

# The Strange Case of Origami Yoda

by Tom Angleberger

## Annotation

In a series of “case files”, Tommy tries to figure out whether the origami Yoda finger puppet that Dwight dispenses advice through really has mystical powers. After all, Dwight is a loser, but his Yoda finger puppet’s words of wisdom seem to really help people. Will Tommy end up trusting Yoda’s advice on the most important question of his life?

## Author on the Internet

<http://origamiyoda.wordpress.com>

## Realia

Item: Origami Yoda (instructions are in the back of the book)

Statement: “The big question: Is Origami Yoda real?” Read Tommy’s case file in “The Strange Case of Origami Yoda” to find out!

## Challenging Words

origami	(Title)	calamity	(p. 51 PB)
hoax	(p. 1 PB)	sarcastic	(p. 56 PB)
logical	(p. 3 PB)	smirk	(p. 97 PB)
Social outcasts	(p. 7 PB)	muzzle	(p. 98 PB)
laughingstock	(p. 15 PB)	vital	(p. 113 PB)
malarkey	(p. 22 PB)		
sly	(p. 34 PB)		
yammering	(p. 35 PB)		
spews	(p. 43 PB)		
perchance	(p. 51 PB)		

## Figurative Language

### Similes

- “2. When he’s not actively annoying us, he’s usually sitting there like a hypnotized chicken, staring into space and completely ignoring everybody.” (p. 45 PB)
- “As far as I can see, all this story proves is that Dwight is crazy as a bald gorilla.” (p. 73 PB)

### Idioms and Expressions

- “‘This will be the one,’ I say to myself. ‘I’ll show them, I’ll blast it down their throats!’” (p. 26 PB)
- “But if you say that to my parents, they make some kind of sarcastic remark about jumping off a bridge, which makes no sense.” (p. 56 PB)
- “Hmmm, I almost don’t want to tell this story because I’m still a little bit mixed-up about it.” (p. 97 PB)
- “Dwight is weird, but I guess I’ve started to like him, and I hated to let him down.” (p. 138 PB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education

- Tommy and his friends are not always nice or respectful of Dwight. Initiate a discussion with the students about respect and treating classmates with respect. Have the students write about a time when they were not treated nicely by their friends and how they felt when it happened. Have students self-reflect about how they treat their classmates and write about it.

### Fine Arts

Related benchmarks:

VA.68.S.2.2

- Make Origami Yodas with green paper, using the instructions in the back of the book.

VA.68.O.1.3

- Cassie broke Mr. Snider's Shakespeare statue and made a new one out of Play-Doh. Have students create their own Shakespeare busts out of Play-Doh or kitchen clay (2 cups flour, 1 cup salt, 1 cup water; keep unused dough in baggies; once sculpted, dough will harden over a few days.)

DA.68.S.2.2

- Play the song "The Twist" and teach the students how to do the dance.

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks:

LA.7.2.2.2, LA.7.2.2.3

- Have students create Character Trait Maps. Character Trait Maps are graphic organizers similar to a web. Draw an oval in the middle of the paper and write the character's name in it (they can also illustrate the character). Draw a line connecting a circle to the oval in the middle. Inside the circle, write a trait of that character (e.g. honesty). Then for each character trait, connect another circle that has an example from the book where the character exhibited that trait (a quote and page number). Students can use as many examples of each trait as they like. You can have students do one Character Trait Map or many, depending on the level of your students and the amount of time you can allot for the activity.

LA.7.4.2.2

- Have students try to solve this case. Have students create a graphic organizer with two columns – Origami Yoda is Real and Origami Yoda is Fake. As they read the book, have them put examples in each column that support whether he is real or fake. At the end, students will analyze their data, draw a conclusion, and write a brief summary explaining their conclusion.

LA.7.6.2.3

- Using books from the school library and electronic resources, have students research origami and present the information to the class.

LA.7.4.1.1, LA.7.3.5.2

- Have students write a short story mystery and add illustrations to the margins like in "The Strange Case of Origami Yoda."

LA.7.4.1.1

- "The Strange Case of Origami Yoda" is written from the perspective of many different characters, except Dwight, who refused to contribute to the case file. Have students write a chapter for the case file from the perspective of Dwight or Origami Yoda.

"The Strange Case of Origami Yoda" could be considered a mystery and a humorous fiction book. Ask your school librarian to booktalk other mystery books and humorous fiction books that the students might like.

### Just For Fun!

- On p. 67 Dwight speaks to Quavondo in Pig Latin. Teach students how to speak/write in Pig Latin.

# *The Prince of Fenway Park*

by Juliana Baggott

## **Annotation**

Just like the Boston Red Socks, Oscar Egg believes he is cursed. After all, his biological parents put him up for adoption, his new parents got divorced and now his mother is dumping him on his dad who Oscar believes is probably a gangster. As the story unfolds, Oscar discovers that his father is living an even stranger life than he imagined and that he himself is involved in the Curse of Fenway Park!

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://www.juliannabaggott.com>

## **Realia**

Item: Baseball

Statement: This object held the key to break the curse that had plagued the Boston Red Sox for 86 years and the Prince of Fenway Park had to find a way to break the curse in order to save the season and his family.

## **Food**

Hot dogs, popcorn, hot chocolate.

## **Challenging Words**

Nonchalantly	(p. 3 HB)	Lithe	(p.115 HB)
Flighty	(p. 5 HB)	Ominous	(p. 133 HB)
Menacing	(p. 7 HB)	Enunciation	(p. 135 HB)
Morose	(p. 16 HB)	Conjoined	(p. 137 HB)
Wheezing	(p. 28 HB)	Torso	(p. 138 HB)
Flume	(p.35 HB)	Satchel	(p. 163 HB)
Chute	(p. 39 HB)	Precisely	(p. 188 HB)
Fallow	(p. 49 HB)	Pruned	(p. 201 HB)
Wizened	(p.50 HB)	Mayhem	(p. 233 HB)
Realm	(p.69 HB)	Simultaneously	(p. 313 HB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Metaphors**

- “He could see now that there wasn’t one large gray animal but many small gray animals- mice, thousands of them- coming at him with the force of a river.” (p. 45 HB)
- “Her eyes were shrunken by her thick glasses so much so that they seemed to be skittering around like beetles.” (p.60 HB)
- “These days, the radio and TV people pack into the cushy roosts next to the .406.” (p. 136 HB)

### **Similes**

- “The tunnels grew dim and overgrown like a jungle.” (p. 37)

- The weasels poured over one another like fish.” (p. 41)
- “You make a curse, and then it hardens like concrete.” (p. 147)

### Idioms and Expressions

- “You’ve bought yourself a one-way ticket to the principal’s office.” (p. 9 HB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education

- Oscar demonstrates many positive character traits throughout *The Prince of Fenway Park*. Have students find specific evidence in the text where Oscar demonstrates responsibility, caring, respect, and trustworthiness.

