



FIFTY:
The Stars, the States, and the Stories

by Meredith Markow and David Sewell McCann

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FIFTY:

The Stars, the States, and the Stories

How to Use the Sparkle Schoolhouse Study Pages

The United States of America is a magnificent experiment. It is a nation built on a dream of a better future, on equality, and on true freedom. But what does that really look like? In this collection of fifty stories, we learn about the American Experiment through the experience of “regular folk” – one from each state. Rebels, Industrialists, Foresters, Farmers, Immigrants from every corner of the planet and Native Folk who have been here for a very long time – we meet them all in a moment of true citizenship: when they make the American Experiment their own. These stories are all historical fiction – pulling from real historical and biographical facts – but “sparkled” into a narrative that engages and inspires.

Once you’ve listened to the story, you can learn more about the history behind the story in our Sparkle Schoolhouse post. Through Sparkle Schoolhouse, we use the stories in our library as starting points for lessons you can do at home. Each story in our FIFTY series is accompanied by study notes that frame how each specific story can inspire further lessons in American history, geography, and civics along with providing themes that can support our children’s growth and development.

Here’s how it works.

The FIFTY Study Notes are divided into three parts:

A Summary of the Story

We understand that Sparkle adults may not have the time to enjoy listening to the stories

along with their children. For this reason, we provide a synopsis of each story so that you can engage in conversation with your child even if you haven’t had the chance to listen to the story yourself.

Topics for Academic Exploration

In each story there are references made to historical, geographic, civic, and cultural topics that you could explore and study further with your child. We know that when subjects are warmed with interest and connection, it makes it more interesting for learning. In this way, the stories and characters in the stories help to give purpose and context to further exploration of the topics.

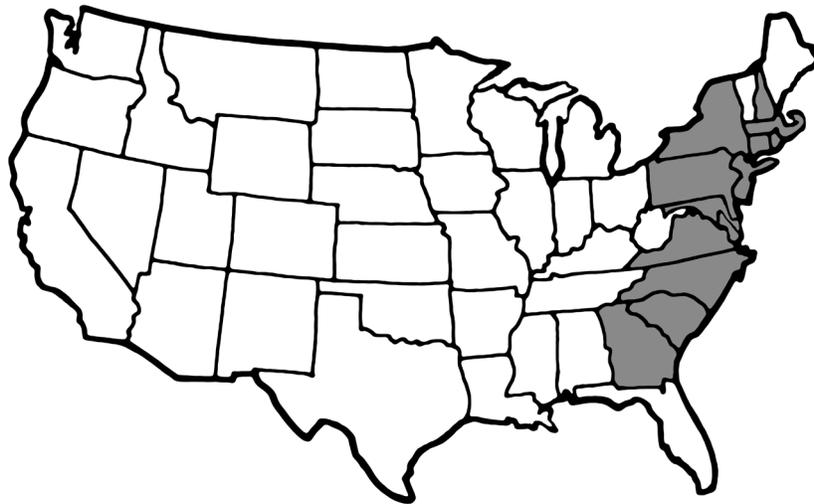
Child Development Themes

Our characters have been developed with attributes that may be useful as reference points and inspirations for the very things your child is experiencing in his or her own life. Themes of courage, social inclusion, grief and loss, anger, disappointment and disillusionment, discrimination, rivalry, fear, decision-making, overcoming obstacles, self-confidence – our characters have gone through it all. Perhaps your child has experienced some of these things as well? With each story, we provide “life lessons” along with specific examples of how our characters encountered them. Our characters and their stories can help you to guide your child as they navigate the complexities of being human. The examples set by others, in real life or in stories, can help show us the way.

We hope that our FIFTY Sparkle Schoolhouse Study Guide can make the stars in our stripes Sparkle even brighter!



FIFTY: The Stars, the States, and the Stories Study Pages — Collection One



Each story in the FIFTY collection focuses on a remarkable American from a different state. Below are some recommended topics to inspire further investigation of the history and geography of the state, as well as themes that can support our children's growth and development.

Though this is historical fiction and the characters have been developed to accommodate a story, their attributes and development may be useful as reference points and inspirations.



Delaware: "People Like Me"

Richard Heath, administrator for the Quaker businessman William Penn, was set with the grueling task of delivering notices to anyone who was living on land now owned by his employer. When he encountered Old Hannu, a 'Forest Finn' and his Lenape-Dutch grand-daughter, his idea of 'land ownership' is fundamentally challenged.

