

Oklahoma Library Association's

Sampler

For the

Sequoyah Children's Book Award

2007 Masterlist

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CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD

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Snarf Attack, Underfoodle and the Secret of Life: The Riot Brothers Tell All
By: Mary Amato

“Make something exciting happen every day” is the Riot brothers number 1 rule. Daily missions include catching a crook, finding hidden treasure and overthrowing a king. In their efforts to accomplish their goals, Orville and Wilbur will be forced to give Annoying Lessons, invent the Super Swift Stuff Lifter and put Doodie Diaper Wipe boxes on their feet. Now you may say, “those are easy, I could do them in my sleep”, but could you do them if your mother was also your school principal? Could you do them if your number 2 rule was “Do not tell *anyone* your true mission”? They will do all this and more while making time to, of course, play some of their favorite games including Underfoodle and Funderwear. Author Mary Amato will let you in on the rules to these games and more when you read Snarf Attack, Underfoodle and the Secret of Life: The Riot Brother Tell All.

Extension Activities:

Bring or have your students bring, odds and ends (toilet paper rolls, string, paper clips, tape, etc) to class. Break into small groups and have them invent games using the items they are given.

Chasing Vermeer
By: Blue Balliett

Balliett, Blue. *Chasing Vermeer*. Scholastic Press, 2004.
IL 3-6 RL 5.4

Chasing Vermeer is a mystery adventure story like no other you have ever read. It begins on an October night in Chicago when a delivery is made to three different houses. The doorbell is rung at each of the houses. When each homeowner answers the doorbell, nobody is there...only an envelope containing a letter. Of course, each person is unaware that anyone else also has received a letter. The letter is the same for all three. It begins:

*Dear Friend:
I would like your help in identifying a crime that is now centuries old. This crime has wronged one of the world's greatest painters.*

The letter continues by explaining that the person needs their help in solving the crime. They have been chosen because of their intelligence. The letter ends with this threat:

If you show this letter to the authorities, you will most certainly be placing your life in danger.

At the same time, strange and seemingly unrelated things begin happening to sixth graders Petra and Calder. Petra finds an old book that describes strange occurrences; Calder is intrigued by a painting done by the artist Vermeer on an old box his grandmother gave him; Mrs. Sharpe, an eccentric old woman in their neighborhood, seeks Petra's and Calder's company; a valuable Vermeer painting is stolen while on route to a Chicago art museum; and their teacher becomes interested in the importance of letter-writing and missing paintings. And, if that's not enough, there is Mrs. Sharpe's husband who was killed years earlier after he revealed that he had secret information about the Vermeer painting. Before Petra and Calder realize, they are involved in an

international art scandal filled with moonlight chases, secret hiding places, and a mysterious hidden code.

And what is it with Calder and those pentominoes? Do you even know what pentominoes are? Well, if you don't, you'd better find out or you will never be able to figure out the hidden message in the book's illustrations.

You soon will be caught up in the same web of coincidences, questions, suspicions, and puzzles as Petra and Calder learn about one of the letters and put all the pieces together in *Chasing Vermeer*.

Related web sites

Chasing Vermeer

<http://www.scholastic.com/titles/chasingvermeer/index.htm>

This is the official web site for the book from the publisher. It is filled information about the book, author, and illustrator. Included are the reader's challenge, the solution to the code in the book's artwork, and information about pentominoes. An interactive pentominoes grid provides a challenging game. Printable pentominoes are available as well.

Chasing Vermeer

<http://adifferentplace.org/vermeer.htm>

This web site is filled with connections related to the book: math connections with pentominoes, art connections related to Vermeer, history connections, literature and writing connections, and many other topics.

National Gallery of Art: NGAKids

The Vermeer painting *A Lady Writing* is featured on this page with information about Vermeer and his use of the *camera obscura*. Links on the page provide information about other Vermeer paintings.

Activities

1. Solve the hidden message in Brett Helquist's chapter illustrations. (See more information at the beginning of the book.)

2. Go to this web site/pdf document for many activities:

http://www.highsmith.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Production/LSP/pages/2005_pdfs/lsp_jan05_vermeer.pdf

Peter and the Starcatchers

Peter and the Starcatchers
By: Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson

This swashbuckling story begins as a seafaring adventure on the high seas where Peter and several other boys find themselves aboard the ship 'Never Land' to be servants to the cruel King Zarboff the Third.

During the journey, Peter meets sweet Molly Aster 'starcatcher apprentice'. Molly tells Peter a fantastical story of 'starstuff' and explains the importance of certain falling stars and their secrets. A mysterious trunk that contains the precious magical substance known as "starstuff" is down below in the cargo hold of the 'Neverland'. Whoever touches the trunk feels a profound sense of happiness and well-being. Just a sprinkle of it heals wounds, and with a dusting people fly. On Earth, it is the 'Starcatchers' job to collect the starstuff before it falls into the hands of those that would use its myriad powers for evil. Peter vows to help Molly keep the mysterious trunk out of the clutches of the pirate Black Stache.