### Language Arts

Benchmarks: LA.6.2.1.2, LA.6.3.1.3, LA.7.2.1.2, LA.7.3.1.3, LA.8.2.1.2, LA.8.3.1.3

- Each of the characters in *The Prince of Fenway Park* has a gift, such as Oscar’s ability to read signs.  
Have students create a new character in the story and endow them with a unique gift. The character must fit in the context of the story and the gift must play a part in solving the curse. Students will write a page-long addition to the story that introduces the character and the gift.
- Oscar’s father and his aunts are fairies in *The Prince of Fenway Park*.  
Have students use a Venn diagram to compare & contrast how the fairies in this book with fairies in other stories.

### Mathematics

Benchmarks: MA.6.S.6.1, MA.6.S.6.2, MA.7.S.6.1, MA.7.S.6.2

- Go to the following website for a NCTM lesson using baseball cards for a lesson in statistics.  
<http://illuminations.nctm.org/LessonDetail.aspx?id=L257>  
Provide each student with a card and/or use a document camera to project a card with statistics for the class to see.  
The online lesson includes an activity sheet and directions for creating a board game.

### Social Studies/Geography

Benchmarks: SS.6.W.1.1, SS.7.C.3.7, SS.8.A.1.2

The Prince of Fenway Park refers to a time when African American players were not allowed to play in the major leagues. The first black player to play in the majors, Jackie Robinson, is a character in the book.

- Have students create a timeline of the integration of baseball in the U.S. Information on the Negro Leagues should be included.  
The following web sites will be helpful in creating the timeline:  
[http://northbysouth.kenyon.edu/2000/baseball/1947\\_Integration.htm](http://northbysouth.kenyon.edu/2000/baseball/1947_Integration.htm)  
[http://education.baseballhalloffame.org/experience/thematic\\_units/civil\\_rights.html](http://education.baseballhalloffame.org/experience/thematic_units/civil_rights.html)  
(This web site outlines a unit plan on Civil Rights and Baseball.)

Once the timelines are created, they can be displayed in the classroom, school library, and hallways.

# *Flawed Dogs: The Novel: The Shocking Raid on Westminster*

by Berkeley Breathed

## **Annotation**

Framed by a jealous poodle named Cassius, separated from the girl who loves him and cast out on the street, Sam manages to live through a series of traumatic experiences. Eventually, along with his friends from the National Last-Ditch Dog Depository, he plans a raid on the Westminster Dog Show to revenge himself on his rival. What will happen when the “flawed dogs” take on Westminster?

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://www.berkeleybreathed.com>

## **Realia**

Item: Flawed stuffed animals especially dogs.

Statement: Despite the fact that they are “flawed”, the dogs who are the main characters of the book have something special about themselves. Have students bring in their own or their siblings’ flawed stuffed animals or provide them. Have them decide what’s special about the animals, and share the stories of their own Flawed Dogs just like Sam and his friends.

## **Food**

Banana taffy, Ice cream, French fries, Hot cocoa, Soup with ladle, Peanut butter sandwiches, Scrambled eggs and sausage

## **Challenging Words**

corrupted	(p. 7 PB)	hilarious	(p. 130 PB)
tarmac	(p. 24 PB)	flared	(p. 138 PB)
extent	(p. 38 PB)	muffled	(p. 149 PB)
demented	(p. 47 PB)	balmy	(p. 159 PB)
gaggle	(p. 59 PB)	vole	(p. 168 PB)
topiary	(p. 70 PB)	smothering	(p. 176 PB)
awkwardly	(p. 90 PB)	sublimely	(p. 186 PB)
ascended	(p. 102 PB)	remarkable	(p. 196 PB)
phalanx	(p. 116 PB)	jowls	(p. 202 PB)
callused	(p. 124 PB)	arena	(p. 210 PB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Metaphors**

- “And here, finally, he knew it (blood) **was the end of a long, unexpected road.**” (p. 7 PB)
- “All she’d known for the last eight years was a girls’ school in the freezing hills of Minnesota and **platoons of behemoth penguins pretending to be nuns.**” (p. 34 PB)
- “And it is not **a ridiculous frankfurter on feet with a bit of laundry lint on his head.**” (p. 66 PB)

## Similes

- “He was small for a dachshund and was being held upright **like a fat salami on end.**” (p. 2 PB)
- “She didn’t know that it was because of DOGS that Heidi’s life was now shredded like one of her stupid uncle’s giant canvas chewtoys?” (p. 23 PB)
- “The laughter then began to build and roll, **like a great wave approaching the beach**, finally cresting in a thundering crescendo of screaming, howling hoots.” (p. 186 PB)

## Idioms and Expressions

- “Heidi felt **the hair on her neck rise.**” P.67 PB

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education

- Discuss what should be legal when it comes to animals: Should humans be allowed to make them fight for their entertainment? Should humans be allowed to put them on display in dog or other animal shows? Should animals be allowed to be raced for entertainment? Should animals be allowed to have chemicals tested on them? After discussion have students write persuasive essay demonstrating their opinion and working to convince others in the class?

### Fine Arts

Related benchmarks: VA.68.H.3.3, VA.68.F.1.4

- Design and draw (or create using a computer) one panel comic strips like the ones in the book. Have a contest to see who can create the most imaginative, creative images with the funniest or most dramatic captions. Take the drawings and bind them into a book.

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks: LA.7.2.1.7

- Write your own unusual and descriptive similes to describe people or things in your life using the following as an example: “Beachball-size explosions of fuzzy hair erupted like creeping blobs of attacking white broccoli across the entirety of the starved beast’s shaved skeleton.” (p. 37-8 PB)

### Science

Related benchmarks: SC.7.P.10.3, SC.6.P.13.3

- Explore physics of why an explosion of gas backwards would push a dog forwards. Look at Newton’s laws and identify the relevant one. In small groups try to design a car that would be pushed forward in a similar manner.

### Social Studies/Geography

- Research the namesake of Cassius the dog from ancient history. Create a Venn Diagram showing similarities and differences between Cassius the human and Cassius the dog.
- Locate an inspiring speech from history, and compare and contrast the speech given by Sam on page 151 in the word choice, the goal and the result.

# 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.5.4.2.3

- Students will create their own talking boards. How does this limit your communication abilities?

LA.7.4.2.2

- 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/>
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## 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.68.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/>

# Dark Life

by Kat Falls

## Annotation

Set in a future where sea levels have risen and the remaining land is given over to packed high rise cities. Food is produced by those who live on and farm the ocean floor. Ty, who was born and raised deep undersea, meets Gemma, a “topsider” looking for her brother. Together they end up in an adventure that includes pirates, strange talents and government conspiracies!

## Author on the Internet

<http://katfalls.com>

## Realia

Item:

Snorkeling Equipment – flippers, mask, breathing tube

Aquarium – live fish

Toy or model submarines

Statement:

Two teens - two friends - from two different worlds.

Gemma, a girl born on land, discovers adventure, mystery, and friendship beneath the waves, away from the sun, in an alien world known as the “Dark Life.”

## Food

Sushi, seafood salad, seaweed salad, milk, eggs, a variety of fish.