Topics for Investigation

Delaware History

- History of New Sweden, New Amsterdam and New York as it relates to the Delaware River area
- History of Quakers and immigration to America
- Timeline of all the different 'owners' of the east coast of USA
- Biography of William Penn

Delaware Geography

- Map of Delaware with different boundaries depending on which countries or proprietors owned the land
- Map of Quaker migration to America

"People Like Me" Study Topics

- What is the Society of Friends?
- A general study of American Colonization and how land was 'claimed' and then how ownership legally (or illegally) changed over time.

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

While some people may find their place where they belong without having to travel far and wide, others need to explore other lands and other ways of living and thinking before they find their true home.

Such was the case with Richard Heath who left his home in England in order to live with his new community of like-minded folks along the Delaware River—the Quakers.

There are so often different perspectives on the same matter, and while it is fine to hold to your own opinion, it is also important to note that other perspectives can also exist without either being wrong. For example, there were some who supported King George during the



time of the American Revolution and some who believed in the same things that William Penn believed in. The same is true today. History is being made every day between and among people who have different opinions.

Quakers strongly believe in being honest, patient and peaceful. You do not need to call yourself a Quaker, in order to live by these important values.

The Quakers also believe that there is no excuse for aggression or bullying, but that there are times where you must defend yourself. There may be times in life where we have to be very clear about what the differences are in our own actions.

We can respect the differences among people and cultures, while at the same time keep our eyes open and to look for the things that connect us all. While Dutch food was different than what Richard was used to, a dumpling boiled in sweet grape juice, the vegetables that grew in the

garden were easily recognizable by Richard. Same produce, different recipes! Isn't that wonderful? Richard saw that garden as a picture of collaboration between Europe and the colonies.

The United States of America is she who she is because of the personalities and contributions of those who came to her from many different lands. Old Han came to teach soldiers how to build Finnish cabins. Others brought recipes, and others brought ideas! Additionally, it is also very important to remember that the Native people who were here originally were the first to till the soil from which America has grown. The United States of America is truly "a beautiful garden of so many colors."





Pennsylvania: “Three Men and a Bell”

On September 16, 1777, three men — a sociable young Mennonite farmer, a seasoned old doorman of poor health, and an injured African-American carpenter — were given the grand task of hiding a uniquely symbolic ... bell. This bell, which would one day be called the “Liberty Bell,” was big, heavy, and currently at the top of the Pennsylvania statehouse — and they had three days to get it out of town.

Topics for Investigation

Pennsylvania History

- Timeline of Revolutionary War Events leading up to September 17 1777
- Study of Liberty Bell from casting to museum
- History of Philadelphia through Revolutionary War

Pennsylvania Geography

- Map of colonial Philadelphia
- Route taken for transporting Liberty Bell to Allentown
- Map of the taking of Philadelphia by British Army

“Three Men and a Bell” Study Topics

- Symbols of the Revolutionary War and America in general

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

Sometimes we are drawn into friendships or working relationships with people we might not have expected. There are times when we find ourselves in warm and productive relationships with individuals that may be surprising to us. It is unlikely that a young Mennonite farmer, an old doorman, and an African-American carpenter would have guessed that they would find their way to each other as they did in our story.

The course of events can unfold in completely surprising ways. We might think we know who our best friends or work companions will be, and we may think we know how events will turn out, but we must always leave room for surprise. In 1777,

England was confident that she would win the War of Independence. The American colonists could have assumed as



much and surrendered, but knowing that there is always a possibility for the wind to change, the colonies persevered and ultimately won their independence.

What's boring to you might be wonderful for someone else. Some people find satisfaction by trying many different things, while others are happy doing a few things with constancy. Mr. McNair had what he thought was the most important job there was — ringing the Statehouse bell. He did it day in and day out at, all different times of the day, over many years, and he took great pride in his work.

Symbols communicate. A symbol — something that stands for or represents something else — can remind us of what is important but otherwise would be hard to repeatedly explain and express. The bell that Mr. McNair tended and cared for represented all that was good, true, and beautiful about America. The Liberty Bell symbolized the colonies' mission toward independence from England. This is why he protected it and refused it to be taken, lest it be melted down and turned into bullets.

