

# A Bear Named Trouble

by Marion Dane Bauer

## Annotation

Ten-year-old Jonathan and his father move to Anchorage, where his father is the new zookeeper. Jonathan loves animals and befriends a young, injured bear named Trouble who had broken into the zoo. After killing Mother Goose, the zoo's favorite attraction for children, Jonathan struggles with his grief for the goose and his anger with Trouble. Eventually, Jonathan understands Trouble's actions and plans a way to save the bear's life. Based on a true story, the familiar author of *Runt* offers another story of animals in the wild that will appeal to young animal lovers. (Grades 3-6)

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.mariondanebauer.com>

## Realia

Item: Stuffed brown bear and a stuffed white goose

Statement: Have you ever wondered what life would be like if you were a bear? How about a noisy goose? Ten year old Jonathan loves animals so much that he even pretends to be inside the animal. Read *A Bear Named Trouble* to find out how much trouble ensues when a bear breaks INTO the zoo.

## Food

Corn kernels, Popcorn, Macaroni and Cheese

## Challenging Words

adept	(p. 32 PB)	indignant	(p. 51 PB)
aggravating	(p. 33 PB)	infuriating	(p. 103 PB)
alignment	(p. 10 PB)	misaligned	(p. 112 PB)
carcass	(p. 16 PB)	prowled	(p. 55 PB)
emphatically	(p. 49 PB)	raucous	(p. 50 PB)
fatality	(p. 71 PB)	reverberated	(p. 107 PB)
futile	(p. 15 PB)	subdued	(p. 19 PB)
hierarchy	(p. 2 PB)	territory	(p. 1 PB)
idyllic	(p. 3 PB)	tottered	(p. 31 PB)
imperious	(p. 26 PB)	undulating	(p. 34 PB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- "Rhonda laughed and laughed, her voice a chiming bell, so clear that she could have been in the next room instead of thousands of miles away." (p. 18 PB)

### Similes

- "Rhonda would like Ahpun the best, Jonathan was certain, because the white bear swam like a seal." (p. 29 PB)
- "And she would toss her dark curls and laugh at the freedom of skimming through the water like a fur-covered fish." (p. 29-30 PB)

- “He should have known to go far away, but he was drawn toward the scent as if he were being pulled by a rope.” (p. 48 PB)

### Idioms and Expressions

- “Jonathan’s heart raced at the thought.” (p. 54 PB)
- “The words erupted from Jonathan in a shout. He filled the night air with his outrage the whole way home.” (p. 62 PB)
- “Jonathan’s head spun.” (p. 83 PB)
- “‘But,’ Jonathan would remind her for the hundredth time. ‘you have to be *inside* the feathers, *inside* the beak. You have to feel them.’” (p. 11 PB)
- “The cold night air slapped him in the face.” (p. 37 PB)
- “A raucous honking stopped him in his tracks.” (p. 50 PB)

### Curriculum Connections

#### Character Education:

- Discuss with class how Jonathan and Trouble are both separated from their mothers and the consequences of those events.
- Have students debate whether Jonathan should be angry with Trouble for killing Mama Goose.
- Conduct a discussion on why Jonathan changes his mind about Trouble being shot by the rangers. Why did he risk his life for the bear?

#### Fine Arts:

- Divide class into small groups and have them design their own zoos with unique animal habitats.

#### Language Arts:

- Using a Venn diagram or other graphic organizer, have students compare and contrast black and brown bears. Projects should include characteristics, habitats, and diets.
- Have students write a story from the animal’s point of view.
- Utilizing the resources for the nonfiction story about Trouble, have students research and explore the differences between fiction and nonfiction. Assign the students to write a nonfiction article and a fictional story about Trouble. The following web sites will be helpful:

<http://www.adn.com/adn/intern/westfallbear.html>

<http://lszoo.org/tour/northern/trouble.htm>

#### Social Studies/Geography:

- Display a map of the United States and have students locate Anchorage, Alaska and Duluth, Minnesota. Have students research the cities using print and online resources. Students will present a mediated report to the class on their research findings.

# ***Cabin on Trouble Creek***

by Jean Van Leeuwen

## **Annotation**

Daniel, 11, and Will, 9, are left alone after Pa leaves Ohio to go back to Pennsylvania to bring Ma and the rest of the children back to the wilderness. Pa had quickly built a cabin before leaving and the boys must finish it while waiting for Pa and Ma to return in a few weeks. Unfortunately, sickness keeps the parents from returning and the boys must survive the harsh winter on their own. Luckily, a Native American trapper teaches them some basic survival skills such as how to set snares to catch food. As the boys struggle through the winter, Daniel and Will mature as they learn to rely on themselves, their wits, and one another. This believable frontier tale is based on an actual incident that occurred in 1803 and gives a realistic picture of survival in the wilderness. (Grades 4-7)

## **Author on the Internet**

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

## **Realia**

Item: Cornmeal

Statement: Imagine that the only food you have to eat is cornmeal. How long do you think you could survive eating primarily cornmeal? Find out how Daniel and Will survive several months eating cornmeal and food they scavenged in the woods. Read *Cabin on Trouble Creek* by Jean Van Leeuwen.

Item: Leaves

Statement: How long could you tolerate sleeping on the ground with nothing but leaves and a blanket? Find out how Daniel and Will survived in their wilderness cabin. Read *Cabin on Trouble Creek* by Jean Van Leeuwen.

## **Food**

Johnnycake (cornbread), Raspberries, Grapes, Nuts (chestnuts, hickory nuts, walnuts), Venison (possibly use beef jerky)

## **Challenging Words**

ague	(p. 7 HB)	noose	(p. 77 HB)
ambushed	(p. 6 HB)	picketed	(p.4 HB)
blazes	(p. 92 HB)	poultice	(p. 185 HB)
britches	(p. 57 HB)	puncheon	(p. 21 HB)
chinking	(p. 17 HB)	putrefy	(p. 185 HB)
daubing	(p. 17 HB)	skittering	(p. 54 HB)
foraging	(p. 31 HB)	snare	(p. 73 HB)
johnnycake	(p. 9 HB)	thicket	(p. 4 HB)
lurk	(p. 93 HB)	varmints	(p. 8 HB)
massacre	(p. 6 HB)	whittling	(p. 32 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Similes

- “Each tree looked so much like the next one, and they stood so close together. Like the long, thick, scarred legs of some giant beast.” (p. 4 HB)
- “Just look at this soil, boys,’ he said, poking a stick into it. ‘Black as charcoal. Soil like this will grow anything.” (p. 6 HB)
- “It was amazing how much better he felt. His stomach was like a fire in a fireplace, he thought. You had to keep feeding it, otherwise it wouldn’t put out a blaze.” (p. 49 HB)
- “He felt his eyes burn with tears. He couldn’t think anymore, his head was spinning so. Like one of those wooden tops Pa carved for Zeke. They were truly lost now.” (p. 58 HB)
- Other similes: pages 89, 95, 185, 195

### Idioms and Expressions

- “Daniel and Will filled their bellies with rabbit stew that night. Afterward, when they had scraped the pot clean, they lay back on their elbows a little way from the fire. Daniel was feeling warm and sleepy and full all the way to the top inside.” (p. 77 HB)
- “Speaking of crazy as a coot,’ said Jake, ‘puts me in mind of Mad Mary.’” (p. 97 HB)
- “‘Yep,’ he said, grinning. ‘Them was the days. Before this country started getting all settled up.’” (p. 98 HB)
- “Daniel looked around the cabin, amazed at how different it looked already. . . . Yes, this cabin was cozied up almost like home.” (p. 218 HB)
- Other idioms and expressions: pages 77, 98, 172

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education:

- Review passages from the book that refer to the way Daniel treats Solomon. Then have students list specific examples of the character trait – respect.
- Discuss with the class how Daniel models the character trait, responsibility, for his younger more carefree brother, Will. Then have students list the specific examples given in the story. Extend this activity with having the students list ways that they model responsible behaviors.

### Fine Arts:

- Show examples of woven baskets and teach students to construct a basket from natural materials found in the local woods, such as pine needles.
- Have students design and construct a miniature version of the coats that Daniel fashioned from his blanket. Have them try to sew it together using rawhide or embroidery floss without a needle.

### Language Arts:

- Assign a research project that focuses on the origin of Solomon’s language and on other Native American languages. Have students locate the Native American terms that Solomon used when speaking to Daniel and Will.
- Using SUNLINK, have students locate and read another frontier or pioneer life book. Compare and contrast the life of the main character with Daniel and Will’s lives.
- Have students imagine what their lives would be like if they had lived with Daniel and Will as they awaited their family’s arrival. Instruct students to write daily entries describing possible events for at least one month.

### Mathematics:

- Discuss with class how the pioneers used all of their resources to survive in the wilderness. Have several students research the average size and shape of a rabbit skin and draw that shape to size on paper. On that shape, have the students create patterns for different size mittens.