## Challenging Words

Radiant	(p. 1 HB)	Smidge	(p. 95 HB)
Torpedoes	(p. 3 HB)	Haphazardly	(p. 115 HB)
Bioluminescent	(p. 7 HB)	Derelict	(p. 115 HB)
Taut	(p. 17 HB)	Biosonar	(p. 171 HB)
Hydrothermal	(p. 22 HB)	Misrepresentation	(p. 185 HB)
Titanium	(p. 39 HB)	Infirmity	(p. 187 HB)
Geyser	(p. 52 HB)	Epitomized	(p. 205 HB)
Writhing	(p. 63 HB)	Coaxed	(p. 224 HB)
Fathom	(p. 71 HB)	Albino	(p. 248 HB)
Acrylic	(p. 82 HB)	Catwalk	(p. 265 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- “Around us, the hull moaned and creaked.”
- The icy glare she shot me could have restored the glaciers.”

- “An enormous glowing ball appeared in the murky water ahead of us. An island of light in the cobalt sea.”
- Gemma’s words cut out as I dove under the water, back into the sea’s cool embrace.”
- “His ego was a flying fish cresting waves, I noted enviously.”
- ““Can’t switch horses midstream,’ the representatives said with every cancelled election.”

### **Similes**

- “As soon as the flare died, the sharks would be on me like suckerfish on a whale.”
- “Like a dilating eye, the hatch opened and seawater filled the small chamber.”
- “One bunch swayed like seaweed, telling me that someone had just passed.”
- “Then that squid will pluck you out like it’s shucking a clam.”
- “As we got up together, she gripped my hand like a moray eel chomping prey.”
- “I shrugged, though my insides whirled like a comb jelly.”
- “I turned to defend myself, but Gemma’s gaze was as bright and intense as the flare I’d fired at the green lantern sharks.”
- “Like the spokes of a wheel, the slender bridges all led to the tower platform, suspended in the center.”
- “Benton Tupper, the settlement’s Commonwealth of States representative, stood on the dais, looking like an overgrown baby with his wispy hair and plumb cheeks.”
- “He ran a hand through his hair, leaving it spiked up like the prickles on a blowfish.”

### **Idioms and Expressions**

- “Gem o’ the ocean.”
- “Glacial!”

## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Physical Education**

Related benchmarks: PE.7.C.1.6

- Think about how people who live underwater move when they go about their daily lives and travel through the water. Create a sport that uses these movements that a community could play on the ocean floor. Remember to take into account: ocean currents, local wildlife, natural formations, survival needs. Your sport should have: a name, rules, goals, team specifications, proper equipment, scoring procedure, time limits, uniforms.

### **Fine Arts**

Related benchmarks: VA.68.F.1.3

- Study the technology that is used in Dark Life. What new types of artistic expressions could be developed using the fictional technology OR could be influenced by the fictional technology?

### **Foreign Languages**

- People usually develop their own language-dialect when they break away from the original group. Create a basic language that the people in the Dark Life might use in the future. Come up with 10 nouns, 10 verbs, 10 adjectives with a pronunciation key.

### **Language Arts**

Related benchmarks: LA.7.2.1

- Compare and Contrast the two main characters, Gemma and Ty. How are these two teens alike and how are they different? Are their similarities and differences consequences of their two environments (Topside & Dark Life). Give support for your argument from the text.

## **Mathematics**

Related benchmarks: MA.7.S.6.1

- List the given traits of Ty and the others who live on the ocean floor. Is it reasonable to apply those traits to everyone who lives under the water? Why or why not?

## **Science**

Related benchmarks: SC.7.E.6

- Review the information in the story that explains the how and why much of the Earth's population migrated to the ocean floor. Is the explanation scientific? Could this actually happen to us?
- Study the devices described in the book that allow humans to live on the ocean floor. Think about what humans need to survive. Could people actually live permanently underwater using devices similar to the ones described in the book? What other devices would people need?

## **Social Studies/Geography**

Related benchmarks:

SS.7.C.2.5

- Discuss the problems the ocean dwellers are experiencing from the established government. Write a constitution that protects the rights of all people, both on land and on the ocean floor.

SS.6.G.1.6

- Explain how the decrease in land and increase in bodies of water impacted the development of the 2 main civilizations in the book.

# Pemba's Song: A Ghost Story

by Marilyn Nelson & Tonya C. Hegamin

## Annotation

Upset at having to leave her friends and move from her Brooklyn neighborhood to an old house in the small town of Colchester, Connecticut, Pemba starts to experience visions of a slave girl named Phyllis. Why is Phyllis appearing to Pemba and what is it she wants? Will Pemba be able to help Phyllis and come to terms with her new life?

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.tonyacheriehegamin.com>

## Realia

Item: Advertisement to sell slaves from the Florida Memory Project

<http://ibistro.dos.state.fl.us/uhtbin/cgiirsi/?ps=EzOXEbPWSh/STA-FLA/324890042/9#>

Statement: Master John wants Master Hart to sell Phyllis to pay his debt to him. "Hart owned a house, forty-seven acres, two horses, a carriage, and one mulatto slave named Phyllis, aged fifteen. She was valued at about two hundred and fifty dollars." Phyllis was treated as property. How did Phyllis teach Pemba to discover what truly has value in her own life in the book *Pemba's Song*?

## Food

Sweet plantains and spicy rice.

## Challenging Words

MP3	(p. 2 HB)	settee	(p. 44 HB)
skank	(p. 4 HB)	trundled	(p. 44 HB)
console	(p. 9 HB)	apoplexy	(p. 77 HB)
whack	(p. 14 HB)	paranormal	(p. 44 HB)
Jabip	(p. 17 HB)	wince	(p. 47 HB)
interacting	(p. 27 HB)	enlightening	(p. 47 HB)
virtue-proof	(p. 30 HB)	naive	(p. 48 HB)
pemba	(p. 32 HB)	nauseous	(p. 51 HB)
abyss	(p. 35 HB)	pyschometric	(p. 64 HB)
psychiatrist	(p. 38 HB)	flabbergasted	(p. 76 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- "Sister, I could hear your belly talking from the other side of the library!" (p. 51 HB)

### Similes

- "Now my head feels like a giant ticking clock." (p. 41 HB)

## Idioms and Expressions

- “You’re really up in Jabip, huh?” he teases.” (p. 17 HB)
- “I already know it’s no use; she always sleeps like a log.” (p. 40 HB) “I already know it’s no use; she always sleeps like a log.”
- “Don’t get me wrong, Harriet Tubman is my homegirl, but . . .” (p. 50 HB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education

Initiate a discussion on why Master Hart does not want to sell Phyllys, even to pay his debt. Why does he say that: “Phyllys shames us!” (p. 68 HB)

### Fine Arts and Social Studies

Related benchmarks: SS.8.A.1.1:

- Use research and inquiry skills to analyze American History using primary and secondary sources by accessing Library of Congress Digital Images or by searching for historic buildings in Connecticut (1790s), locate a drawing or photograph of the kind of house described in this book.

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks: LA.6.2.2.1, LA.6.2.1.8:

- Different voices in this book are portrayed using different typefaces and forms of verse. Explain how this lets the reader know who is telling the story, and whether the dialog is internal narrative or other. Why is this book called “Pemba’s Song” rather than Pemba’s Story?

