron skillet." (p. 8 HB)
- "Words knotted up in Mella's mouth, and she couldn't loosen one to get it out." (p. 140 HB)
- "The ground under her feet was crafty, plotting against her." (p. 154 HB)

### Similes

- "It came out of the forest, something between a roar and a howl, and it rose and fell like the wind on a stormy night." (p. 29 HB)

- “Roger didn’t seem troubled by the sight of the mountains like jagged teeth gnawing at the sky.” (p. 85 HB)
- “His voice was like the roots of the trees, gnarled and knotted, somehow deep and dark brown and strong.” (p. 128 HB)
- “The little animal felt as warm and light as a loaf of bread fresh from the oven.” (p. 221 HB)

### **Idioms and Expressions**

- “‘Spoils of war,’ he said.” (p. 118 HB)
- “The wolf is stronger, but the dogs still bring it down.” (p. 228 HB)

## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Fine Arts**

Related benchmarks: VA.3.F.1.1, VA.4.F.1.1, VA.5.F.1.1,

- Using a variety of materials, students will create their own dragon egg.  
<http://www.instructables.com/id/Make-a-gorgeous-Dragons-Egg/>

Related benchmarks: VA.3.H.1.1, VA.4.H.1.1, VA.5.H.1.1, VA.3.H.2.1, VA.4.H.2.1, VA.5.H.2.1

- Utilizing a variety of online and print materials, students will find illustrations of dragons from different cultures to create a mural. Students will compare differences and similarities between different cultures.

### **Language Arts**

Related benchmarks: LA.3.4.1.2, LA.4.4.1.2, LA.5.4.1.2, LA.5.2.1.3

- Using expressive language, students will write their own poems depicting Mella and Roger’s adventure.

Related benchmarks: LA.5.6.2.3

- Using a variety of resources, students will research and write a report about the history and legend of dragons. Students will analyze the differences and similarities of dragons throughout the world.

<http://animal.discovery.com/convergence/dragons/myth/myth.html>

### **Science**

Related benchmarks: SC.3.L.15.1, SC.4.L.16.3, SC.4.L.16.2

- Research komodo dragons.

Related benchmarks: SC.5.P.9.1, SC.4.P.11.1, SC.4.P.11.2, SC.3.P.11.1

- Conduct an experiment to measure the movement of heat between an object and water. Fill a glass with water; let it stand for at least an hour. Put a thermometer in the water to record the temperature of the water. Heat a metal nut or bolt – be sure to use insulated tongs. Put the heated nut or bolt into the water. Record the change of temperature. Try adding additional metal nuts/bolts to see if that changes the results.

Additional experiments: [http://www.kids-science-experiments.com/cat\\_heat.html](http://www.kids-science-experiments.com/cat_heat.html)

### **Social Studies/Geography**

Related benchmarks: SS.3.G.1.2

- Using a map, symbols and clues, students will participate in a dragon egg hunt. All the materials need may be found at: [http://home.earthlink.net/~slthomson/pdf/dragon\\_kit.pdf](http://home.earthlink.net/~slthomson/pdf/dragon_kit.pdf)

Related benchmarks: SS.5.C.2.5, SS.3.C.2.1

- Explore the Knights’ code of Chivalry. Students will rewrite a modern code of Chivalry for citizens.

<http://www.middle-ages.org.uk/knights-code-of-chivalry.htm>

### **Physical Education/Health**

Related benchmarks: PE.3.M.1.1, PE.4.M.1.1, PE.5.M.1.1

- Conduct a medieval field day. Set up a variety of medieval sporting events such as horseshoes, bowling, archery, golf, skittles, etc. Board games such as chess, knucklebones, and backgammon may also be included. Refer to the following Internet sites for game ideas:  
<http://www.middle-ages.org.uk/entertainment-middle-ages.htm>  
<http://www.modaruniversity.org/Games.htm>

# ***Bobby vs. Girls (Accidentally)***

by Lisa Yee

## **Annotation**

Bobby and Holly have always been friends, but when Holly starts painting her nails and wearing dresses things start to get awkward between them. A series of mishaps and misunderstandings cause the boys and the girls in Rancho Rosetta Elementary School fourth grade to band against each other. Holly and Bobby both end up running for student council. Will they ever manage to be friends again?

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://www.lisayee.com/LisaYee.com/Home.html>

## **Realia**

Item: goldfish, election poster

Statement: Can a boy & girl be best friends? Can their friendship survive the opinions of a wolf pack, playground fights and burnt cookies? Find out in Bobby Vs. Girls( Accidentally).

## **Food**

Mini donuts, Cookies, Cinnamon rolls.

## **Challenging Words**

Rickety	(p. 1 HB)	Transfixed	(p. 72 HB)
Ferocious	(p. 4 HB)	Topiaries	(p. 77 HB)
Intimidating	(p. 16 HB)	Palate	(p. 79 HB)
Encouragingly	(p. 41 HB)	Aerodynamic	(p. 87 HB)
Immigrants	(p. 49 HB)	Sinister	(p. 88 HB)
Phenomenal	(p. 50 HB)	Infuriating	(p. 116 HB)
Ichthyology	(p. 50 HB)	Jubilant	(p. 121 HB)
Asthma	(p. 51 HB)	Distinguished	(p. 125 HB)
Indubitably	(p. 62 HB)	Mockery	(p. 138 HB)
Distracting	(p. 69 HB)	Murmur	(p. 140 HB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Metaphors**

- “The big white bow around the waist reminded him of toilet paper.”
- “He had learned that wolves were social creatures that traveled in packs and were rarely seen alone. The girls reminded Bobby of a wolf pack.”

### **Similes**

- “Bobby’s thick, dark brown hair looked like a tornado had blown through it in twelve different directions.”
- “The puppies looked like balls of fur, only cuter.”
- “The dog’s tail wagged so fast it looked like a windshield wiper gone crazy.”

- “The sound of Mrs. Carlson’s heels was comforting, like raindrops against a window.”
- “Even though Bobby’s mouth felt like it had been filled up with burnt cardboard, it was worth it to see his father grin.”

### **Idioms and Expressions**

- “When she won the job, the headline in the local newspaper read, ‘Freezer’s Daughter Follows in His Footsteps.’”
- “Yep, I’m in the big league now!”
- “We’re going to keep an eye on you!”
- “I made it from scratch.”
- “You’re bad news!”

## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Character Education**

- Think about the qualities of a good friend, compare and contrast your list with Bobby and Holly’s friendship.

### **Fine Arts**

Related benchmark: VA.3.O.2.1

Bobby drew the Koloff tree leaning to one side, as if it were lonely, and saw the vines in the garden as “sinister.” Draw an object you observe to suggest how it would feel if it was alive.

### **Foreign Languages**

- Use books or online sites to research how to say hello in foreign languages and greet each other with them during morning meetings.

### **Language Arts**

Related benchmark: LA.3.4.1.2

- Describe your pet or the perfect pet in a poem. Make sure to include the qualities you would look for and what you would do with your pet.

### **Mathematics**

Related benchmark: MA.3.A.2.4

- Survey your family to discover their heritage and then express it as a fractional representation, and or as a percentage.

### **Science**

- Using butcher paper and paint, divide into teams to paint murals of the planets in our solar system.
- Use books to research if the Koloff tree is a real tree, and then compare and contrast it to the Florida state tree or another tree found in Florida.

### **Social Studies/Geography**

Related benchmarks:

SS.4.A.3.4

- Research missions and Spanish settlements in Florida using books and/or the internet.

SS.3.C.2.1

- Hold a class election. Think about the qualities that would make a good candidate.