- Purchase a bag of cornmeal and give it to a small group of students. Have them read the directions and determine how many meals could be made from one bag.
- Choose a small group of interested students to research the size, shapes, and construction of pioneer log cabins. As a follow-up activity, the group could construct a miniature cabin using twigs and similar building techniques.

#### Science

- Discuss alternative healing methods used by the pioneers. Have groups of students research poultices, their uses and ingredients.
- Lead a discussion on the native foods and plants found in the Ohio region. Have students research which trees and plants were used for food and medicinal purposes. To extend the activity, have students compare/contrast the foods and plants native to Ohio with those in Florida.

#### Social Studies/Geography:

- Have the library media specialist teach the students to use SUNLINK to find a nonfiction book about pioneers or life in the frontier. Then have students compare the facts in the books with the events in *Cabin on Trouble Creek*. Students could use a graphic organizer online to complete the project.
- Research Native American tribes that were originally located in Ohio. Based on their research findings about the tribes, have students determine to which tribe Solomon may have belonged.
- Divide class into small groups to research wilderness survival strategies for various types of environments.

# **Christopher Mouse: The Tale of a Small Traveler**

by William Wise

## **Annotation**

Christopher Mouse's adventures begin "in a commonplace way," but quickly escalate to include adventures in the Metropolitan Museum of Art where he encounters a large cat in the Egyptian room. Fortunately, Christopher's mom had properly prepared him and his siblings to survive in the world by teaching them how to find a good owner, how to read, and even how to escape a home if necessary. Eventually, Christopher needs all of these skills to survive his exciting adventures. The delightful ink illustrations and the enticing story make this a winner. (Grades 3-5)

## **Realia**

Item: Stuffed (or real) white mouse

Statement: Have you ever wanted a white mouse for a pet? Have you ever wondered if a white mouse wants to be a pet? To see life from a white mouse's point of view, read *Christopher Mouse: The Story of a Small Traveler*.

## **Food**

Strawberry jelly, Cheese (Liederkrantz, Camembert, French Brie), Walnuts, Hazelnuts, Cashews

## **Challenging Words**

anguish	(p. 17 PB)	nudge	(p.15 PB)
callous	(p. 86 PB)	pedigreed	(p. 49 PB)
chortle	(p. 20 PB)	philosophical	(p. 23 PB)
commiserating	(p. 63 PB)	queasiness	(p. 28 PB)
doggerel	(p. 71 PB)	reminisce	(p. 34 PB)
fetch	(p. 5 PB)	scorn	(p. 71 PB)
grist	(p. 15 PB)	swaggered	(p. 13 PB)
jaunty	(p. 106 PB)	swindle	(p. 67 PB)
meager	(p. 69 PB)	taxidermy	(p. 90 PB)
morosely	(p. 39 PB)	unscrupulous	(p. 67 PB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Metaphor**

- "For his owner, alas, is a snake in the grass." (p.72 PB)

### **Similes**

- "She dropped them into our cage, wriggling those fat fingers above our heads like five pale sausages." (p. 3 PB)
- "The box rocked back and forth like a pendulum as Mrs. Crimmons strode from the room." (p. 28 PB)

- “The boy is here to buy a pet. Don’t stand there like a statue – you’ve got to respond!” (p. 48 PB)
- “Every now and then I ran into a gale that seemed to blow out of nowhere; it swirled along the hall for a few seconds and then abruptly died away, leaving my teeth chattering and my long, furless tail as chilled as an icicle.” (p. 113 PB)

### Idioms and Expressions

- “He’ll talk your ears off with it, if you give him the chance.” (p. 37 PB)
- “Aubrey’s father laughed. ‘A chip off the old block. Before long you’ll be teaching your old man a few tricks!’” (p. 66 PB)
- “Mice are so creepy-crawly! I wouldn’t have you in *my* house for all the tea in China!” (p.76 PB)
- “Without a qualm, he was going to place me in the hands of a boy who would butcher me!” (p. 92 PB)
- “I refused to knuckle under,  
So it’s hardly any wonder  
That with every mounting crisis I could deal!” (p. 102 PB)
- “Slim pickings here, I guess.” (p.137 PB)
- “It’s only a hunch, I know, but something tells me that it could be my sister at the pet shop, and that our story might end the way every story should, with singing and laughter – and a poem that says that after our long separation, Anna and I lived happily ever after.” (p. 152 PB)

### Curriculum Connections

#### Character Education:

- Discuss with the class the meaning of optimism. Who do they know who is optimistic? Is optimism a valuable trait? Why/why not?
- Have students discuss why Aubrey lied to Freddy. Should Freddy have given Christopher to him? Why/why not?

#### Fine Arts:

- Lead a virtual tour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art at [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org), focusing on the ancient Egyptian exhibit.

#### Language Arts:

- Have students pick a pet and write his/her biography, from the pet’s point of view.
- Instruct the students to compare the events in chapter 8, *Desperate Circumstances*, from Christopher’s and the cat’s points of view.
- Have students predict the “real ending” if Annie is at the pet store and the three children buy her as a companion for Christopher.
- Assign students the task of defining puns, riddles, quips, sallies, and ripostes with examples for each.
- Divide class into small groups and have them choose one of Christopher’s poems to memorize and present to the class.

#### Mathematics:

- Have students research the following terms: profit and capital gains to see how successful Aubrey was in making money.
- Read to the class *If You Hopped Like a Frog* by David Schwartz. Then have the students compare the distances traveled by Christopher’ in the museum to a person’s ability to travel.

#### Science:

- Invite a pet store owner to tell the students about the needs of various pets.
- Invite a taxidermist to visit the class and discuss his/her work.

# *Drita, My Homegirl*

by Jenny Lombard

## Annotation

Drita, a Muslim Albanian refugee from Kosovo, narrates her struggle to understand American ways. She and her family join the father in New York City and live in a crowded apartment building. Drita's mom has a difficult time adjusting and falls into a serious depression; consequently, Drita must make the difficult transition with minimal family support. In alternating chapters, Maxie, a bright African American fourth grader, tells her story. She lives with her grandmother and widowed father and has behavioral and academic problems in school. The two girls forge a friendship based on their mutual need to grieve, one for the loss of her mother and the other for her homeland. This poignant, realistic, heartwarming story will spark lively conversations. (Grades 3-5)

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.dritamyhomegirl.com/p/reviewbio.html>

## Realia

Item: Basketball

Statement: Who would have thought a basketball would help Drita find a friend? Read *Drita, My Homegirl* to find out how a basketball bridged the gap between New York and Kosovo.

## Food

Popcorn, Apple Pie

## Challenging Words

baba	(p. 1 HB)	nene	(p. 24 HB)
bibliotekarja	(p. 89 HB)	Rrobe plake	(p. 24 HB)
biskota	(p. 73 HB)	Shoge e ngushte	(p. 90 HB)
Byrck me mish	(p. 45 HB)	Te shtunen	(p. 90 HB)
Fruta dhe perime	(p. 13 HB)	trahana	(p. 1 HB)
gazetar	(p. 60 HB)	zemra	(p. 75 HB)
gjyshe	(p. 1 HB)	Zemra ime	(p. 44 HB)
karroce	(p. 13 HB)	zhduker	(p. 5 HB)
Mengjez	(p. 98 HB)	zonjee	(p. 3 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Similes

- "All of it dirty, a gift for the poor,' my mother says with a sound like crying coming up from her voice." (p. 5 HB)
- "She's the kind of white person who's so pale, she's like a ghost – you think you can see right through her." (p.19 HB)
- "Behind my eyes, I see flashes of orange, look like bombs dropping, and I know my grandmother is right." (p. 34 HB)
- "Speaking English is very difficult – like moving rocks inside your mouth using only your tongue." (p. 35 HB)

## Idioms and Expressions

- “When you call someone your homey, it’s because they feel like a home to you, and you really like them.” (p. 23 HB)
- “She thinks she’s alla that,” Kayla says.” (p. 62 HB)
- “I close one eye and focus on the sweet spot my daddy told me all about. It’s on the backboard, right above the basket.” (p. 62 HB)
- “But Drita’s in a bad position. She’s boxed in by Tasha and Kayla now.” (p. 66 HB)
- “Are you going to call my house?’ I ask him because now it’s my turn to be shaking in my shoes.” (p. 71 HB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education:

- Discuss with students ways that Drita’s classmates could have made her feel more welcome. How would they feel if they were in a place they could not understand? What would have made them feel more comfortable?
- Have the students go back through the book and find each of the incidents where Maxie made poor choices in her actions. Discuss why she made the choices and what could have been better choices for Maxie to make.
- Facilitate a discussion about the fact that in Kosovo Drita’s school was separated into a Serbian side and a Muslim side. Discuss what would happen if an American classroom was divided into different sections. Do the students think this is a good idea? Why do the students think that in America we do not separate the people? What are the legal issues involved?
- Start a discussion on bullying with the example from the book when Maxie also got into trouble for trying to help Drita after Brandee hit her. Discuss ways Maxie could have helped Drita without getting herself in trouble also. Expand the discussion by incorporating your school’s rules on bullying.
- Read an excerpt from the book that describes how Maxie did not like Lisa even before she met her. Have the students offer their opinions on why they think she felt that way. Poll the students to determine if they think it is fair. Discuss how Lisa handled the situation and whether or not this was the best course of action.