### Social Studies and Media Literacy (Reading)

Related benchmarks: SS.8.A.1, LA.6.6.2.2:

- Pemba initially believes that there is no history relating to Africans or African Americans in Connecticut. She soon discovers through her research that at this time in history “. . . there weren’t just a few black people in Connecticut in the 1700s, there were *thousands*.” (p. 49 HB) Research “the Great Negro Plot of 1741” to learn five new facts about black people in Connecticut at this time. Suggested web sites:  
[http://www.gilderlehrman.org/historynow/12\\_2004/](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/historynow/12_2004/)  
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6528/>  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7236322>

Compare the information you learn at these sites to the information about this time in history in your school textbook. Check for accuracy, relevance, and viewpoints/bias. How complete is the information in your sources? Why would Pemba not have learned about this Plot in her history classes at school?

# Scat

by Carl Hiaasen

## Annotation

Nick and Marta dislike their biology teacher Mrs. Starch but when she disappears after a school trip to the Black Vine Swamp, they don't buy the principal's excuse and decide to investigate. Very quickly they become involved in a complicated mystery involving oil prospectors, an eco-avenger, a stuffed rat and an endangered Florida panther!

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.carlhiaasen.com/index.shtml>

## Realia

Items: baseball, camo print backpack, taxidermied animals (or realistic stuffed animals), biology textbook, orange spray paint, (empty) asthma inhaler, ski cap, sun block, straw hat, school journal.

Statement: True to all of Hiaasen's books, *Scat* involves the reader in an environmental adventure through the natural wonders of Florida—and along the way is mystery, political commentary, and lots of humor.

## Food

Peanut butter and jelly sandwich, Turkey and cheese sandwich, Lime Gatorade, Bottled water, Pork chops, Cocoa, Fancy cheeses.

## Challenging Words

profound	(p.4 HB)	alibi	(p.232 HB)
intimidated	(p. 6 HB)	grimaced	(p. 233 HB)
botany	(p.30 HB)	scat	(p.241 HB)
liberate	(p.126 HB)	forays	(p. 244 HB)
taxidermied	(p.136 HB)	extenuating	(p. 322 HB)
syllabus	(p.137 HB)	stanch	(p. 339 HB)
claustrophobic	(p.139 HB)	notoriously	(p.355 HB)
hyperventilate	(p.231 HB)	alliteration	(p. 355 HB)
incriminating	(p.231 HB)	ominously	(p.356 HB)
skeptical	(p.231 HB)	humiliation	(p. 366 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Similes

- “Every now and then they would glance back, watching for oncoming headlights, but Buzzard Boulevard was as quiet as a graveyard.” (p. 131 HB)
- “Fifty feet of line would snap straight behind him and float in midair, then loop tightly and shoot forward, dropping the fly as softly as a snowflake.” (p. 174 HB)

### Idioms

- “ ‘Way to go, Sherlock,’ Marta said.” (p.134 HB)

- “ ‘Besides losing her marbles?’ “ (p.137 HB)
- “ ‘Honest, if you’d just let us go, we won’t nark you out—’ “ (p. 144 HB)
- “ ‘Four hours and change.’ “ (p. 218 HB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education

- Cite and discuss the examples of bullying in *Scat*, between students, between teachers and students, and between adults. Why are several characters in the story bullied?
- Cite and discuss the examples of loss in *Scat*, through divorce, death, abandonment, or coping with disabilities; such as Nick’s father’s war injury.
- Develop an understanding of empathy through the main characters in *Scat*. Which characters could students in your classes relate to? Which characters in the book showed empathy, or were developing more understanding of others?

### Fine Arts

Related benchmarks:

MU.68.C.3.1

- Listen to classical recordings, such as Rachmaninoff’s Prelude number 4 in D, (p.228 HB), or inquire if a student could perform any of the book’s referenced composers for a class.
- VA.68.O.2.3
- Create jewelry or art projects from items found in natural surroundings.

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks:

LA.7.2.1.7, LA.7.2.1.8

- Read selections from *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975) by Edward Abbey, or its sequel *Hayduke Lives!* (1990). Compare the two authors, Edward Abbey and Carl Hiaasen, and their influences on the environmental movement and their literary styles.

LA.7.2.1.10

- Research and create a list of authors (and poets) that would be considered “environmental.” List could have contemporary and classical names. Share responsibilities of making presentations on these authors and/or reading examples from their works.

### Science

Related benchmarks:

- List and identify current endangered or threatened wildlife in the State of Florida. Create a display of those that could be found in your school’s region.

SC.8.L.18.1

- Simplify, for basic understanding, the Krebs Cycle and Calvin Cycle. Relate these processes to photosynthesis.

SC.6.N.2.1

- Compare and contrast the different branches of science mentioned in *Scat*, such as biology, botany, ecology, chemistry, and zoology.

SC.7.E.6.6, SC.8.N.4.2, SS.8.G.3.2

- Research the processes of finding and refining fuel sources, particularly oil. Research could be narrowed to the State of Florida and its effects on the Florida environment.

### Social Studies/Geography

Related benchmarks: SC.7.G.5.1

- Map and describe the various regions within the State of Florida and the unique features found in each region such as types of vegetation and wildlife, the formation of the regions

over time by geologic and climatic changes. Discuss the impact of Florida's growing population on these regions.

- Arrange for a visit to your classes/school from a qualified guest speaker on the Everglades.

# Alibi Junior High

by Greg Logsted

## Annotation

Cody has spent all of his life moving from place to place with his father, an undercover agent for the CIA. Cody knows how to pick locks and handle weapons, but when his dad sends him to stay with his aunt he finds that fitting in at junior high may be the most difficult thing he's ever had to do!

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.greglogsted.com>

## Realia

Item: New York Yankees hat and a New York Mets hat

Statement: It's not easy being the new kid in school, especially when you've never been to school before and your dad is in the CIA. Cody survived a bombing, but can he survive junior high? Read "Alibi Junior High" to find out.

## Food

Pancakes, scrambled eggs, ice cream.

## Challenging Words

alibi	(Title)	shenanigans	(p. 115 HB)
humiliated	(p. 16 HB)	prolonged	(p. 116 HB)
Novocain	(p. 35 HB)	bouts	(p. 116 HB)
vicious	(p. 40 HB)	conspiring	(p. 131 HB)
transcripts	(p. 43 HB)	swagger	(p. 136 HB)
unruly	(p. 43 HB)	synchronized	(p. 148 HB)
smirk	(p. 44 HB)	revert	(p. 148 HB)
mangled	(p. 48 HB)	conventional	(p. 148 HB)
insubordination	(p. 74 HB)		
imbicile	(p. 114 HB)		

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- "I slip out the door and into the shadows, a new raccoon with a kitchen knife for claws, roaming the night." (p. 18 HB)
- "My dad has this great way of talking to people; he could thread a needle with words if he had to." (p. 57 HB)

### Similes

- "I've been traveling for a week, slicing up my time like an apple." (p. 1 HB)

- “Walking toward the building is like walking straight into a ten-thousand-watt lightbulb. I’m beginning to feel like a moth.” (p. 36 HB)
- “Seeing her face is like turning on a light in a dark room.” (p. 241 HB)