Pirate Black Stache, the most dangerous pirate on the high seas and captain of the 'Sea Devil' and his first mate Smee and fellow crewmembers get wind of the treasure and pursue the 'Wasp' in an attempt to take the treasure. Chaos ensues after numerous sea chases, thunderstorms, battles and shipwrecks; Pirate Black Stache soon realizes the real treasure is aboard the 'Neverland' and not on the 'Wasp' as he had first thought. Pirate Black Stache then begins his pursuit of the 'Neverland' where they all end up on the faraway island of Mollusk. After landing on Mollusk an island inhabited by savages where visitors are fed to a vicious beast in order to prevent them from ever returning. A fight continues over the gold glowing contents in the trunk. Mystical and magical things happen when part of the trunks contents leaks into the sea. Mermaids, talking porpoises, stinky rogues, and a giant flying crocodile soon appear.

Read this action packed adventure about an unforgettable high seas journey, filled with danger, excitement and magical things to find out if Peter and his new friend Molly can overcome pirates to keep the fantastical secret safe and save the world from evil.

Web site: www.peterandthestarcatchers.com
www.hyperionbooksforchildren.com/board/displayBook.asp?id=1440

Disney animation will develop this 3-D CGI feature film

The sequel Peter and the Shadow Thieves will be released in July 2006.

A 2005 Quills Award Nominee
2005 Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Book Gold Award

Operation Clean Sweep
By: Darleen Bailey Beard

Characters:

Narrator	Sister Suffragists:	Mom	Mrs. Burris
Cornelius (young boy)		Miss McKee	Mrs. Gill
Otis (his friend)		Mrs. Smith	Aunt Lola

Narrator: It was just a week away from the mayor election in Umatilla, Oregon. Cornelius Sanwick's dad was running against his archenemy, Kim Lanier. Mr. Sanwick was hoping to be reelected. Deep down inside Cornelius was thinking how nice it would be if his dad didn't win. In the old days his dad had a lot more time for fishing, hanging out, and even whistling. Cornelius and his dad whistled duets in church, and they always got lots of compliments.

Cornelius and his friend ran home after school because they had been roped into keeping the little kids while his mother had her weekly card game. They never minded since they got to eat all the great food the ladies brought.

Mrs. Burris: (entering the house speaking to the other ladies) Hello, sisters!

Otis: (to Cornelius) Why did Mrs. Burris call the ladies sisters?

Cornelius: Of course they are not really sisters! It means they are sister suffragists-ladies who supported the suffrage movement, which means that all women should have the right to vote. Only eleven states let women vote though. Lucky for Mom and her sisters Oregon is one of them.

Mom: You boys take the kids on outside.

Cornelius: Come on Otis, let's get the kids outside then I'll come back and get us some food.

Narrators: Cornelius took the side door back into the kitchen. Just as he was about to open the kitchen door to the dining room he over heard his mother.

Mom: Sisters, if we're going to carry this off, we can't tell any man in town. Not our husbands, our brothers, not even our sons. Our next meeting will be tomorrow night, nine o'clock, at the library.

Miss McKee: That's right. Remember the password?

Ladies: Operation Clean Sweep!

Mom: Tomorrow night we'll make our nominations.

Mrs. Gill: I know who I'll be nominating! Flora, you're just the person we need for mayor.

Mom: It would be my honor and pleasure.

Mrs. Smith: Just think, Flora. Your name will go down in history books. People will be reading about you hundreds of years from now – Mayor Flora Sanwick, right here in Umatilla, Oregon.

Aunt Lola: Your name will be up there with all the great suffrage leaders like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.

Mom: Sister Suffragists, I think we stand a very good chance of getting elected. You know there are more women than men in this town.

Mrs. Burris: If we spread the word among ourselves, and persuade enough women to vote for us, I think we can give the men of this town a run for their money.

Narrator: The side door opened, and in walked Otis with his arms crossed and a mad face.

Otis: What's taking so long!

Cornelius: Shh! I'm eavesdropping!

Otis: What for? I don't hear nothin. Look, I'm tired of waiting. I'm hungry. I'm going in there and getting something to eat!

Mom: Oh, uh, boys! Hello. How long have you two been standing there?

Cornelius: Us? Um, not long. We're grabbing some food and gettin' out.

Narrator: And that is just what they did!

Otis: So what were they saying that was so interesting?

Cornelius: You won't believe it....I don't eve believe it.

Otis: Try me.

Cornelius: Well, I'm not exactly sure, but it sounds like.....

Otis: Like what?

Cornelius: Like all the ladies are planning to run for office in our upcoming election and my mom's going to run for mayor!