### Foreign Languages:

- Have students use the list of challenging words to try to figure out the meaning of the Armenian words from the context clues in the story. Then have them check the Armenian dictionary to see if they are correct.

### Mathematics:

- Assign the following problem to a small group of students:
  - Find out how many miles Drita traveled from Kosova to New York. Refer to the story to find how many days the journey took. Figure out the average miles she traveled each day.

### Social Studies/Geography:

- Divide class into small groups and assign the following research projects:
  - Research Kosova and its history, culture and issues.
  - Research the background of why this area has been at war.
  - Make a map of Kosova. Find Drita’s home in Prishtina
  - Use Sunlink’s Kid’s Search Tools to find information on Kosovo:
    - <http://factmonster.info/spot/kosovo1.html>

# ***Fame and Glory in Freedom, Georgia***

by Barbara O'Connor

## **Annotation**

The two misfits, Bird and Harlem, eventually form an unlikely alliance as partners in the school's spelling bee. Bird's kindly neighbor Miss Delphine, supports her efforts to gain Harlem's friendship and to win "fame and glory" and a trip to Disney World. Bird soon learns that being Harlem's friend is not easy, but she courageously works to build their friendship and each strives to overcome their shortcomings. Sympathetic readers will easily become involved with this vulnerable, but courageous heroine. (Grades 4-6)

## **Author on the Internet**

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

## **Realia**

Item: English dictionary

Statement: "Miss Delphine yanked the screen door open and disappeared inside. Then she marched back out and dropped a big, heavy book in my lap – *Oxford American Dictionary*. Why is the dictionary important in the book, *Fame and Glory in Freedom, Georgia* and will it help Bird achieve her goals?"

Item: Eyeglasses

Statement: If you had a kid who needed eyeglasses and you didn't have any money, what would you do? Find out who needs eyeglasses and how they discover they need glasses in *Fame and Glory in Freedom, Georgia*.

## **Food**

Black-eyed Peas, Collard Greens, Stewed Tomatoes, Ham, Apple Pie, Ice Cream with Cherries, Nuts, and Chocolate Syrup

## **Challenging Words**

ambled	(p. 27 HB)	provincial	(p. 78 HB)
atrocious	(p. 38 HB)	rickety	(p. 12 HB)
biennial	(p. 42 HB)	ricocheting	(p. 101 HB)
centaur	(p. 28 HB)	rummage	(p. 56 HB)
chalice	(p. 28 HB)	rustling	(p. 74 HB)
compatible	(p. 75 HB)	scowling	(p. 3 HB)
dangled	(p. 35 HB)	smidgen	(p. 19 HB)
facilitate	(p. 49 HB)	succotash	(p. 53 HB)
larynx	(p. 78 HB)	tattered	(p. 69 HB)
orator	(p. 58 HB)	whooshing	(p. 28 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Similes

- “Miss Delphine smiled and gazed out at the magnolia tree in the front yard. Its leathery leaves spread out across the ground like a giant tepee.” (p. 7 HB)
- “To make those pea-flicking kids stop and take a look at Burdette Weaver and really see me instead of looking right through me like I’m Casper the Ghost.” (p. 15 HB)
- “Miss Delphine’s shoes click-clacked on the sidewalk and her dangly earrings sparkled in the sun like diamonds.” (p. 11 HB)
- “By lunchtime, it seemed, like the whole world had turned into one big Noah’s Ark. Two by two. Everybody paired up except the losers.” (p. 22 HB)
- “He was still as a statue.” (p. 71 HB)
- “We lit candles and turned on the tiny white Christmas light we’d strung over the windows, and that room I’d been in a thousand times looked like a brand-new fairyland.” (p. 62 HB)
- Other similes: pages 23, 55, 61, 62, 77

### Idioms and Expressions

- “‘Bird.’ Miss Delphine stopped peeling and leaned towards me. ‘The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach.’” (p. 10-11 HB)
- “She nodded. ‘Something tells me that boy is gonna be a tough nut to crack.’” (p. 14 HB)
- “So while Mrs. Moore went on and on about two heads being better than one and blah blah blah, I slumped down in my seat and scribbled on my science notebook.” (p. 22 HB)
- “Miss Delphine had jiggled my shoulders and said, ‘Aren’t we a sight for sore eyes?’” (p. 61 HB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education:

- Facilitate a discussion on bullying, starting with how the students in the story continually made fun of Harlem. Have the class make a list of the ways Harlem could have handled the problem of bullying.
- Have the students make a list of the character traits that make Bird such a good friend.

### Fine Arts:

- Distribute directions for and examples of pink tissue paper flowers like Bird and Miss Delphine made in the story. Have students create similar flowers for displays around the school.

### Foreign Languages:

- Have students look for words in the book that had their origins in other languages (e.g., boutique comes from the French language.) Have students make a chart with the words and the languages of origin.

### Language Arts:

- Lead a discussion on the characters in the story, focusing on Bird. Have students decide if Bird achieved any of her goals. Conclude the discussion by having the students write an essay about a goal they have set for themselves and how they plan to reach it.
- Have students debate the pressures of spelling bees and research the prizes that are offered with them. Have students discuss the fact that if Bird had won the spelling bee, she was going to pick the bicycle and a trip to Disney World as her prizes. Give students an opportunity to tell which prize they would have picked and why.

### Mathematics:

- Give students the following word problem:

- Bird loved shopping at the Have-to-Have It Shop for bargains. She bought her skates for \$3.50. How many quarters are in \$3.50? How many dimes? How many nickels?
- Read the book, *How Much is a Million* by David Schwartz. Relate this story to *Fame and Glory in Freedom, Georgia*. In this story, Bird said Mr. Moody must have had about a million cans. Does the class think Mr. Moody really had a million cans?

Social Studies/Geography:

- Divide class into small groups and remind students that Bird wants to win the spelling bee so that she can go to Disney World. Then have students visit the following Internet site <http://disneyworld.disney.go.com/wdw/parks/parkOverview> to research the parks in Disney World. For a final project, the students may make a brochure, chart, or poster of all the places Bird could go and the things she would see and do.
- Take the students to the library media center to research the history of spelling bees. Have students answer questions such as: 1) When did they start? 2) What was the original purpose of the spelling bees? Has the purpose changed today? 3) Do spelling bees today differ from spelling bees in the past? How are they alike? How are they different? As a final project, have students create a Venn diagram that shows the similarities and differences.

# ***A House of Tailors***

by Patricia Reilly Giff

## **Annotation**

Thirteen-year-old Dina has learned her family's trade of fine tailoring in their German home in the 1870s. When she moves to Brooklyn to live with her Mama's brother, Dina expects to live a very different type of life. Unfortunately, her hopes are dashed when she finds herself living in a crowded, five-story walk-up tenement building where she must continue the hated sewing and help take care of little Marie. Hardships continue as the family struggles through a smallpox epidemic and a devastating fire. Believable characters and endearing letters from "home" bring this immigrant struggle to young readers. (Grades 5-8)

## **Author on the Internet**

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

## **Realia**

Item: Sewing pattern, thimble, needles, pins, thread; examples of embroidery

Statement: If you were a tailor, what tools would you use? To find out how Dina thinks she is escaping the life of a tailor but finds herself a tailor once more, read *A House of Tailors* by Patricia Reilly Giff.