### Idioms or Expressions

- “My stomach growls; I guess I’m hungrier than I thought.” (p. 13 HB)
- “Albert finally makes up his mind and runs to his brother, throwing his arms around him.” (p. 15 HB)
- “Jenny keeps shoveling pancakes into her mouth but it doesn’t stop her from talking.” (p. 26)
- “Dude yells from the window, ‘Knock it off! Don’t tell them anything. What’s wrong with you? Boss told us to hold them, he didn’t say anything about arguing with them.’” (p. 219 HB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education

- Cody sticks up for Frank in P.E. on two different occasions: when Coach Dinatelli makes Frank run an extra lap at P.E. if the other students beat him on the first lap, and when the other boys are harassing Frank in the locker room. Ask students to discuss (or write about) what they would do if they saw a classmate being picked on. Would they stand up for a classmate? Why or why not?
- Cody is most comfortable wearing suits, which is not common for students at the junior high. At first he tries to dress like the other students, but eventually he starts wearing suits to school because that’s what makes him comfortable. Initiate a discussion, or have the students write about, individuality and the importance of being yourself. Or have students write about a time when they did something that made them stand out in a crowd and how they felt about the reactions from other people.
- Read the following passage to the students: “My dad likes to talk about ‘respect.’ He says there’s two ways of getting it: you either earn it, or you take it. I’m not earning or taking anything: I’m being led around like a puppy.” (p. 40 HB) Initiate a discussion about being respected and respecting others. Have students identify and write about a time in their lives when they earned someone’s respect or when they gave respect to someone else and why.

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks:

LA.8.2.1.7

- Read this passage to students: “I hate sleep. It lies to me, it makes its promise, and then where does it go? It leaves me here, twisting all alone in the darkness.” (p. 19 HB) Discuss personification and have students write an example of personification.

LA.8.4.1.2

- Have students write haiku poems from the perspective of each of the characters: Cody, his father, Aunt Jenny, Andy, Albert, Renee, Coach Dinatelli, the boys in the karate club.

LA.8.4.2.1

- Have students write an article for Cody’s school newspaper about one of the events that happened during the book: Cody refuses to pass Frank running laps (p.76-79); the locker room fight (p.106-109); or setting the mice free (p. 165-167).

LA.8.4.2.4

- Cody has a problem respecting authority when he first goes to junior high. Discuss this with students, and then have them write a thank you letter to a teacher, administrator, or staff member at the school showing their appreciation for what that person does for the school and students.

LA.8.4.1.1

- Have students choose a character in the book (Aunt Jenny, Albert, Renee, Frank, the school resource officer, the principal). Have students write a few paragraphs from that character’s perspective describing their first impression of Cody.

LA.8.4.2.3

- Ask students to respond to this prompt: If Cody was your classmate, would you be friends with him? Why or why not? Give examples from the book.

LA.8.6.4.2

- Have students choose one character from the book and create a scrapbook based on the character's life. The scrapbook should include items such as: photos, newspaper articles, letters from friends or family, etc.

LA.8.4.2.2

- Read "Bystander" by James Preller (also a SSYRA nominee) with your students. Compare and contrast the bullying in the two books on a Venn diagram.

**Social Studies/Geography**

- Cody's father is in the CIA, and Andy served for six years in the Army Rangers. Break students into small groups and have them research the CIA and the Army Rangers.
- Andy served as an Army Ranger in the War in Iraq. Have students write pen pal letters to U.S. soldiers serving in Iraq.

# *The Day of the Pelican*

by Katherine Paterson

## Annotation

Meli's family is Albanian. For years they have lived in the Yugoslavian city of Kosovo. Then in the spring of 1998, ethnic tensions come to a head and Meli's family is forced to flee Serbian persecution. After a perilous journey, they find their way to the United States, where the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> cause them to face prejudice again.

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.terabithia.com>

## Realia

Item: Old family photo (black and white) of grandparents or great grand parents

Statement: The last item that Meli and her family take from their home is her mother's cherished photo of her parents. Paterson begins her book with the quote: "*The Family is the Country of the heart,*" from Giuseppe Mazzini, *The Duties of Man*. Determine the point in the story when Meli's mother parts with this beloved photograph? Does she ever get it back? How do this quote and this photograph relate to the message of *The Day of the Pelican*?

## Food

Coffee with lots of sugar, goulash, pashteta and bread, spicy sausage, flija topped with honey, pepper and eggplant sauce, goat cheese with bread and pepper sauce, potato soup, savory cheese pie, yogurt, coca cola.

## Challenging Words

ubiquitous	(p. 10 HB)	paddock	(p. 55 HB)
stifling	(p. 10 HB)	gravitate	(p. 59 HB)
bulbous	(p. 10 HB)	querulously	(p. 60 HB)
propaganda	(p. 14 HB)	clamor	(p. 68 HB)
guerillas	(p. 23 HB)	suffocating	(p.75 HB)
dilapidated	(p. 30 HB)	maneuvered	(p. 76 HB)
reconcile	(p. 32 HB)	pandemonium	(p. 76 HB)
concoction	(p. 43 HB)	turmoil	(p. 80 HB)
insolent	(p. 45 HB)	adamant	(p. 94 HB)
dhimmi	(p. 46 HB)	acclimated	(p. 107 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- "The ubiquitous crows were squabbling over territory and bits of food like old women squabbling in the marketplace." (p. 10 HB)
- "Living in the refugee camp was, as Mehmet put it, like being chickens sentenced to jail." (p 81 HB)

### Similes

- “That little house would burst like an overripe pumpkin.” (p. 9 HB)
- “Questions tumbled over in her mind like laundry in their old washing machine.” (p. 26 HB)

### Idioms and Expressions

- “Inshallah. God willing. Yes, please, God, Meli prayed. Let him be safe.” (p. 15 HB)
- “You never really know someone till you’ve eaten a sack of salt together.” (p. 41 HB)
- “‘The wolf loves the fog,’ Mama said sadly.’ (p. 57 HB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education

- Describe how Baba’s character reveal his strength? What is his driving purpose?
- Do you agree with this statement? Mehmet is consumed with rage and a desire for revenge for most of this book. What changes him or does he ever change?

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks: LA.6.2.1.1

- Define why *The Day of the Pelican* is considered an historical fiction rather than nonfiction or fiction work.

### Social Studies/Geography

Related benchmarks: SS.7.G.6, SS.8.A.1.2

- Chart the Lleshi family’s route from Kosovo to Barre, Vermont using Google Earth or MapQuest. Include the following locations:
  - Kosovo, Albania and The Albanian Alps;
  - Macedonia and the Plain of Dukagjin
  - Vienna, Austria
  - New York City
  - Vermont (Barre, VT)

Related Benchmarks: SS.8.A.1.1, SS.8.A.1.4

- Use a database resource such as Biography in Context or History.com to locate information on the following individuals who are historical figures mentioned in *The Day of the Pelican*: Gjergj Kastrioti-Skanderbeg, Adem Jashari, and Slobodan Milosevic. Then answer the following questions:
  - Why is Skanderbeg a hero to Mehmet, Meli’s brother? (p. 3 HB)
  - Was Skanderbeg a Muslim or a Christian, or both?
  - Who is Adem Jashari? Locate two sources – one that calls him a terrorist and another naming him the Hero of Kosovo. Which do you believe? When Paterson describes his death in her first chapter, Jashari is just “someone” who has been killed with his whole family. How is this only part of Jashari’s story? (p. 6 HB)
  - Why does Mehmet despise Slobodan Milosevic and blame the war on him? (pp. 47-48 HB)

Related Benchmarks: SS.6.W.1.1

- Using Google Search and the TIMELINE feature, custom set the search date for 1400 AD to 2011 AD and search “Kosovo War.” Explore the articles mentioning the early roots of this conflict. Do any articles mention a time that pre-dates 1400 AD? What does this timeline say about our story?