Otis: Very funny, corncob. You're a real joker. Now tell me the truth!

Cornelius: I just did, Oatmeal!

Otis: I'm supposed to believe that? Women don't run for political office, especially for mayor! Come on, Corn, I'm smarter than that...that's a man's job!

Cornelius: I know...they're plumb crazy.

Otis: They're loony birds. How do they expect a man to vote for a woman?

Cornelius: According to them, there are more women in this town than men. If they all vote, they could win!

Otis: Why would a woman want to vote for another woman when she could vote for a man?

Cornelius: Beats me, but they are having another secret meeting and they have a password.

Otis: Secret meeting? What's the password?

Cornelius: Operation Clean Sweep

Otis: What the heck is that supposed to mean?

Cornelius: I think it means Umatilla is going to get a clean sweep, but not by a broom.

Otis: Then by what!

Cornelius: The woman!

Narrator: Will Cornelius tell his father that his mother is secretly running against him for mayor? What if she wins, what will his father do? Can the women of Umatilla, Oregon make a clean sweep? Read *Operation Clean Sweep* by Darleen Bailey Beard

Great activities for this book on this web site.

<http://www.darleenbaileybeard.com/cleansweepactivity.htm>

The World According the Humphrey
By: Betty G. Birney

Humphrey enjoys being the classroom hamster in room 26 at Longfellow Elementary School. He learns to read and write and observe the other species at school and during his home visits.

These are some of Humphrey's observations and thoughts about his friends:

Ms. Mac rescued Humphrey from Pet-O-Rama and brought him to school. She was tall and wore bright clothes and jewelry that jingle jangled when she talked. He loved her and she left.

Principal Morales, the most important person at Longfellow Elementary, when Humphrey gets to go home with him for the weekend and lends him a helping paw.

Mrs. Brisbane replaces Ms. Mac and she doesn't like rodents! She wore dark clothes and didn't jingle jangle at all when she talked.

Aldo Amato came to clean the room when everyone went home. He and Humphrey became great friends.

Speak-up-Sayeh. Sayeh always gets 100% on everything in class, but she won't talk. Why?

Lower your voice A.J. Thomas. A.J. is a lot of fun in the classroom but he is so LOUD! Humphrey needs to find out why.

Golden-Miranda. Humphrey loves Golden-Miranda. Actually her name is Miranda Golden and she cleans his cage better than anyone.

Wait-for-the-Bell Garth Tugwell. Garth was always in a hurry and getting into more trouble each day.

Raise-your-Hand Heidi Cooper. She likes to answer every question in class but never remembers to raise her hand.

Stop-giggling Gail Morgenstern. Laughter is contagious and everything causes Gail to laugh. Is she nervous?

Will Humphrey solve everyone's problems? Will Mrs. Brisbane come to accept a rodent in her classroom? Read the World According to Humphrey by Betty Birney to find out.

<http://bettybirney.com/>
<http://www.hamstertours.com>

The Dark Pond
By: Joseph Bruchac

Weirdo, Spookie, Geronimo, Tonto. Those are just a few of the names kids call me. It's partly because I look different with my thick, black hair and brown skin, but it's mostly because I say things that other kids think are strange. It's all because I can "feel" things. It's something I get from my mother and my Shawnee ancestors.

My name is Armie and I go to North Mountains School. It's a school with "personalized counseling and a healthful outdoor environment." Why do I need to be at a school with "personalized counseling you may ask? Well, my mother calls me head strong. Others might consider me a bully. It's not that I go around looking for trouble, but since I'm so big, people just expect trouble and so it usually finds me. Since mom and dad are both busy with their law practice I get to enjoy a stay here where they hope I'll commune with nature and stay out of trouble.

Kids are encouraged to hike around the woods that surround the school. They expect you to "find yourself" or "get to know yourself." Grayson, my counselor here, understands I enjoy the outdoors and understands if I want to take a weekend camping trip by myself. One day when I was out hiking I got off the trail and wandered deep into the woods. I felt something pulling me. That was when I found the pond. I felt hypnotized standing in front of it. As I stood there and watched, I saw other animals creeping up to the pond just like me, only they couldn't stop themselves. Once they got too close – **Snap** – something grabbed them and dragged them underneath the water. Something lives underneath that dark pond and I'm going to figure out what it is.

To see if Armie discovers what lives under the dark pond read, [The Dark Pond](#) by Joseph Bruchac.