## **Food**

Lemon cookies, Apple strudel, German noodles

## **Challenging Words**

annexing	(p. 51 PB)	shaving	(p. 48 PB)
Black Forest	(p. 103 PB)	snuffling	(p.49 PB)
bodice	(p. 4 PB)	spool	(p. 47 PB)
crocheting	(p. 71 PB)	stoop	(p. 46 PB)
faillie	(p. 8 PB)	thimble	(p. 4 PB)
Frau	(p. 6 PB)	trousseau	(p. 73 PB)
gilt	(p. 68 PB)	tunic	(p. 4 PB)
greenhorn	(p. 96 PB)	vaccinated	(p. 85 PB)
icebox	(p. 77 PB)	wafted	(p. 47 PB)
mimicking	(p. 70 PB)	wrought iron	(p. 64 PB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Metaphors**

- "My arms were prisoners in their sleeves; my back almost sizzled on the rook of the house." (p. 36 PB)
- "He was frowning, the lines in his forehead a washboard." (p 55 PB)
- Other metaphors: pages 103, 143

## Similes

- “It’s worn down over the face like one of Mama’s dinner crepes.” (p. 51 PB)
- “Like Konig the cat, Dina has claws that you don’t see until you’ve been scratched.” (p. 54 PB)
- “I stabbed at the inside of the drawer, the dresser groaning and trembling as if it were alive.” (p. 61 PB)
- “The hat was in my hands. It was like the chiffon cake at the bakery in Freiburg, all swirls and cream on a round piece of white silk.” (p. 68 PB)
- “Through the archway into the hall, the sewing machine sat on the worn rug like a huge black beetle.” (p. 70 PB)
- “I was through the door in an instant, looking up at the stairway, which seemed to be covered in a dense fog, like the bridge over my river on an early spring morning.” (p. 113 PB)
- Other similes: pages 5, 90, 109, 119, 120, 134, 141

## Idioms and Expressions

- “There was no one to whip up a birthday cake, to tuck a small present under my pillow.” (p. 39 PB)
- “You can certainly sew. You have a gift for it.” (p. 133 PB)
- “Then he smacked his hand on the table. ‘Where is your head?’ he asked.” (p. 142 PB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education:

- Discuss with students how this author gave Dina’s mother the particular characteristic of stringing happenings together with the word “If...”. Find the examples on page 12 and on page 21. Ask students if they think Dina could have changed what happened? Can they think of an event that could have been changed “if” someone in one of their families had not done something?
- Discuss adversarial relationships with students, illustrating it with the interactions of Dina and her Uncle. Find examples of their arguments in which Dina feels like she “wins” and in which she feels like she does not. Have students discuss why they think each incident occurred.

### Foreign Languages:

- Have students compile a list of the German words and their definitions found in the book.

### Language Arts:

- Assign students the task of comparing Dina’s letters with those of her sister and Mother. How do you think they would have used e-mail today?

### Mathematics:

- Have students locate the conversion rate for U.S. and German money. How much is \$5.00 worth? How much was \$5.00 worth in 1871?
- Discuss how difficult life was during Dina’s lifetime. Then refer to the quote from Dina’s uncle, the tailor who, “if you begin every morning and work until dinnertime, we might get a dollar a day.” (p. 72 PB). They finally agree that Dina would get \$.40 of the dollar. How much would that be per hour?

### Science:

- Have students research the smallpox epidemic in New York. Was it important that the health department workers go from house to house looking for people with smallpox? How many people died from smallpox?

Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students locate the Rhine River border between Germany and France in an atlas. Can they locate the German cities of Breisach and Freiburg? Have students calculate the number of miles Dina traveled to get to New York City.
- Remind students that the topic of immigration is a hot news topic today. What were the immigration laws when Dina came to the United States? Could she have immigrated today? What did it mean on page 29 (PB) when Dina wondered if “they were going to chalk my coat with an X and send me straight back across the ocean?”

# *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*

by Kate DiCamillo

## Annotation

Edward Tulane is a selfish, cold-hearted, and vain china rabbit owned by 10-year-old Abilene Tulane, who dearly loves him. Edward, of course, does not return this love and the Grandmother recognizes his selfishness. Unfortunately for Edward, he must make a difficult and, at times, horrifying journey to learn the value of love. Edward's journey begins by his falling overboard during the family's ocean voyage where he remains underwater for 297 days until he is rescued by a fisherman. As his journey continues, Edward learns about fear, love, and humility. Readers will be swept along on Edward's journey in this exquisite and memorable tale by Newbery Award winner Kate DiCamillo. (Grades 3-6)

## Author on the Internet

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

## Realia

Item: China rabbit

Statement: "Once in a house on Egypt Street, there lived a rabbit who was made almost entirely of china." Read about Edward's extraordinary journey in *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*.

Item: Harmonica

Statement: "And then came another song, the hum of a harmonica." Find out why the harmonica is important to a particular character during Edward's miraculous journey.

## Food

Bread, Cookies, Pies, Stew, Biscuits, Pancakes, Eggs, Steak, Toast, Coffee

## Challenging Words

cavalierly	(p. 19 HB)	grotesque	(p. 35 HB)
condescending manner	(p. 9 HB)	maw	(p. 17 HB)
derogatory	(p. 16 HB)	pummeled	(p. 55 HB)
discerning	(p. 64 HB)	rancid	(p. 81)
ennui	(p. 5 HB)	salvation	(p. 84)
excruciatingly dull	(p. 23 HB)	umbrage	(p. 58)
exhilarated	(p. 88 HB)	vain	(p. 181)

## Figurative Language

### Similes

- "Got the old folks bewitched, don't you?" said Lolly. "I heard the talk in town. That they've been treating you like a rabbit child." (p. 77 HB)
- "Pellegrina was very old. She had a large, sharp nose and bright, black eyes that shone like dark stars." (p. 9 HB)
- "Bryce picked up Edward and held him so that he was standing straight, like a soldier, at the end of the bed. "All right, now you can open them." (p. 126 HB)

- Other similes: pages 29, 54, 61, 98

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education:

- Remind students that Edward met many people on his journey. Some of them were kind to him and some were cruel or mean. Have students make a chart of the characters and their personality traits. Discuss how each character helped Edward's self discovery.
- Have the students do a character study of Bryce. What makes him such a special person? What special qualities does Bryce possess?
- Discuss that fact that listening is an important theme throughout Edward's journey. Discuss with students why listening is important. Ask them to list what they think are the qualities of being a good listener.

### Fine Arts:

- Collaborate with the music teacher. Have him/her teach the students a simple song on the harmonica or have students listen to harmonica music.
- Have each student choose a different character in the story. Have them draw a portrait of this character.

### Foreign Languages:

- Reread the passage in which Edward fell overboard into the Atlantic Ocean. Ask the students what language besides English they think Laurence and Nellie spoke? Have students learn 20 basic words in this language.

### Language Arts:

- Discuss the problem that Edward is repeatedly lost by those who love him. Ask students if they have ever lost a treasure? How did they deal with the loss? Instruct students to write an essay about what happened to the treasured item and what consequences occurred following this event.
- Divide your students into groups. Select a chapter for each group to recreate as a reader's theater. Have the students practice and present their theater to the class.
- Have your students write a story about their favorite doll or stuffed animal as the main character.

### Mathematics:

- Remind students that Edward's journey was long in years, but was it long in distance? Calculate the number of miles that Edward traveled. Add the miles to the map they create in the social studies curriculum suggestion.

### Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students make a list of all the places Edward visited during his journey. As a final project, have students create a map of all the places Edward lived.
- Assign students a research project on hoboes and tramps, focusing on their role in United States history. Have students share their findings with the class, including a list of the characteristics of a typical hobo. Have students decide if Bull and Lucy fit that mold.

# No Dogs Allowed!

by Bill Wallace

## Annotation

For eleven-year-old Kristine, falling in love with another pet is unthinkable. She is still grieving for her family's horse that recently died. Even though the new puppy, Mattie, that she received for her birthday is adorable, there is just no way she will let herself get attached to the puppy and love it like she did her pet horse. Additionally, she is worried about the health of her grandfather and her new baby sister. Eventually, Kristine learns to handle her fears and take a chance on new relationships. Pet lovers and readers seeking a heartwarming, contemporary story will gravitate to this one. (Grades 4-6)

## Author on the Internet

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/contributor.jsp?id=2683>

## Realia

Item: Turkey bell or cow bell

Statement: "You still have any of those turkey-bells Grandpa used to have?' Meme nodded. 'They're collector's items. Can't find the things anymore. But I think there's a few in the closet. I'll go get one.' We waited until Meme brought a small bell to her. The thing looked like one of the antique cow bells Meme kept on the mantel -- only smaller." Read *No Dogs Allowed!* to find out how these bells, turkeys, and dogs are woven together into this appealing story!

## Food

Chocolate Chip Cookies, Quesadillas, Popcorn (cooked with oil on the stove)

## Challenging Words

calloused	(p. 91 PB)	immaculate	(p. 28 PB)
colic	(p. 123 PB)	inconvenience	(p. 69 PB)
conformation	(p. 57 PB)	invisible	(p. 37 PB)
conniving	(p. 51 PB)	scorched	(p. 92 PB)
cylinder	(p. 78 PB)	spectacular	(p. 115 PB)
eased	(p. 134 PB)	veterinarian	(p. 6 PB)
embarrassment	(p. 24 PB)	yearned	(p. 126 PB)
groggy	(p. 32 PB)		

## Figurative Language

### Similes

- "Sleeping next to a scared puppy is like sleeping during an earthquake." (p. 104 PB)
- "I felt like I just got to sleep. Head fuzzy and eyes that felt like someone had poured sand in them, I sat up." (p. 105 PB)
- "Guilt covered Anna's face like a blanket. Her bottom lip poached out so far, a parakeet could have perched on it." (p. 83 PB)
- "'Grumpy old woman,' he mumbled to Daddy. 'Got ears like a bat.'" (p. 133 PB)

## **Idioms and Expressions**

- “Revenge is sweet!” (p. 73 PB)
- “You’re not supposed to be eating smoked meat, either, and you scarfed that brisket down like you were starving to death.” (p. 133 PB)
- “I had five beautifully shaped salmon patties on the griddle and was just ready to pour the taters-n-onions into the skillet, when we heard a bloodcurdling scream from the living room.” (p. 82 PB)

## **Curriculum Connections**

### Character Education:

- Discuss with students the death of a pet. Use Matt’s idea on page 62 that it is better to enjoy the pet you have now than spend your time thinking about what is gone.