# Woods Runner

by Gary Paulsen

## Annotation

As the Revolutionary War begins, Samuel is living in Pennsylvania. The War seems far away, but one day while he is out hunting in the woods near his house his parents are taken prisoner by the British. Using his hunting skills, Samuel tracks his parents to the British headquarters in New York. Will he be able to get them out alive and will they ever be able to get home?

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.randomhouse.com/features/garypaulsen>

## Realia

Item: Chess set

Statement: Samuel's Pa was kept alive because he could play chess with a British officer who was one of his captors.

## Food

Roasted corn, meat broth

## Challenging Words

musk	(p. 3 HB)	ravenous	(p. 67 HB)
frizzen	(p.10 HB)	plunder	(p. 71 HB)
grapeshot	(p.26 HB)	confiscate	(p. 76 HB)
militia	(p. 32 HB)	brogue	(p. 97 HB)
unshod	(p. 36 HB)	honing	(p. 115 HB)
mercenaries	(p. 46 HB)	adzes	(p. 116 HB)
coupstick	(p. 48 HB)	cadavers	(p. 135 HB)
gangrene	(p. 56 HB)	privies	(p. 154 HB)
poultice	(p. 58 HB)	scabbards	(p. 155 HB)
abated	(p. 66 HB)	ambuscade	(p. 157 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Similes

- "He frowned, looking at the smoke, willing it not to be what was coming into his mind like a dark snake, a slithering horror." (p. 21 HB)
- "His legs were wobbly but seemed to work well enough, even though he felt weak as a kitten." (p. 67 HB)

### Idioms and Expressions

- "Maybe, maybe not. One never knows how a wind is going to blow." (p. 69 HB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks: LA.7.2.2; LA.8.2.2

- Have students complete a characterization graphic organizer on Samuel and one other character such as Abner or Annie. Choose from the character maps linked here or create your own.

[http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/GO/GO\\_pdf/Character\\_map\\_boy.pdf](http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/GO/GO_pdf/Character_map_boy.pdf)

[http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/GO/GO\\_pdf/character\\_trait\\_chart.pdf](http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/GO/GO_pdf/character_trait_chart.pdf)

[http://www.teacherfiles.com/downloads/graphic\\_organizers/Character\\_Web.pdf](http://www.teacherfiles.com/downloads/graphic_organizers/Character_Web.pdf)

Related Benchmarks: LA.8.6.2.2

- Explain the difference between primary and secondary sources. Give examples of each. Have students go to the web site below and read the Revolutionary war diary of a Connecticut soldier. Have students compare the information contained in the primary source of the diary with the information embedded in the novel. Graphic organizers such as Venn Diagram or Two Column notes can be used to make the comparisons.

<http://www.connecticutsar.org/articles/diary.htm>

### Social Studies/Geography

Related benchmarks: SS.6.W.1.1

- Time plays an important role in the novel, both historically and practically as Samuel tries to rescue his parents. Have students study a timeline of events of the American Revolution. Below are links to timelines of the period, or you may have one displayed in your room.

<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/revolutionarywartimeline.htm>

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/revolution/revwar-75.htm>

Have students create a timeline of the events of the novel. They may create a horizontal or vertical timeline and include the events in chronological order. The web site linked below allows students to input information and print a timeline.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/timeline/>

# Bystander

by James Preller

## Annotation

When Eric moves to a new town he has some trouble picking out the right kind of friends. When Griffin and his gang allow him to join them, Eric is glad to have found someone with whom he can hang out. But soon he discovers that Griffin is really a liar, thief, and a bully. The problem is that you don't want to find yourself on Griffin's bad side. Eric will have to look deep into himself to decide if he is willing to stand up to become the type of person he can be proud of.

## Author on the Internet

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

## Realia

Item: basketball, homemade music CDs, guitar and sneakers.

Statement: The first time Eric meets Griffin and his gang they are chasing after a boy. He should have known then that joining them was not a good idea.

## Food

Ketchup, meatball sub, and cereal

## Challenging Words

fractured	(p. 20 PB)	amnesia	(p. 54 PB)
abandoned	(p. 20 PB)	quavering	(p. 54 PB)
Jurassic	(p. 21 PB)	energized	(p. 56 PB)
lynchpin	(p. 27 PB)	barricade	(p. 56 PB)
undeniable	(p. 36 PB)	pawn	(p. 59 PB)
spontaneous	(p. 44 PB)	hysterical	(p. 60 PB)
acoustic	(p. 46 PB)	feigned	(p. 63 PB)
Exoskeleton	(p. 46 PB)	impasse	(p. 65 PB)
schizophrenia	(p. 47 PB)	demurred	(p. 75 PB)
diagonally	(p. 53 PB)	Place holder	(p. ? PB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- "hear his father twisting in the wind" (p.22)
- "Eric was immersed in a rolling sea of faces" (p. 24)
- "she reminded Eric of a kindly mouse"(p. 33)
- "she fished into her bag" (p. 38)
- "sat watching her while a thousand small fish swam through his bloodstream" (p.46)
- "It's a jungle, the survival of the fittest" (p.65)

## Similes

- “A part of him had been ripped out like the stuffing from a pillow” (p. 22)
- “rapid-fire like a machine gun on the open E string, before hitting three big chords..”(p.23)
- “his pearly whites gleaming like a toothpaste commercial” (p.37)
- “it was as if he had sprouted wings and now floated on a white puffy cloud” (p.37)
- “like a mosquito hovering around a campfire” (p 54)
- “exploding like grenades” (p.61)
- “Hallenback is like the sick gazelle in the herd” (p.65)
- “Ginger took off like a rocket” (p.69)
- “It’s like death by a thousand cuts” (p. 70)

## Idioms and Expressions

- “Cody craned his long neck, made a quick survey of the room” (p. 34)
- “You laid it on pretty thick”, Eric noted.” (p. 39)
- “when it hits you, wham, you’re still all messed up” (p.45)
- “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me” (p.55)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education

- Discuss with students the need for taking responsibility for your actions, bullying, and cyberbullying. Use this book as a tool to open discussion about cyber safety as well.
- Provide discussion for students about mental illness and have them research a variety of different forms. Use this research to tell a story from that person’s perspective.

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks:

LA.7.1.7.2, LA.7.2.1.2

- Select several quotes from the beginning of the chapters in the book to read to the class. Ask the students about the purpose of these quotes. How do the quotes inform the reader and add to the story? Have the students write additional quotes for the chapters.

LA.7.2.1.7

- Use the multiple examples of figurative language to encourage students to add similar forms to their own writing.

### Social Studies/Geography

Related benchmark: SS.8.G.4.2

- Discuss with students the reasons why people might relocate. Use this to incorporate information about why people may have relocated throughout history.