Gregor and the Prophecy of Bane
By: Suzanne Collins

Reader's Theater

Characters:

Narrator

Gregor -- the "Overlander" who has descended into the Underland to rescue his two-year-old sister Boots from the giant rats and cockroaches who rule that world

Mareth -- the warrior in charge of training Gregor to conquer the giant rat Bane

Zap -- first "shiner" (firefly) hired to provide light for Gregor's quest to find the Bane before the Underlanders kill Boots

Photos Glow-Glow -- second "shiner"

Ares -- the huge bat who has sworn to carry Gregor into battle and give his life for Gregor if need be

Boots -- Gregor's fearless two-year-old baby sister

Temp: A rather clumsy giant cockroach

Twitchtip -- a bad-tempered rat with a highly-developed sense of smell

Narrator: Armed with flashlights, batteries, duct tape, and candy bars, Gregor and the others have set out on the Underland Waterway to find and battle the Bane. Afraid for Boots' safety, Gregor refuses to let her out of his sight. Buckled in a life jacket, she plays in the bottom of the boat with Temp while Twitchtip scowls. In this scene from Chapter 11, Twitchtip's ugly mood increases when Zap and Photos Glow-Glow join the voyagers. The fireflies argue about everything from where they will sit to whose servant Temp will be.

Mareth: I tried to distract them by feeding them, but now they're arguing about each other's table manners!

Photos Glow-Glow: *Must* you talk with your mouth full, Zap? You're killing my appetite!

Zap: This from someone who just sat in his milk!

Narrator: Apparently this was true, because Photos's rear end immediately turned bright red with anger, and he chomped on a mushroom for at least 30 seconds in silence.

Gregor (whispering): Mareth, are they always like this?

Mareth (whispering back): In truth, these two are not as bad as some others I have traveled with. I once saw a pair try to fight to the death over a piece of cake!

Gregor: *Try to?*

Mareth: Yes, they are not very capable fighters, and they tire quickly. So they ended up accusing each other of cheating, and giving up. Then they sulked for several days. (Zap and Photos Glow-glow glare at each other.)

Gregor: Do we really need them?

Mareth: Unfortunately, yes.

Narrator: Even Boots, who is rolling a ball around the floor of the boat with Temp, seems annoyed by the fireflies.

Boots (tugging on one of Photos's wings): Fo-fo, too loud! Shh, Fo-fo!

Photos Glow-Glow: Fo-fo? Fo-fo? I am called Photos Glow-Glow and will answer to no other name!

Gregor: She's just a little kid. She can't say Photos Glow-glow.

Photos (haughtily): Well, then, I cannot understand her!

Narrator: At this point, Twitchtip's foul temper boils over.

Twitchtip (turning towards Photos): Allow me to translate. She said if you don't stop your incessant babble, that big rat sitting in the boat next to you will rip your head off.

Narrator: A blissful silence follows. Gregor switches on his flashlight and shines it around. All signs of land have vanished. He picks up the scroll with "The Prophecy of Bane" and opens it.

Gregor (reading slowly, puzzled): "DIE THE BABY, DIE HIS HEART.
DIE HIS MOST ESSENTIAL PART."

Narrator: He lets the scroll snap shut and looks at Boots, innocently singing "Row, row, row your boat" in the bottom of the boat. How can anyone think they are going to solve anything by killing her? And yet, at this moment, Gregor knows squads of rats are scouring the Underland to do just that. Will they succeed? Buckle up your life jacket and ride along with *Gregor and the Prophecy of Bane* to find out!

Midsummer Night's Dork
By: Carol Gorman
Dramatic Dialog in 3 parts

Jerry Flack, His Conscience, and His Tormentor (Narrator can help beginning and end.)

Narrator sets the scene. “Jerry Flack, 6th grader, shares his ideas but keeps getting interrupted by the Angel, His Conscience, and the Devil, His Tormentor to keep him in touch with reality.”

Jerry: Hi, I'm Jerry Flack and I have just been elected 6th grade president. This will be the coolest year ever! I have some great ideas and a committee to make Sixth Grade the Coolest!

Tormentor: Yeah, but your ideas are all too expensive.

Jerry (to Tormentor): The committee has ideas to raise money.

Conscience: Yes, the committee is committed to a project like a Bake Sale or Car Wash.

Tormentor: Those ideas will never raise enough money!! You need big bucks for computers and student email access!

Jerry (to the audience): The Committee knows we need big bucks, that's why we are having a big festival that lots of people will attend. We are learning about William Shakespeare, and will use our new knowledge to create a Shakespearean Extravaganza!!

Conscience: The idea of a play is outstanding, Jerry. That is so Shakespearean.

Tormentor: A play? How original. (Yawn)

Jerry: Well, yes actually. It is an original work: Camouflage Girl. This girl is a fairy, but she wants to fit in so she...

Tormentor (interrupting): Camouflage Girl? What kind of Shakespeare is that? Who wrote this play?

Conscience: Two very talented, imaginative girls. They have a wonderful concept and the ideas are really flowing.

Tormentor (to Jerry): Do you have a script?

Jerry: Well, no, but (looking happily at the audience again) we started some classes to develop the things we need for the whole festival. We are learning about stage combat, and

Tormentor: Yeah that was a great one. Let sixth graders punch each other out!