### Foreign Languages:

- Have students scan the text and make a chart listing the Spanish words in the book. Then have the students locate the definitions in a Spanish language dictionary and write them on their chart.

### Science:

- Have students research the history of popcorn and explain why it pops.

# *The President's Daughter*

by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

## Annotation

The White House is never the same once the hard-driving, fun loving Theodore Roosevelt family moves in after President McKinley's assassination. For 10-year-old Ethel and her brothers, it holds a musty basement perfect for roller skating and lots of other rooms for playing or housing their pets. Just when Ethel starts to get settled, her parents send her to the National Cathedral School where she is very unhappy and anxiously waits for each weekend so she can return to the White House and her raucous family. In this quick read, historical fact and fictionalized account are cleverly woven together to bring alive Ethel and her famous family. (Grades 3-5)

## Author on the Internet

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

## Realia

Item: Classroom pet such as rabbit, macaw, rat, guinea pig or snake

Statement: Snakes, rats, macaws, guinea pigs, rabbits in the White House? At dinner! Really! What on earth is going on? Read *The President's Daughter* to find out why and when this really happened to Ethel.

## Food

Lemon ice, Dinner rolls

## Challenging Words

anarchist	(p. 7 PB)	governess	(p. 6 PB)
assassin	(p. 21 PB)	inaugural	(p. 2 PB)
balustrade	(p. 39 PB)	monopolies	(p. 23 PB)
bilious	(p. 38 PB)	pony trap	(p. 77 PB)
brambles	(p. 101 PB)	reticule	(p. 125 PB)
bureau	(p. 41 PB)	rococo	(p. 120 PB)
dais	(p. 102 PB)	uncouth	(p. 6 PB)
discreet	(p. 52 PB)	valet	(p. 8 PB)
divan	(p. 115 PB)	vestibule	(p. 37 PB)
epileptic	(p. 2 PB)	woebegone	(p. 63 PB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- "You're a bear!" Quentin shouted." (p. 79 PB)
- "Then I felt a ray of golden hope shooting from my heart." (p. 111 PB)
- "I heard Father's voice, loud and hearty, as he led the party into the room. That was a lion, I thought. An African lion. King of the jungle. And I was a lion, too, younger but still strong, part of the mighty beast's pride." (p. 144 PB)

## Similes

- “Not hardly!’ Father snapped. ‘I’m not going until sent for. Been there once already. I’d be like an old vulture, hovering over him. Dreadful.” (p. 2 PB)
- “She’d be pacing this room like a caged tiger,’ he said.” (p. 5 PB)
- “I remembered how Sister’s eyes had glittered, how fierce she looked, like a cornered wildcat.” (p. 31 PB)
- Other similes: pages 36, 38 and 49

## Idioms and Expressions

- “Do you really think some old anarchist would be faster on the draw than a cowboy like me?” (p. 7 PB)
- “Otherwise it’s not that you’re too young, it’s that you’re too thick in the head.” (p. 34 PB)
- “Chin up,’ ordered Father.” (p. 52 PB)
- “I blinked back the tears. ‘Everything’s so topsy-turvy,’ I said.” (p. 53 PB)
- “Never mind,’ Mother said. ‘It’ll all blow over soon.’” (p.110 PB)
- “I suppose silence is golden,’ she said at last, giving up.” (p. 111 PB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education:

- Remind students that Ethel had a difficult time making friends at her new school, because she did not make friends until she became a friend. Locate examples in the book illustrating how Ethel had the opportunity to make a friend but did not. Have students brainstorm ways Ethel could have acted differently and what the outcome could have been if she had changed her behavior.
- Have students read-aloud examples of Harriet’s mean behavior toward Ethel. Discuss why they think Harriet acted the way she did. Discuss other ways Ethel could have handled this situation.
- Discuss with students why Booker T. Washington’s invitation to dinner at the White House created such an upset. How would the students feel if something like this happened today?

### Fine Arts:

- Divide class into small groups and have them research the White House rooms. Students can compare how different rooms were decorated in Ethel’s time as compared to how the same rooms look today.

### Language Arts:

- Remind students that Ethel wrote letters home describing her days at school. Have students write letters home describing their days at school. How are they different? How are they the same?

### Mathematics:

- Present the following scenario to the students: At the time Ethel rode in an automobile, it was considered as an alternative to the expense of keeping a horse. Find out how much it would cost to buy and keep an average horse for one month today. Find out how much it costs to buy and keep an average car for one month today. Which is the cheapest form of transportation?
- Scan the text to determine a list of all the items Ethel needed to buy for school. Have the students use different catalogs or the internet to find out the prices and their total cost.

### Science:

- Introduce students to the national park system, explaining that Ethel’s father, Theodore Roosevelt, a conservationist, developed the first national park. Have students find out which park was the first one and what other parks he created.

- Have students choose a national park to research. Have the class create a chart, noting the distinguishing characteristics of each one. Have students refer to reference resources such as the almanac, general encyclopedia, as well as specialized resources.
- Have students make or download a map showing the location of all the national parks.

#### Social Studies/Geography:

- Lead a discussion on the historical period during which Ethel Roosevelt lived. Have students make a timeline of important events in her life, as well as social and political events during that time period. What important events took place during her lifetime? What causes were important to her?
- Have students use the following Internet site for further information on Ethel and her siblings from Sagamore Hill:
  - [www.nps.gov/archive/sahi/kids.htm](http://www.nps.gov/archive/sahi/kids.htm)
- Explain to students that Ethel becomes *The President's Daughter* because of President McKinley's death. Have students research how and why President McKinley died.
- Have students check this website to read about Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders in Tampa. Have them find what other Florida cities were important during this time.
  - [www.fcit.usf.edu/FLORIDA/docs/r/rough.htm](http://www.fcit.usf.edu/FLORIDA/docs/r/rough.htm)
- Assign a research project to students concerning children in the White House. Have students find out how many other presidents had children living in the White House during their tenure. Have students choose which children they want to find information on their lives in the White House and what happened to them after they moved out.

# Project Mulberry

by Linda Sue Park

## Annotation

Seventh graders Julia and Patrick need a winning science fair project. Julia's mom suggests they raise silkworms, but Julia initially dislikes the idea because it is too closely linked to her Korean culture. Eventually she agrees and the project begins. Along the way, Julia learns to value her friendship with Patrick and to be proud of her heritage. Between the chapters, the author creates conversations with herself and Julia in which the teenager unsuccessfully tries to convince Park to bend the plot her way. Realistic, contemporary characters and a fast-paced plot combine to make this a winning page-turner. (Grades 4-7)

## Author on the Internet

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

## Realia

Item: Embroidery sample or quilt

Statement: "I kept thinking while I was embroidering how each of the stages had a special meaning to me." – Julia (p. 209) Find out why the embroidery takes on a special meaning in *Project Mulberry*.

## Food

Kimchee (Korean pickled cabbage), Beef short ribs, Rice, Mulberries, Pies, Brownies

## Challenging Words

agriculture	(p. 159 HB)	ferocious	(p. 214 HB)
animal Husbandry	(p. 6 HB)	font	(p. 48 HB)
camcorder	(p. 103 HB)	inconvenience	(p. 75 HB)
charter	(p. 16 HB)	millimeter	(p. 124 HB)
constantly	(p. 168 HB)	pessimist	(p. 59 HB)
convince	(p. 147 HB)	phobia	(p. 186 HB)
doubtfully	(p. 199 HB)	progress	(p. 113 HB)
embroidery	(p. 90 HB)	pupae	(p. 172 HB)
exponents	(p. 26 HB)	sustainable	(p. 131HB)
fabric	(p. 39 HB)	thrilled	(p. 215 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Similes

- "The eggs inside looked like tiny dark seeds." (p. 99 HB)
- "The eggs looked exactly the same as when we'd first gotten them – gray with a tiny black dot inside. The dots looked like periods." (p. 107 HB)
- "The worms were supposed to be as big as a person's finger." (p. 123 HB)
- "I felt like a doctor doing microsurgery – slow, gentle, careful, so I wouldn't hurt any of them." (p. 125 HB)
- "When they were all eating at the same time, it sounded like a miniature army marching over gravel." (p. 148 HB)

## Idioms and Expressions

- “If you want to get really good at embroidery, it’s the little things that count. Because all those little things go together, to make the big picture.” (p. 91 HB)
- “Mr. Maxwell was so pleased that he gave us high fives.” (p. 151 HB)
- “Somehow that was the last straw.” (p. 178 HB)

## Curriculum Connections

### Character Education:

- Read to the class the section on page 65 where we find out that Julia’s mom does not like Black people. Have the students locate in the book where it explains that this practice is commonly found in Korean culture. Based on the premise in the book, have the students discuss why they think this might have started and how they would deal with it in an acceptable manner?