# Alcatraz versus the Evil Librarians

by Brandon Sanderson

## Annotation

If you had to choose a talent, you probably wouldn't choose being able to break things, but since he was little Alcatraz Smedry keeps disintegrating things around him! Having been through a series of foster homes, he discovers on his 13<sup>th</sup> birthday that reality is not what he has been brought up to believe and his talent will come in really useful as he works with his new found grandfather and cousins to save the world from the cult of evil librarians!

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.brandonsanderson.com>

## Realia

Item: hourglass, dinosaur models or dinosaur toys, bag of sand, eyeglasses of all styles, world map, old postage, motor oil can, toy sword, monocle, toy shotgun or other toy guns.

Statement: "Hushlanders, I'd like to take this opportunity to commend you for reading this book. I realize the difficulty you must have gone through to obtain it---after all, no Librarian is likely to recommend it, considering the secrets it exposes about their kind." According to our hero, Alcatraz, this book would never be considered important, meaningful, or thoughtful. But *Alcatraz vs The Evil Librarians* is a "solid, true account"....and will hopefully "anchor you in reality."

## Food

Ramen noodles, lettuce (on any sandwich), Twinkies.

## Challenging Words

impending	(p.1 HB)	lethal	(p. 83 HB)
inclination	(p. 2 HB)	dexterously	(p.124 HB)
frayed	(p. 3 HB)	ponderous	(p. 125 HB)
feigned	(p. 24 HB)	stealth	(p. 126 HB)
duress	(p. 26 HB)	marginal	(p. 127 HB)
smelted	(p. 31 HB)	callous	(p. 171 HB)
nonchalance	(p. 37 HB)	farce	(p. 177 HB)
lineage	(p. 36 HB)	scathing	(p. 184 HB)
skeptical	(p. 36 HB)	snide	(p. 184 HB)
pristine	(p. 46 HB)	manacles	(p. 256 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Idioms and Expressions

Grandpa Smedry uses alliterations throughout the story, some examples of his exclamations: Blistering Brooks (p. 17 HB), Hyperventilating Hobbs (p. 21 HB), cavorting cards (p. 95 HB), Pestering Pullmans (p. 99 HB), Whooping Williams (p. 256 HB), Aspiring Asimovs (P. 266 HB)

## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Fine Arts**

Related benchmarks: VA.68.O.1.3, VA.68.S.3.1, VA.68.S.3.5

- Create paper mache models of an “Alivened” creature.

### **Social Studies/Geography**

Related benchmarks:

SS.6.W.3.7

- Introduce students to the ancient philosophers, such as Socrates and Plato. Compare and contrast their ideas.

SS.6.G.4.2, SS.6.G.6.2

- Research how the earth has been mapped, the history of cartography, how our view of the continents and oceans has changed over time.

### **Language Arts**

- Review the Dewey Decimal System of library organization with a scavenger hunt, or by using names/types of television shows, decide where the shows would fit in the library, if it were a book.

# *Jolted: Newton Starker's Rules for Survival*

by Arthur Slade

## **Annotation**

Every member of Newton's mother's family has over the centuries been killed by lightning. Newton himself spends his days living in a protective dome, afraid to go outside. When his mother is killed by a lightning strike, Newton decides he must do something, so he enrolls in the Jerry Potts Academy of Higher Learning and Survival. Will a highly intelligent pig, some good friends, and some unorthodox teaching methods be enough for Newton to conquer his fear?

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://arthurslade.com/frontpage>

## **Realia**

Item: A Journal with the appearance of being old with yellowed paper, etc.

Statement: Newton caught the book his great-grandmother tossed to him. It was ancient, and pieces of the cover flaked away like scales.

Item: Cell phone

Statement: Newton didn't know what the talisman could be, but in his mind he thought it would be a sword.

## **Food**

Truffle quiche, haggis, Eggs Benedict.

## **Challenging Words**

pallbearers	(p. 4 HB)	peripheral	(p. 44 HB)
cumulonimbus	(p. 4 HB)	exuberance	(p. 52 HB)
synapses	(p. 10 HB)	hors d'oeuvres	(p. 55 HB)
Geodesic dome	(p. 11 HB)	pomposity	(p. 79 HB)
argyle	(p. 15 HB)	atrocious	(p. 91 HB)
tantalizing	(p. 23 HB)	pugilist	(p. 93 HB)
vegan	(p. 28 HB)	doltish	(p. 104 HB)
propaganda	(p.36 HB)	trotter	(p. 121 HB)
stickky	(p. 43 HB)	malaise	(p. 157 HB)
scrumptious	(p. 43 HB)	feighed	(p. 164 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- “It was a Celtic jigsaw puzzle.” (p. 10 HB)
- “The tunnels, spa, and a casino are the vibrant commercial heart, lungs, and spleen of Moose Jaw.” (p. 70 HB)

### Similes

- “The bolt would deliver three hundred kilowatts of electricity to the top of his skull, burning his scalp and popping thousands of brain cells like popcorn.” (p. 2 HB)
- “The only other survivor was his great-grandmother Enid, a woman who was as friendly as a pickled wolverine.” (p. 3 HB)

### Idioms and Expressions

- “It’ll put hair on your chest.” (p. 17 HB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Fine Arts

Related benchmarks: VA68.S.1.1

- Have students create a poster about lightning safety. The following web site contains information on myths and facts about lightning.  
<http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/myths.htm>

### Language Arts

Related benchmarks: LA7.4.1.2; LA8.4.1.2

- Newton has created a set of rules to survive his worst fear: lightning. People are afraid of many things such as spiders, snakes, heights, etc. After a discussion about fears and phobias, have students create their own survival guide for a fear they may have or one they can imagine.  
Encourage creativity. The guides may be created in book form and illustrated.

### Science

Related benchmarks: SC6.E.7.6; SC6.E.7.8

- Use the “Stormy Weather” lesson plan from the Discovery Education web site to teach students about weather, cloud formation, static electricity, etc.  
<http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/free-lesson-plans/stormy-weather.cfm>

### Social Studies/Geography

- Newton and his fellow students at the Jerry Potts Academy wore traditional Scottish Tartan plaid kilts. Have students read about the history of the Scottish Tartan plaid. One source with a brief history is <http://www.leviathanstudios.com/figures/macjoe/tartans.html>  
After reading, provide students with strips of construction paper in various colors and have them weave their own tartan design.

# Killer Pizza

by Greg Taylor

## Annotation

When Toby gets a summer job at the new pizza parlor in town he's thrilled, after all he really loves to cook and this will give him some great hands-on experience. Little does he realize that Killer Pizza is just a front for a secret monster hunting organization and he and his coworkers are the latest recruits!

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.gregtaylorwriter.com>

## Realia

Item: Pizza Box, Red Hat with patch that reads "Pizza to Die For"

Three teenage pizza workers are charged with saving Hidden Hills from hideous monsters. Can Strobe, Toby and Annabel save their town from monster infestation? Read the deliciously chilling book Killer Pizza to find out.

## Food

Pizza, Bread Sticks.