Conscience: It worked well. The students learned techniques and how to work together.
(Jerry smiles at Conscience.)

Jerry: My friend and I have made a new friend, too, Elena. She is really interesting and knows things that we need for the festival.

Tormentor: (hooting with laughter) Elena, what a dork!!

Jerry: We are helping her out of dorkdom. She's learning to blend in better.

Conscience: Jerry, I can tell she is happy making new friends.

Tormentor: Talk about friends, how about that Craig! He's really a bad dude!

Conscience: He is very bad (nodding vigorously.)

Tormentor: I mean bad dude in a cool way.

Jerry: (sounding very angry) He isn't cool at all! I'm really worried about his lies and that puppy.

Conscience: Now, Jerry, don't get worked up about that puppy. There just isn't much you can do. Let's focus on the Festival.

Jerry: Oh man, it's just too much. All I wanted was to create the Coolest Sixth Grade ever. How did I end up with all these problems?

Narrator: Jerry seems to have a big job ahead of him. He wants to do a good job, and not be a dork. He has a lot on his plate: Festival, 6th grade committee, the Elena friendship, and what about that puppy? Read *A Midsummer Night's Dork* by Carol Gorman and see how things turn out.

Curriculum connections and the author's website:

<http://www.carolgorman.com/dorkmid.html>

Publisher's website with published excerpt:

http://www.harpercollins.ca/global_scripts/product_catalog/book_xml.asp?isbn=0060507187

Abduction!
By: Peg Kehret

Book Talk

Overwhelmed with fear, thirteen-year-old Bonnie has an unsettling dream and a feeling of foreboding on the very day that her six-year-old brother, Matt and their dog, Pookie, are abducted.

Matt is missing!

Matt left his kindergarten class to use the bathroom and then suddenly disappears. His father, Danny, whom he has never seen before, has abducted him. Danny dressed as a UPS man uses Pookie to lure Matt into his car, by saying Pookie has been hit by a car and needs to see the vet. Danny then stops at a park to change and leaves Pookie tied to a post at a park where he is found later by an elderly couple. Danny plans to use Matt to try and get money from his brother in law to help raise Matt but really plans to use the money to gamble with. Danny showers Matt with new toys and convinces him that he is his father and he will be living with him from now on because his mother and sister were killed in a car wreck.

The police use a police dog to trace Matt to the curb at the school and there all traces vanish. An Amber Alert is issued for Matt. The elderly couple that picked up Pookie at the park ends up missing the evening news, so they don't realize that the family wants Pookie back. Trying to help aid in the search for Matt, Bonnie and her mother make up flyers displaying Matt and Pookie's photos to place around town. Where is Matt? Will they ever find him?

Bonnie follows her instincts and becomes involved in this frightening adventure and major search effort to try and find her brother. Bonnie goes to a Mariners game at Safeco Field with her friends and sees her brother Matt. Bonnie then follows Matt and ends up getting kidnapped too. Danny then pulls a gun on them when they try and escape while aboard the Washington State ferry.

Will Bonnie and Matt be able to outsmart their abductor or will they pay with their lives? Read Abduction and find out.

Web site: www.pegkehret.com

Edgar Allen Poe Award nominee

Danny: “Not until tonight, really, until he called to tell me how sorry he was that I didn’t make it. He said he didn’t want me to find out in a letter.”

Richie: “Right.”

Danny: “The only other time I actually heard him say anything was when he welcomed all of us the first night.”

Richie: “He thinks he’s the mayor.”

Danny: “Mom says that in his mind, it would be a step down, from his current position as king.”

Richie: “That’s all you got out of him? That he was sorry?”

Danny: “There was the one other thing, as we were breaking up into groups the first night. He was talking to a couple of the evaluators—you know, the clipboard dads?—and he told them, ‘Remember, I want us to get bigger this year, last year we were too small and we couldn’t even get out of the sectionals.’”

Richie: “He said that he wanted the twelve-year-old travel team from Middletown to get *bigger*?”

Danny: “Yeah, Dad, he did.”

Richie: “What, so we can match up better against the Lakers?”

Narrator: Richie Walker, Danny’s dad hung around Middletown for a few more days. He watched Danny and Ty Ross play basketball. He confronted his old friend, Jeff Ross. Jeff, who had been the second-best Middletown basketball player all through school—behind Richie. Richie Walker, who was small like his son, who had gone on to play professional basketball, until the car wreck that had ended his career, and eventually his marriage.

Danny: “When are you leaving, Dad?”

Richie: “Listen, I’m thinking about hanging around for a while.”

Danny: “What are you going to do here?”

Richie: “I was thinking about coaching.”

Mom: “You’re going to coach a team in Middletown?”

Richie: “Yeah, an opportunity just presented itself in the last couple of days.”