### Fine Arts:

- Have the class make a “quilt” using squares of paper that each student decorates with one or two interesting things about their family’s history.

### Language Arts:

- Refer the students to the between chapter scenes in which the author and her main character carry on a running dialogue throughout the book. Have students discuss why they think the author chose to include these conversations. What do the students think they add to the story?
- Discuss favorite books mentioned by students and then have them each choose one book for this assignment. Have the students write a short, imaginary conversation between him/herself (as the author) and one of the prominent characters of the story.

### Mathematics:

- Refer students to page 77 and Mr. Dixon’s explanation of how he remembers numbers, such as using patterns. Have students look at the following number patterns and try to continue them and then create one of their own.
  - a. 1, 3, 5, 7, \_\_\_\_, 11, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_
  - b. 1, 1, 2, 4, 3, 9, 4, \_\_\_\_, 5, \_\_\_\_, 6, \_\_\_\_
  - c. 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_
  - d. 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_
- Distribute chart paper and have students measure sections in millimeters. Then have students draw actual size silkworm eggs and silkworms and measure those to the nearest millimeter.

### Science:

- Divide class into small groups and have them begin a project to raise silkworms or a similar caterpillar.
- Assign students a research project comparing the differences between “battery” eggs and “happy” eggs. Have students chart the similarities and differences between the types of eggs.

### Social Studies/Geography:

- Have each student choose a state’s quarter and explain the story behind its image.
- Remind students that Julia came from Korea. Ask students what countries their families came from originally. Have them talk to a family member and find out more information about their heritage. As a culminating activity have students present one interesting fact about their culture to the class.
- Refer students to page 27 where Julia learns the countries that the Maya used to live in: Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, and parts of Mexico. She remembers this with an acronym BEG-Mex. Either have students think of 4-5 geography facts that they need to remember or assign them a few related facts. Then have the students devise their own acronym to help them remember and share these with the class.

# Say What?

by Margaret Peterson Haddix

## Annotation

Six-year-old Sukie and her brothers are worried about their parents. Mom and Dad are telling the children to behave, but not in the ordinary way. For instance, Dad tells Sukie not to pick her nose when she drops glitter on the carpet and Mom tells Brian to shut the door when he spills orange juice in the kitchen. After the kids find out that the parents are using advice learned from the magazine, *New Ways of Parenting*, they craft their own plan to deal with their parents. Lighthearted and humorous situations follow that will have young readers zipping through this chapter book. (Grades 2-4)

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.promotega.org/ksu00003/authorinfo.htm>

## Realia

Item: Copy of *Parenting Magazine*

Statement: How does a magazine article lead to a kids-against-parents war? Read *Say What?* to find out how this crisis resolves itself!

## Food

Peas, Orange juice, Spaghetti, Garlic bread, Salad, Cake, Milk

## Challenging Words

authority	(p. 75 HB)	negotiate	(p. 85 HB)
backfiring	(p. 44 HB)	ramrod	(p. 23 HB)
confident	(p. 73 HB)	rebellion	(p. 45 HB)
confusion	(p. 68 HB)	rendezvous	(p. 41 HB)
disguise	(p. 32 HB)	scornfully	(p. 63 HB)
disobedience	(p. 45 HB)	scrunched	(p. 10 HB)
emphatic	(p. 85 HB)	tarragon	(p. 16 HB)
haughty	(p. 26 HB)	traitors	(p. 22 HB)
hooligans	(p. 43 HB)	treaty	(p. 84 HB)
miniature	(p. 73 HB)	undermine	(p. 75 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- “Within days your little monsters will be magically transformed into little angels, eager to please, and delighted to have you scold them in your old, familiar manner.” (p. 58 HB)

### Similes

- “Brian challenged, forgetting he was trying to act haughty and regal, like a king.” (p. 26 HB)
- “Brian sat up even straighter and tried to look serious and somber, like a TV judge.” (p. 28 HB)
- “He inched forward, quiet as a cat.” (p. 43 HB)
- “And then, sounding as confident as an Olympic gold medalist, she said, ‘No, you can’t have a snack.’” (p. 73 HB)

- “Mom and Brian were like two crazy generals. And he and Dad were like two fountains of laughter.” (p. 76 HB)

### **Idioms and Expressions**

- “Waste not, want not.” (p. 11 HB)
- “Cross your heart and hope to die, stick a needle in your eye.” (p. 26 HB)
- “Money doesn’t grow on trees.” (p. 36 HB)

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### Language Arts:

- Brainstorm with students a list of “Parent speak” and “Kid speak” phrases.
- Have students write their own magazine article for parents on how to discipline children.
- Assign the following writing prompt: All parents have rules for their children. What kind of rules do you think all parents should have and why?

#### Mathematics:

- Remind students that Suki and her brothers are tired of hearing their parents say the same things millions and billions of times. Read the book: *How Much is a Million* by David Schwartz. Review place value of large numbers with students, using as many examples as necessary.

#### Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students use the United Nations Internet site and research the history and mission of the United Nations.
  - <http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/>
- Assign students a research project on famous peace treaties that have been signed throughout history.

# *The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs*

by Betty G. Birney

## **Annotation**

11-year-old Eden McAllister's Pa challenges him to find Seven Wonders in their small Missouri farm town in 1923. Eden quickly begins to hear of wonders such as his Sunday school teacher's applehead doll that reportedly saved the woman's life when she was very sick as a child. Then there's the wonder of an old saw that, when played, allows Calvin Smiley to grow more food than anyone around. Cully Pone's bookcase used to belong to a rainmaker who was seeking revenge when he ended a drought but didn't get paid by the town; it has saved a man's life, held the secrets of the universe, and now holds up Cully's house. In this down-home tale, Eden meets his Pa's challenge to find the extraordinary in the ordinary and, along the way, finds wonder in the world around him. (Grades 4-7)

## **Author on the Internet**

<http://bettybirney.com/>

## **Realia**

Item: Nonfiction book on the Seven Wonders of the World

Statement: How many Wonders can you find in your town? Read about Eben's search (before you start your own) in *The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs*!

## **Food**

Fried chicken, Cornbread, Milk, Iced tea, Peach pie, Boxed chocolate candy, Root beer, General store penny candy (licorice, jawbreakers, etc.), Ham, Boiled beans, Biscuits, Dumplings, Watermelon, Apple pie

## **Challenging Words**

cockleburs	(p. 18 PB)	maiden	(p. 115 PB)
concoctions	(p. 54 PB)	notions	(p. 6 PB)
congregated	(p. 118 PB)	peddler	(p. 86 PB)
crocheting	(p. 2 PB)	pondering	(p. 10 PB)
cyclone	(p. 69 PB)	stingy	(p. 64 PB)
dawdle	(p. 24 PB)	superstitious	(p. 107 PB)
drought	(p. 49 PB)	tramp steamer	(p. 7 PB)
gingerly	(p. 39 PB)	unperturbed	(p. 64 PB)
hardscrabble	(p. 84 PB)	uppity	(p. 50 PB)
high-tailed	(p. 20 PB)	whittled	(p. 2 PB)

## **Figurative Language**

### **Similes**

- “She could never remember whether it was a cup of flour and a pinch of salt, or a pinch of flour and a cup of salt. So her biscuits were hard as rocks,’ Aunt Pretty explained.” (p. 6 PB)
- “In winter it’s as slick as glass.” (p. 14 PB)

- “With the shades pulled halfway down, they looked like a pair of sleepy eyes. (p. 19 PB)
- “Not that anyone would know, since it was about as hard to get invited into the Pritchards’ house as to be admitted through the Pearly Gates.” (p. 22 PB)
- Other similes: pages 23, 24, 27, 28

### Idioms and Expressions

- “There was no chance of seeing an ocean in Sassafras Springs, which is set smack dab in the middle of the country.” (p. 1 PB)
- It was no picnic taking care of Pa and me. She moved in when Ma died four years ago and did all she could. Still it was lonely for her because Aunt Pretty could talk your arm off, while Pa and I weren’t ones to waste words.” (p. 4 PB)
- “I didn’t give him the satisfaction of a comeback.” (p. 5 PB)
- “Leaving the farm to go to rack and ruin.” (p. 6 PB)
- “Even though his family’s farm was next to ours, it was a hike to get there. Dusty, their big brown dog, ran up to greet Sal and me and led us to the vegetable patch, where Jeb was riding herd on a whole pack of Austins.” (p. 16 PB)

### Curriculum Connections

#### Character Education:

- Have students carefully go through the story and locate at least one example of a person in Sassafras Springs that represents one of the “Six Pillars” of character traits. Then have the students describe how that person demonstrated that character trait. Refer students to the following web site: <http://www.charactercounts.org/defsix.htm>.