People are often more capable than you think. Do not underestimate the capacities of an individual with differences in their physical abilities. Some of these individuals have to work harder and build perseverance and muscles that make them more productive and capable than they otherwise would have been. Absalom had an injured foot, but he was a very good carpenter, accurate, strong, and dependable! It was ultimately those strong shoulders of his that were needed to carry the Liberty Bell.

Let the work speak. Sometimes when we are looking for praise, the best thing we can do is to just do the work and let the quality of the work speak for itself. If we work for praise and

acknowledgment, then we are working from the wrong motivation. While it is wonderful to be recognized for your hard work, that recognition in itself will likely not sustain you for long. Absalom was not looking for praise when he moved the bell, but rather working on behalf of his dedication to his country and the love of a job well done.

It is possible to work through the pain.

Although it can be very challenging, it is possible to put your focus on other aspects of your life than just physical pain. It can be difficult living with pain, and yet Absalom models for us that even if our bodies are limited or if they are in pain, there is still plenty that we can accomplish in life and celebrate what our bodies can do.

It can take time for others to see all of us.

People often make decisions based on the limited amount of information that they have about us without seeing our true selves. Absalom knew that he was much more than an enslaved man with physical strength. He knew that he was smart and skilled and that he needed to be patient so that others would see his true nature. And this proved true when it was his ingenuity that sparked the idea about how to move the Liberty Bell.

We are stronger together. We can accomplish so much more as a team than any of us could as individuals. The gifts from Absalom, Mr. McNair, and Frederick were all needed to bring the Liberty Bell to her new home so that she could ring proud and true, heralding America's very first Independence Day.





New Jersey: “Miss Barton’s Free School”

Clara Barton wanted to teach all children — not just the children from families that could afford to pay her. So when she learned of the “Free School” movement where state and local governments paid for school rather than the individual families, she saw her future. With hard work and perseverance, she was able to create the first Free School in New Jersey — and much to everyone’s surprise, it was a huge success. This victory, however, eventually led to Miss Barton’s removal and sent her on an entirely new trajectory: to form the American Red Cross.

Topics for Investigation

New Jersey History

- History of Public Education in America
- Biography of Clara Barton
- History of the American Red Cross

New Jersey Geography

- Map of Clara Barton’s movement from Massachusetts to New York to New Jersey to Washington DC

“Miss Barton’s Free School” Study Topics

- Study of how seeming failures can lead to huge successes

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

Sometimes in spite of the gratitude we feel for our circumstances, the concern we feel for others may inspire us to change our circumstances, as

comfortable as they may be. While Clara

was glad to be able to provide a service to those who could afford education,

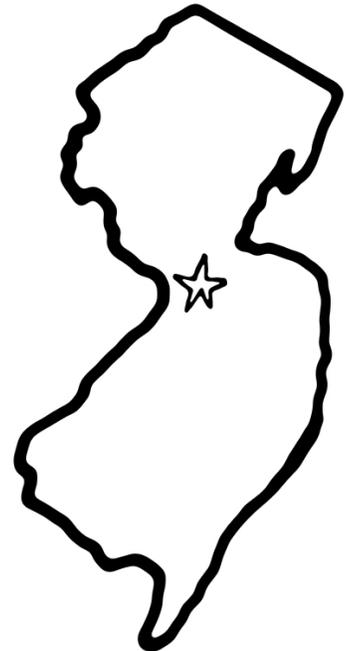
her eyes were open to the fact that not everyone was so fortunate. Even as

a schoolteacher of children from wealthy families,

Clara often wondered about the children left behind—

the children from poor working-class

families who didn’t have the extra money to pay for school. She loved the school



she taught in, and she was happy to have a job, but she knew that her real work was somewhere else.

With enough creativity and good will, when we come together with like-minded people, we can turn a good idea into a great one through action. Free Schools were created in response to not all children receiving education. It was a new idea that became a revolutionary one because it was implemented. It required teamwork and bravery and Sarah found both.

When we do something new, and take a risk, it's OK to start small until we are sure that we are safe and secure. Before committing herself to teaching in the Free Schools, Sara decided to visit her friend to see if the project was one that she could be a part of. Even though Mary Norton saw the Clara was the right person for the job, Clara had to make sure what had what was required to do what was being asked of her here. She had to take small steps to make sure she was up to the task.