Danny: “*Dad! Who are you going to coach?*”

Richie: “You.”

Danny: “Me.”

Richie: “You know what this town needs more than cable TV at the Inn?”

Danny: “*What?*”

Richie: “Another seventh grade travel team.”

Narrator: Danny’s mom had a few reservations.

Mom: “You can pull this off?”

Richie: “We’re sure as hell gonna find out.”

Narrator: Danny Walker knows something else that the clipboard dads don’t: You can’t measure heart.

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To find out more about Mike Lupica, the author of *Travel Team*

Author biographies:

<http://www.teenreads.com/authors/au-lupica-mike.asp>

<http://www.answers.com/topic/mike-lupica> (Wikipedia)

Down Girl and Sit: Smarter than Squirrels

By: Lucy Nolan
Reader's Theater

Narrator:

Down Girl:

Rruff:

Sit:

Sit's Master:

Man with bag of doughnuts:

Narrator: In this selection, Down Girl and Sit decide to follow their brains.

Down Girl: It's not easy being a dog. There are too many things to remember. If we didn't have such large brains, we might become as forgetful as our masters. The other day, Rruff forgot to eat breakfast. I couldn't believe it. Rruff never starts the day without toast or a doughnut. At least he put my coffee where I could reach it.

Rruff: Down, Girl!

Down, Girl: Rruff!! I love that man.

Narrator: Later, Down Girl and Rruff meet Sit and her master for a walk; at least the dogs think it's a walk.

Down, Girl: But wait! Our masters had somehow gotten out of the fence when we weren't looking. They were riding off on bicycles. Here's the worst part: they forgot us! I jumped against the gate. I barked and barked (she barks) Suddenly the gate swung open. I actually opened the gate! I thought I was brilliant.

Sit: I thought the gate was unlocked to begin with.

Down Girl: It didn't matter. Sit and I were free. We could go after our masters! We put our noses to the ground and followed their trail. After three blocks, we began to lose the scent. It was time to quit following our noses and start following our brains! Where could our masters possibly be?

Sit: Perhaps they stopped to roll in that leaf pile.

Down Girl: That was an excellent suggestion. Sit and I trotted over to it. Our masters weren't anywhere in sight, but that didn't mean they weren't hiding deep in the pile. We sniffed it (sniffs loudly).

Sit: We could tell that a poodle, a collie, and two cocker spaniels had been there. Quite frankly, the leaf pile stunk! We jumped right in.

Narrator: Down Girl and Sit decide if that if their masters had passed up this much fun, they must be somewhere even better. Where could that be?

Down Girl: Perhaps they went to swim in the creek. Sit and I splashed all through the creek. When we climbed out, we were covered with green pond scum. Ha! I told Sit. You look like a salad! (Sit whines). We crept along, pretending to be salads.

Narrator: They were running out of places to look. It was time to think about this more deeply.

Down Girl: If we weren't at home, where would we be? Finally the obvious answer hit us.

Both dogs together: We'd go to the park to chase squirrels! (shouting)

Down Girl: All of a sudden I caught the whiff of something familiar in the air. I quivered (shaking) all over with excitement. (Sniffs deeply) I couldn't believe what my nose was telling me!

Sit: Is it Ruff?

Down Girl: (Shouts) No! It's a doughnut!!

Narrator: Down Girl and Sit followed the delicious smell up one street and down another, until they found the most amazing place. People were sitting at tables outside, and there were doughnuts everywhere.

Down Girl: Quite frankly, I was surprised we were the only dogs there. Then I saw Ruff. He was eating with Sit's master. We wagged our tails and ran to them.

Ruff: (Loudly, surprised) Down, Girl!

Sit's Master: (Also surprised) Sit!!

Down Girl: Our masters didn't seem happy to see us. They insisted we lie down beside them. I was being good. I really was. But then I saw a man at the table next to us. He had a bag of doughnuts. I did the only thing I could do. I inched my way over to him (slinks along ground) and begged (sits up begging with paws up and tongue out). I did this in a very cool way, of course. When you beg in a cool way, it is not called begging. It is called staring.

(Man with doughnuts pulls out newspaper, accidentally pushing bag of doughnuts to the edge of table.)

Down Girl: (Grabs bag with mouth and drops it on ground.) Why, thank you! What a generous man!

Ruff: (Angrily) Down, Girl!

Down Girl: Was it time to go already? Okay, I could finish my doughnuts on the way.

Narrator: Can Down Girl and Sit survive their adventures with doughnuts and the dreaded Here, Kitty Kitty without being put on the leash? Read Down Girl and Sit: Smarter than Squirrels to find out!

The Right Dog For The Job
By: Dorothy Hinshaw Patent

Ira is a small golden retriever puppy and, like any other puppy, he's cute and cuddly, soft and furry. He's full of energy and loves to play and romp around with his brother and sister. And, of course, he loves to retrieve.