#### Fine Arts:

- Assign students the project of creating one work of art similar to one found in this book (e.g., an applehead doll, whittle a figure using wood or soap, make a clothespin person, crochet a small item, etc.)

#### Language Arts:

- Divide class into small groups and have them create a colloquialism dictionary, starting with terms and expressions found in this story used by the rural people of Sassafras Springs. Have students define what the saying means and also list different ways people today might express the same thing in a different way. (Example: p. 203 Eben says, “you could have knocked me over with a feather.” This means that he was really surprised. Today we might say, “holy cow!” or “you’re kidding me!”)

#### Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students determine which of these places are real and which are fictional: St. Clair, MO (p. 10, 64); St. Louis, MO; Silver Peak, CO (p. 8); Garnerville or Garner County, MO (p. 49); Sassafras Springs, MO (p.1); Pine Gap or Garvey City, MO (p. 64); Gladiola, GA (p.129).

# Whittington

by Alan Armstrong

## Annotation

A tattered tomcat, Whittington, earns his keep in a New England barn as a ratter and a storyteller. He claims to be a descendent of Dick Whittington's anonymous cat and he charms everyone with his clever retelling of the English folktale *Dick Whittington and His Cat*. The barn's soft-spoken owner, Bernie, and the barnyard animals become engrossed in the cat's enchanting stories as the long, snowy winter lingers. This magical tale will delight readers whether they read it curled in their favorite chair or hear it read aloud. (Grades 4-6)

## Author on the Internet

<http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-armstrong-alan.asp>

## Realia

Item: Magnetic letters and a small tray with sand

Statement: "Ben stared openmouthed. Somebody else had his problem. Someone knew how to fix it." Read *Whittington* to find out how these objects can help Ben.

## Food

Oatmeal raisin cookies and chocolate milk

## Challenging Words

audacity	(p. 60 PB)	moseyed	(p. 185 PB)
cajoled	(p.13 PB)	phosphorescence	(p. 114 PB)
conjured	(p. 72 PB)	pungent	(p. 20 PB)
consignments	(p. 68 PB)	remnants	(p. 19 PB)
enmity	(p. 127 PB)	revive	(p. 151 PB)
fetid	(p. 97 PB)	sashay	(p. 121 PB)
gamboled	(p. 54 PB)	spigots	(p. 35 PB)
jury-rig	(p. 171 PB)	squalled	(p. 27 PB)
labyrinth	(p. 98 PB)	stanchions	(p.14 PB)
luxuriance	(p. 31 PB)	troubadour	(p. 134 PB)

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- "The sea was bigger than anything Dick had ever seen, boring and endless until the wind moaned and slammed and it became hills and swoops of black oil he was sure would drown him as the ship heaved and shuddered worse than the agent's carriage when the robbers attacked it." (p. 96 PB)

### Similes

- "The wind picked up. The Lady shifted into it like a moored dory." (p. 5 PB)
- "Talk about moving is like talk about divorce, nobody knows what it will mean except that everything will be different and not better." (p. 21 PB)

- “It was the way this cat wove from side to side that worried him, like a snake ready to strike.” (p. 25 PB)
- “A gang of crows is like a gang of angry women in a street market after a pickpocket – five of them could do in anyone.” (p. 128 PB)
- “The river surged like a pulse, noisy and slicking, carrying branches, leaves, and trash.” (p. 155 PB)
- Other similes: pages 1, 10, 28, 75, 85, 121, 147

### Idioms and Expressions

- “She has scores to settle. She lives to get even.” (p. 26 PB)
- “Tit for tat,’ said the rat.” (p. 60 PB)
- “Tell Truth, and shame the Devil.’ Ben read that through once with Abby helping.” (p. 93 PB)
- “Time and tide wait for no man.” (p. 94 PB)
- “Work is the medicine for despair.’ He worked day and night, taking breaks only to tend the kittens.” (p. 171 PB)

### Curriculum Connections

#### Character Education:

- Discuss with students how to deal with teasing. Record successful methods for handling teasing on the board or in a *PowerPoint* presentation.

#### Fine Arts:

- Have students research which plants can be used to make dyes. If possible, make some of the dyes using the plants. Follow-up by dyeing t-shirts, yarn or painting canvas pictures. Refer to the following site: <http://www.pioneerthinking.com/naturaldyes.html>.

#### Language Arts:

- Read aloud the book: *Dick Whittington and His Cat*, by Marcia Brown or *Charlotte’s Web*, by E. B. White. Divide the class into small groups and have them use graphic organizers to compare and contrast the characters, plot, setting, etc. in the books.
- Read aloud and discuss a variety of fables, using books or the following site: <http://www.aesopfables.com/> (This is an online database of fables, many of which are read aloud to students.) Review the elements of a fable (characters, setting, events and moral) with students. Have students write their own fables.

#### Mathematics:

- Have students plan a modern day trip to the same countries Dick Whittington visited. To prepare their budget, have students research the cost of airfare, hotels, food, etc., using various travel websites such as: [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com) and [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com).

#### Science:

- Work with students to list the plants and herbs that were mentioned in the book (e.g., nutmeg, clove, rhubarb, mace, ginger, lilac, cinnamon, saffron, salt, tamarind, olive oil, etc.) Assign plants to small groups and have them research what the plants are used for today? Have the students determine if the plants still have medicinal purposes today?  
<http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/comindx.html>

#### Social Studies/Geography:

- Divide the class into small groups and have them complete the following research projects:
  - Research the city of Tripoli in Libya.
  - Research sailing ships during the 1400’s. How were they built? Where were they built? How were they different?
  - Draw a map that traces Dick Whittington’s trips.

# Wildfire!

by Elizabeth Starr Hill

## Annotation

Following the death of his parents six years ago, 10-year-old Ben, has lived with his grandparents and great-grandparents in Bending Creek, Florida. Dry weather and the threat of forest fires have led to the cancellation of the Fourth of July fireworks, but when the troublesome new boy named Elliot dares him, Ben sets off one rocket anyway. The noise scares Elliot's new puppy into the forest and the boys rush into the woods to save him. After an exciting adventure, this fast-paced story comes to a satisfactory conclusion. (Grades 3-4)

## Realia

Item: Sack of peanuts, fireworks, sparklers, coke bottle, stuffed dog

Statement: Do you enjoy the Fourth of July? Read *Wildfire!* to find out about a Fourth of July that Ben will never forget.

## Food

Biscuit, Orange marmalade, Molasses, Two-color cole slaw

## Challenging Words

amiably	(p.14 HB)	hesitation	(p. 39 HB)
apprehensively	(p. 35 HB)	hospitality	(p. 25 HB)
bewildered	(p. 24 HB)	ignited	(p. 40 HB)
blunders	(p.16 HB)	marmalade	(p. 1 HB)
bungalow	(p. 12 HB)	reassuring	(p. 5 HB)
discordant	(p. 60 HB)	responsibly	(p. 21 HB)
enraged	(p. 46 HB)	scorn	(p. 9 HB)
ferocious	(p. 45 HB)	smirk	(p. 34 HB)
flourishing	(p. 30 HB)	sorrow	(p. 7 HB)
foliage	(p. 49 HB)		

## Figurative Language

### Metaphors

- “Ben liked the bells. They were like voices to him, the voices of Bending Creek – his family, his neighbors, his friends.” (p. 17 HB)
- “Elliot strolled up. ‘Maybe Ben’s the chicken.’ He smiled coolly.” (p. 40 HB)
- “Ben looked up the road. There was no glow in the sky now, no flames. Only smoke, the lingering ghost of a dead fire.” (p. 61 HB)

### Similes

- “Mr. Olsen made a sound of disgust. ‘It’s terrible how people do that with a pet sometimes. They don’t want them anymore, so they drop them off like a sack of peanuts.’” (p. 20 HB)
- “Ben imagined what it would be like if the pup were his. Ideas bubbled in him, sweet as soda.” (p. 24 HB)

- “Obviously this boar was ready to defend the whole group against danger. It was the largest of them all, its tusks glimmering like curved knives.” (p. 45 HB)
- Other similes: page 36 HB

### **Idioms and Expressions**

- “He sounded friendly but Ben heard an edge of scorn in his voice. Ben’s spirits sank.” (p. 9 HB)

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### Character Education:

- Discuss with students about peer pressure. Have the students write in their journal about a time where they felt peer pressure. How did they handle it? Did they do what was right? How did they feel afterwards?