## Challenging Words

scrutinize	(p. 27 PB)	claustrophobic	(p. 169 PB)
commissions	(p. 34 PB)	catatonic	(p. 204 PB)
furtive	(p. 43 PB)	disheveled	(p. 230 PB)
humanitarian	(p. 44 PB)	aura	(p. 231 PB)
coalesced	(p. 53 PB)	luminous	(p. 234 PB)
skeptically	(p. 59 PB)	obliterated	(p. 235 PB)
permeated	(p. 61 PB)	disembodied	(p. 245 PB)
diminutive	(p. 75 PB)	impenetrable	(p. 247 PB)
belligerently	(p. 103 PB)	crucible	(p. 247 PB)
congregate	(p. 153 PB)	serendipity	(p. 256 PB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- Her back hunched up and over, her reptile-like skin bursting through her blouse.
- Teeth the size of paring knives.

### Similes

- Doug had been sitting like a slug.
- Spread out under the cathedral-like canopy of the tall oaks, they looked like a creepy platoon of black-clad soldiers, ready to do battle.
- Toby ran to the fireplace, grabbed the poker from its stand, and held it in front of him like a sword.
- Huge black-veined wings curved up and over Toby, like a death shroud.

## **Idioms and Expressions**

- “We’re on a bit of a shoestring budget here.”
- “...as he studied the deadly object he felt his flesh crawl.”
- “But instead there was a little hiccup of silence before Annabel said, ‘Harvey likes us as a team.’”

## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Character Education**

- Identify opposite character traits demonstrated by a character, for example: Toby is at times brave and at times cowardly. Cite an example of Toby being brave, as well as a conflicting example of Toby being fearful. Choose which trait you feel best describes the character and defend your opinion.

### **Fine Arts**

Related benchmarks: VA.68.S.3.1

- Using a variety of possible materials, (pen and ink, charcoal, pencil, paint, clay etc.) student will create a model of the monster, gutatta.
- Create a menu for the Killer Pizza restaurant.

### **Language Arts**

Related benchmarks: LA.6.6.2.3

- Students will create an article for the “Monster Fighting for Dummies” series focusing on ‘How to Destroy Gutatta.’”

Related benchmarks: LA.6.3.3.1

- Toby tried on several occasions to quit fighting monsters, yet each time Harvey or Strobe talked him into staying. Choose a character and point of view to write a persuasive letter to either quit fighting or continue with the trio.

### **Mathematics**

Related benchmarks: MA.7.A.1.2

- Given word problem involving pizza menus, calculate appropriate tip, tax, discounts etc.
- Use Killer Pizza menu to complete word problems involving basic operations.

### **Social Studies/Geography**

Related benchmarks: SS.7.E.2.

- Students will research founders of successful pizza companies and present findings to the group. For example the founder of Pizza Hut, Papa John’s etc.

# Peace, Locomotion

by Jacqueline Woodson

## Annotation

Since the death of their mother and father, Lonnie and his sister Lili have been living with separate foster families. As he doesn't get to see his sister as much as he would like, Lonnie writes her letters that talk about his friends and teachers at school, and his life with his foster family; especially his foster brother Jenkins who returns injured from the Iraq war.

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.jacquelinewoodson.com>

## Realia

Item: Letter paper (stationery) with writing utensils and a nice box.

Statement: In the book Lonnie writes letters that he never sends to express himself along with poems. Have students write their own letters and poems and put them into a big box to share out at the end of the year creating a picture of the year in words just like Lonnie did in Peace, Locomotion.

## Food

Baked chicken, macaroni and cheese, corn bread, salad, chocolate [birthday] cake, peanut butter crackers, Hershey bar, French toast, lemon pound cake, chicken and dumplings, red and green wreath cookies, ice cream, spaghetti with meat sauce, bananas, oranges, chocolate chip cookies, crackers, cupcakes, milk.

## Challenging Words

eternity	(p. 9 PB)
camouflage	(p. 13 PB)
Sickle-cell	(p. 15 PB)
crabby	(p. 29 PB)
limericks	(p. 31 PB)
amnesia	(p. 34 PB)
insurgents	(p. 39 PB)
photosynthesis	(p. 53 PB)
majority	(p. 58 PB)
accountant	(p. 92 PB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- "I got something I think is going to crack a smile out of the **hardest nut**." (p. 131 PB)
- "I think Peace is springtime and your whole family." (p. 135 PB)

### Similes

- "[Peace is] soft **like flannel sheets in the wintertime**." (p. 1 PB)

- “Sometimes, when I see her with her friends and she’s smiling, my whole body feels **like it’s lifting right up into the sky to hang out with the pigeons.**” (p. 57 PB)

### **Idioms and Expressions**

- “If they’re really **all the rage** like you say they are, then I know you and your friends are probably playing with them right now.” (p. 90 PB)
- “**Gotta keep on keeping on.**” (p.129 PB)

## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Character Education**

- Define “Peace” as individuals and then come together as a group to come to a consensus on what peace would look like in your classroom or school. Brainstorm ideas of how to promote peace and decide on 1 to 3 which are doable and implement as a class or school.
- Research the number of casualties of the most recent war in the United States. Decide upon something you will sacrifice as a class or school in their memories, just as Angel sacrificed a part of his chocolate bar. Think about how you feel when doing this.
- Research a famous American who overcame a disability. Think about how you would deal with a similar disability. Write a scene of your life with that disability and how you would overcome it.

### **Fine Arts**

Related benchmarks:

VA.68.C.3.4, VA.68.F.3.1

- Create your own peace posters or comic strips to promote peace in your school, community or the world.

MU.68.F.1.2, MU.68.O.2.1

- Write a song, poem or rap about peace and hope and then perform it in a small group. Videotape and share on your school’s morning show or other venue.

### **Foreign Languages**

- Look up the word Peace in as many different languages as possible. Create posters with your word and pictures of people in that country as well as peace symbols/illustrations. Create a multicultural peace mural or quilt with all of the posters!

### **Language Arts**

Related benchmarks:

LA.6.4.1.2

- Write and publish a class or school poetry book of student poems. The poems can be about anything. Publication can be anything from Xeroxing to binding to publishing a professional-looking collection using a website like [www.createspace.com](http://www.createspace.com). As Ms. Cooper would put it, students would go from [feeling like] aspiring poets to being real poets.

LA.6.4.2.4

- Write an imaginary email or letter conversation with someone you know. Now remove the letters to you. Read just your own letters. Think about how Lonnie was responding to Lili’s letters but her letters were not in the book. Modify your own letters so they make sense without having to read the other person’s letters. Then do the same thing for their letters.

### **Science**

Related Benchmarks:

SC.8.L.18.1, SC.8.L.18.3

- Discuss photosynthesis and the cycle of life.

SC.8.E.5.2, SC.8.E.5.3

- Create a star chart of the major constellations and astronomical bodies above your town right now. Think about a family member who lives in another state or country. Use a website like [www.skyviewcafe.com](http://www.skyviewcafe.com) to locate the stars and astronomical bodies they can see right now. Make a Venn diagram comparing similarities and differences in the night sky.

**Social Studies/Geography**

Related benchmarks: LA.6.4.3.2

Research the history of drafts in this country. Think about yourself and how you would feel about being drafted. Write a short persuasive essay for or against the idea of a draft in this country.