But Ira is not just any puppy---he's special. He has been chosen to become a service dog. By two years of age, Ira will be trained to help a person who has difficulty moving around on his own. Ira will help that person live a fuller life. Ira will become a guide dog for a blind person. Being a guide dog is not easy. Ira will have to learn to deal with the world around him---loud noises, smelly buses, and crowds of people. He will have to learn to sit quietly in loud, distracting places and, more importantly, learn to retrieve things for his owner, press a wheelchair sign with his paw to open doors, turn on a light switch with his nose, and get on and off a bus.

When Ira is only about eight weeks old, he is given to a new family who will become his "foster puppy raiser." Ira's puppy raiser is Sandy, a sixth grade teacher. Sandy's job is to begin Ira's training as a guide dog. Will Ira measure up to the challenges? Will he be able to become a guide dog?

Read Dorothy Hinshaw Patent's book *The Right Dog for the Job*.

Related web sites

Canine Companions

http://www.caninecompanions.org/our_program.html

This page gives an overview of training dogs to assist people. Several links at the bottom of this page provide more information on breeding, raising, training and follow-up programs.

Canine Partners

<http://www.caninepartners.co.uk/about/index.html>

This is the web site of a nonprofit organization that trains dogs to assist disabled people. Of special interest is the link “Training Our Dogs” which gives more detailed information on how dogs are trained to become canine partners.

The Do and Don'ts

<http://www.paisleyplace.com/gdf-grads/dodont.htm>

Find out the proper way to act around a guide dog with these lists of what to do and not to do.

Golden Surprise

<http://www.missoulain.com/articles/2003/06/16/territory/territory01.txt>

This is a news article about the visit by Don Simmonson and Ira to the eighth grade graduation program as described in the book.

Guide Dogs of America

<http://www.guidedogsofamerica.org/training.html>

This page provides a description of guide dog training and has an interesting list of frequently asked questions about guide dogs (e.g., How does a guide dog know where to go? What are the main commands used with guide dogs? Does a dog ever fail to adjust to his owner?)

How Guide Dogs Work

<http://people.howstuffworks.com/guide-dog.htm>

Several interesting topics related to guide dogs are covered on this page. Use the Table of Contents to navigate to all sections.

Leader Dogs for the Blind

http://ldfb.convio.net/site/Survey?SURVEY_ID=1020&ACTION_REQUIRED=URI_ACTION_USER_REQUESTS

Take this quiz to find out how much you know about guide dogs for the blind.

Activities

1. Guide dogs for blind people are one of the most common types of service dogs. For what other disabilities can a dog be trained to assist people? What other kinds of service dogs are available besides guide dogs for the blind?
2. Design a brochure or make a poster that describes the purposes of a guide dog.

Becoming Naomi Leon
By: Pam Munoz Ryan

When Naomi was very little, her self centered mom gave her and her disabled baby brother to Naomi's great grandma to raise. So for 7 years, this makeshift little family has been living a quiet life in Lemon Tree, California. Naomi is very good at carving soap, making lists and worrying and she suddenly has lots more to worry about when her mother shows up on their doorstep, supposedly to get to know her kids again.

Although Naomi is happy when her mom first shows up, it's not long before she realizes that Skyla, her mom, has her own plans for Naomi and they don't include her little brother Owen. In a desperate effort to keep their little family together, Gram and Naomi uproot their trailer home and head to Mexico looking for Naomi's father. Will they succeed? Read [Becoming Naomi Leon](#).

Blue Jasmine
By: Kashmira Sheth
READER'S THEATRE

Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Seema, Mommy and Mela.

Narrator 1: Seema has moved to the United States and left so many things behind in her homeland, India. She misses her grandparents, her school, the aromatic food, familiar sights and sounds. She misses her cousin Raju most of all. Sometimes the simple events bring out surprising emotions in Seema's whole family.

Narrator 2: Mommy has taken Seema and her little sister Mela to do the grocery shopping. They ride the bus because Mommy doesn't drive a car, yet. It is October, and Seema has already learned many things about her new life while attending school.

Seema: Mommy, even through my gloves the wind is freezing my fingers. Can't we get a car instead of walking and riding the bus?

Mommy: Days like this will not come often, Seema. We don't need a car.

Seema: It will get colder than this. It's only October, and it will get much colder. Everyone at school told me about Winter. Jennifer says the coldest month is January.

Narrator 2: Mommy didn't reply. She just gritted her teeth against the brisk wind.

Mela: I'm cold.

Seema: Would you like candy? We could play a guessing game.

Mela: No, I just want to go home. Home now!

Mommy: Seema, you could tell Mela a story while we wait for the bus.

Mela: No, no, no!!! I'm cold. I want to go home now!

Narrator 2: Mela grabbed Mommy's hand and dragged her down the street past the bus stop.