#### Fine Arts:

- Have class listen to a CD of patriotic songs. Have students create their own musical instruments and allow the students to play their own versions of a patriotic song.

#### Science:

- Assign students to research droughts and to discuss the effect that rain has on the environment.
- Have students research the current problem of forest fires and what we can do to prevent them. Students could go to [www.smokeybear.com](http://www.smokeybear.com) for more information. Questions that students need to answer can be created from the website.

#### Social Studies/Geography:

- Divide class into small groups and have them research the history of the Fourth of July and its importance to our country.

# Worth

by A. LaFaye

## Annotation

Young Nathaniel's leg is crushed in a farming accident, leaving him bitter, angry, and helpless. He is further upset and frustrated when his father brings John Worth, an Orphan Train boy, to the farm to help with the work. The two boys, each wounded in different yet similar ways, discover they both want to save the family farm and a friendship slowly develops. Additionally, the ongoing power struggle between the farmers and ranchers further complicates their lives. In this short and beautifully written winner of the Scott O'Dell Award for historical fiction, LaFaye tells a compelling and historically accurate story. (Grades 3–6)

## Author on the Internet

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

## Realia

Item: A book of Greek myths

Statement: “You’ve been listening?” As Nate reads the book of myths to John through the bedroom wall, he wonders if this ‘just might be the start of something good.’” Could the wonderful stories of Greek heroes be what brings these two enemies together? Read *Worth* and find out!

## Food

Corn bread

## Challenging Words

amenable	(p.142 HB)	noose	(p. 54 HB)
ashen	(p. 72 HB)	nymph	(p. 69 HB)
bartered	(p. 46 HB)	ornery	(p. 117 HB)
billowed	(p. 5 HB)	saunter	(p. 45 HB)
dank	(p. 65 HB)	scythe	(p. 13 HB)
fray	(p. 133 HB)	shears	(p. 128 HB)
gawking	(p. 111 HB)	sidled	(p. 82 HB)
homesteader	(p. 35 HB)	skulk	(p. 128 HB)
kin	(p. 122 HB)	stragglers	(p. 73 HB)
leered	(p. 80 HB)	tenement	(p. 31 HB)
		traction	(p. 10 HB)

## Figurative Language

### Similes

- “Haven’t heard it myself, but she swears there’s crackling in the grass like tiny bolts of lightning traveling from blade to blade.” (p. 1 HB)
- “The thunder kept threatening like a big old empty cloud clearing its throat.” (p. 4 HB)
- “That old cow had eyes as big as a pitching ball at the fair.” (p. 5 HB)
- “The world tumbled in on me like hay from the loft door, each blade cutting with knife-sharp pain.” (p. 7 HB)

- “My stomach rolled like the turn of a wagon’s wheel. My leg bones felt like metal heated up good and red.” (p. 8 HB)
- “The old clock stared at me from the dresser like a worm-eaten stump, all useless and dead.” (p. 45 HB)
- “The possibility of Pa getting hurt had us all as nervous as cooped-up chicks, rushing around, trying to keep busy, snapping at anybody who made a sound.” (p. 55 HB)
- “Cracked his lip so it swelled up like an earthworm struck with a shovel – all purple and oozy.” (p. 103 HB)
- “They milled around in there like a pack of hound dogs kept in a corn crib, all crowded together and noisy.” (p. 105 HB)
- “Come winter, when the work around the farm grows as thin as bare trees, Pa might even let him go to school with me.” (p. 144 HB)
- Other similes: pages 32, 56, 82, 104, 140

### Idioms and Expressions

- “‘Then we better get it in before it catches fire,’ Pa said, backing Vernon to the wagon. ‘And the sooner you quit flapping at the mouth, the sooner we can get out there.’” (p. 3 HB)
- “Took me a week of Sundays to get it apart.” (p. 14 HB)
- “Can’t say what has him so back to front, but I’d guess he feels responsible.” (p. 33 HB)
- “I figured she said that so I didn’t think she was sweet on me or something.” (p. 68 HB)
- “Pa didn’t come to dinner that night, said he’d be supping with Mr. Clemson to iron things out.” (p. 84 HB)
- “Gripping the cup, John said, ‘Never been in the country in the dark like that. Thought the ground might swallow me up.’” (p. 74 HB)

### Curriculum Connections

#### Character Education:

- Explain to the students that each of the major characters in *Worth* has gone through at least one event that has caused him or her much grief. This grief, in turn, has led each character to feel anger. List the characters and describe an event that has caused grief and provoked anger.
- Have students compare Nate’s feelings when Pa brought home a “replacement” with John’s feelings when he was brought to the Peale home.

#### Fine Arts:

- Explain to the students that the pictures in the book that Anemone gave Nate were probably lithographs, a form of illustration found in many 19<sup>th</sup> century books. Have students research the process of lithography and find one example from that time to show the class.

#### Foreign Languages:

- Remind students that from Anemone, Nate learns the Greek word for “you’re welcome”: Parakalo. She also says the word for mother. Have students make a list of fifteen simple words relevant to the story: father, sister, farm, orphan, etc., and find out what they would be in the Greek language.
- Have students research the letters of the Greek alphabet
- Refer students to the following web sites for research:  
<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~christos/christina/greece-project/alphabet.html>  
<http://www.kypros.org/cgi-bin/lexicon/>

#### Language Arts:

- Discuss the first person narrative viewpoint and explain that this story is different from others because it is told from the point of view of the family, specifically the boy being “replaced”, rather than from the orphan. Have students briefly retell the story from the point of view of John Worth,

beginning from when Mr. Peale picks him up from the Orphan Train until he meets Nathaniel and his mother.

- Take students to the library media center to locate books on Greek mythology. Have students research the stories that Nate reads to John and then retell the stories in their own words.
- Have the student review the story and jot down key events. How did each event change the characters involved and the direction of the plot?
- Discuss the plot with students and then have them predict how the story would have ended if Nate had not confessed to this mom that he had started the fight in the corn field. What do they think might have happened to John Worth?
- Remind students that Nathaniel says that Ma learned tinkering from her father. (Tinkers repaired items made of metal, such as pots, pans, and parts of clocks.) Have students list some of the ways that Ma's craft had helped the family.
- Explain to students that literature can reflect historical time periods. In this story, Ma was forced to say that her husband had done the tinkering jobs. Why? Discuss with students how attitudes towards the work men and women do have changed since that time?
- Have students define the Challenging Words (above) through the context of the story. If students cannot find the word in a dictionary, have them turn to the page and try to give their own definition according to how the word is used.

#### Mathematics:

- Discuss the bartering system. Refer to the fact that Nate's mother and father "bartered" for many things. They were not always paid in money, but in goods or services. Have students find examples in the story where bartering took place.
- Have students discuss the bartering process at home for a week, making deals with their families to trade chores or receive items or services in exchange for like valued items/services (e.g., dinner at a pizza place for cleaning the house or mowing the lawn).

#### Science:

- Discuss with students the lack of medical care during the time of this story. Review the fact that Nate's recovery after the accident was slow and painful. His leg did not mend well and probably never would. Medicine was very different in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and there were few resources out in the prairie to mend broken bones. Use the website below to research what happens when a bone breaks, or fractures. Have students research the treatment that Doc Kelly did for Nate (p. 10 HB) to determine if it was or was not correct, in light of the times and the resources available.

[http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/ill\\_injure/aches/broken\\_bones.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/ill_injure/aches/broken_bones.html)

#### Social Studies/Geography:

- Have students research the history of Orphan Trains using the following website: <http://www.42explore2.com/orphan.htm>. Once on the site, have the students choose one of the activities, (NOT a WebQuest), at the bottom of the page in the yellow box.
- Assign students a follow-up activity by having them trace a map, after researching the routes and destinations of the Orphan Trains. Students should highlight the journey that John Worth took from Chicago to Nebraska.
- Remind students that Nebraska was a great pioneer state. Have students continue researching about pioneer life on the prairie using the web site below. Have students select the family pictured on the page and follow the links until they see the picture of their homestead. Ask students what is striking about that photograph? Why? What do they think it tells about this family?

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award98/nbhihtml/pshome.html>

- Discuss with class the conflict between the ranchers and the homesteaders (farmers) and debate the arguments for both sides. Use this website for more information and to see how the events in *Worth* have a true historical basis: <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/butcher.htm>.
- Remind students that Nate's mother had insisted on a wood house when they moved to Nebraska and that most homesteaders made houses out of sod or dirt. Have students examine the houses in the photographs on this web site. Scroll down to learn about digitized images and what they can tell us.

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/lib-arch/research/photos/highlite/butcher/photos.htm>