Mommy: Mela, be quiet! If you open your mouth one more time I will slap you!!

Narrator 2: Mela was so shocked she stopped crying. Mommy never slapped. She never even raised her voice. The bus arrived and they gathered their groceries and got on board. They rode without talking. As soon as they got home and safely inside, Mommy started crying.

Seema: Are you okay, Mommy?

Mommy: I'm miserable. I don't know why we are in this place, always so dark and cold. I feel trapped, and I miss home. If I go outside the cold grabs me. My feet are freezing, my hands never warm up and my back is stiff. I miss our home in India where it was warm and sunny. I have never liked the cold, and now I hate it!

Narrator 2: Seema was scared. She had never heard Mommy talk this way, and she didn't know what to say.

Seema: It will be all right, Mommy. It will be.

Mommy: How? You said it will get colder. What will Mela and I do cooped up here in this house, too cold to go outside? I miss markets and crowds from back home. I miss our family and friends. I don't like this cold, ugly place.

Seema: I'm sorry Mommy. I didn't know you were so sad.

Narrator 2: Suddenly Mela hopped into Mommy's lap and gave her a kiss. She smiled and the room seemed warmer.

Mela: I'm sorry you are so sad, Mommy.

Mommy: No, I am sorry my little girls. I don't even sound like myself. That anger must have been boiling inside for a long time. Today, it just came out. In India I always had things to do, and now all I have is time.

Seema: Could Mela go to school yet? I know my friend, Ria, has a brother in school, and he is Mela's age. I could find out where he goes to school.

Mommy: Do you think Mela knows enough English yet?

Seema: She is learning well, and when she goes to school she will learn more.

Mommy: We will talk with your father and see where Mela can go to school, and then I will meet new friends, too.

Narrator 1: It is difficult to adjust to so many new things. Seema and her family work together finding solutions to their new problems. There are plenty of problems for her in America, but she soon learns that there are problems back in India, too. Blue Jasmine is a story about family, home and how people adapt to changes.

Awards:

Paul Zindel First Novel Award – 2002 (Although the books was published Spring of 2004, the Award is dated 2002.)

Learn more about the book and author:

<http://kashmirasheth.com/bluejasmine/index.html>

The publisher has posted the first chapter, read it here:

http://www.hyperionbooksforchildren.com/blue_jasmine_chap1.html

The Unseen
by Zilpha Keatley Snyder

Did you ever wonder what happens between your eyes and your ears and your nose and your mouth? Like, what if there's something out there that can't be detected by any of those, but it's still there? What if you wanted to taste a smell or hear a color or touch a feeling, there has to be a key, right?

Well, 12-year-old Xandra Hobson has just found a snow white feather and she thinks it might be the key to what lies beyond the senses. Nobody knows about it. Not any of her popular, talented, beautiful siblings and especially not her successful parents. I mean, they're hardly home anyway, why would they pay any attention to a feather?

But Xandra needs to find out what this key is. I mean, it just looks just like a feather; it *is* a feather, but it's got the power to bring back friends Xandra thought she'd lost. But it can also bring these faceless, shapeless...things that bite at her with needle-sharp teeth. How can this key be so good and so painful all at the same time?

Maybe Brenda would know. She's totally weird with her bag lady clothes and crazy grandpa. Nobody at school ever talks to her, but if anyone would know the key to this key it would be her.

If you want to learn the key to the key so that you can see the unseen, then you must read The Unseen by Zilpha Zeatly Snyder.

The Unseen by Zilpha Zeatly Snyder. Delacorte Press. 2004

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

Hachiko
By: Pamela S. Turner

Hachiko waiting
For Dr. Uneo's Tokyo
train. Good dog. Waiting.

One day no doctor
Comes home. Hachiko still waits
All night long. Waiting

Hachiko waits days
become weeks become months
become 10 years. Wait.

Hachiko's days end
waiting for Doctor's return.
Now they are together.

Hachiko: The True Story of a Loyal Dog by Pamela Turner. Houghton-Mifflin. 2004

Grades 1-3

<http://www.nylana.org/RRACI/hachiko.htm>

Shredderman: Secret Identity
By: Wendelin Van Draanen

Bullies--I hate them! Bullies--everyone knows one! Bullie--nobody can win against one! Bubba is the bully in Mr. Green's class and he's been making everyone's life miserable for years. "Bubba Bixby was born big and mean, full of teeth and ready to bite." Nolan Byrd (of course, nicknamed Nerd by the hulking Bubba) would love to stop him but hey, Nolan would also love to live long enough to see high school. So Nolan creates a secret identity, Shredderman, and uses his brains and lots of cool technology to expose Bubba for the rotten bully that he is.

Will Nolan's secret identity remain a secret or will he becomes tomorrow's hamburger platter? And is it possible to win against a bully? Read the very funny Shredderman: Secret Identity.