Be who you are with full confidence and pride. In being yourself now, you allow something to grow in you that the world will need for the future. Clara knew when she was a little girl that she was not comfortable being home helping mothers with their daily chores. She also loved opportunities for hard work. She was more comfortable roughhousing and playing sports in the ways that were more acceptable for boys than for girls. But she was herself. This all translated into her developing just the right courage and skills needed to be a teacher! Had she denied who she was as a little girl, she may not have become a teacher, and in turn she may not have been part of founding the Red Cross. And what a loss for the world that would have been!

A really good teacher is one who will intentionally change her way of teaching if her students are showing her that they need something different. While it is true that students also need to accommodate to expectations of the classroom, this does

not mean that in doing so that their needs should be dampened. Clara had the skills to accommodate the children who were “rambunctious” and who otherwise might not have been given an opportunity for success in school. At the time Clara taught, school success was reserved for the polite and well behaved.

A good teacher is also a patient one, one who holds a high standard of behavior, but also who sees the end goal and helps her children step-by-step to reach it. This is with Clara did when helping to shape her “unruly children” into productive, enthusiastic students.

Children crave work that is meaningful. We all want to feel on some level that we have purpose. For this reason giving children chores, real chores, that make a difference to a family or a community helps them feel that they matter and that they are part of the greater Good. In Clara handing a hammer and a saw to her new students, and in having them be part of building the school that they would get to attend, they were part of something real. They built their school with their own hands.

It can be hard to trust the way life unfolds for us when we can't control the outcome. But if we trust in the unfolding, a new and perhaps even more “right” way can be shown. Clara returned to work from her bout with laryngitis only to find that she was no longer in charge. After accepting the painful reality, she used her upset and put it toward focus and determination to make change in a positive way. This ultimately had far-reaching consequences for her future and the world. Millions of people have been helped by the Red Cross during times when help is most needed and spirits are lowest. Thank goodness for the good people and a good hearts, and for the strong determination that puts all that goodness in the right place!





Georgia: "All in Translation"

James Oglethorpe had an idea: he wanted to reform the debtor's prison system in England by establishing a new colony in America called Georgia. The only problem was that the current residents of the 'new land' were members of the Yamacraw tribe and he did not speak their language. Luckily he met Mary Musgrove who not only could translate, but gave him invaluable advice that helped both Oglethorpe and the Yamacraw people.

Topics for Investigation

Georgia History

- Biography of James Oglethorpe
- History of Muskogee and Creek people
- History of Georgia colony

Georgia Geography

- Map of American Colonies in 1730
- Map of Savanna River

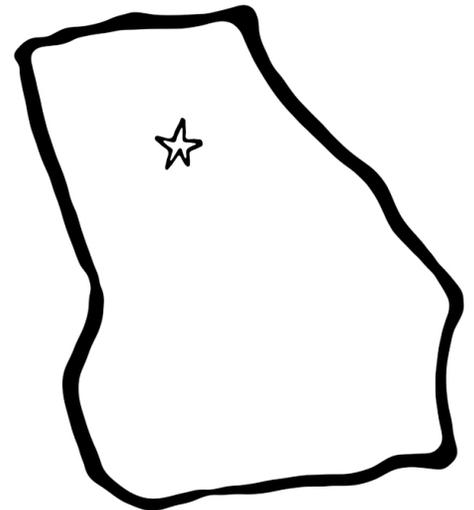
"All in Translation" Study Topics

- Political challenges between English colonies and Spanish (Florida)
- Why Oglethorpe was unique as anti-slavery
- A look at prison reform initiatives

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

Great action begins with a small idea. Feed your ideas. Water them. Even if you are not sure they will take root, listen to them. This is what James Edward Oglethorpe did when he had a flash of idea about prison reform. He knew there were a great many challenges to overcome to give prisoners a chance by treating them with more kindness and in giving them more opportunities. He knew that they needed to be treated with more kindness if they were to learn how to treat others with more kindness. He watered his idea and it grew!



Kindness is infectious! If we repeatedly treat others with kindness, even those who have not learned how to be kind themselves, eventually kindness wins. If we treat others with a lack of consideration, then they will often respond with a lack of consideration. This was the problem that many people faced who went to prison when they tried to reenter society. In prison they were treated badly, and they learned how to treat other people badly. Upon release, they were in worse shape than when they had entered prison in the first place.

It is essential that we feel that our lives are filled with purpose. Oglethorpe knew that it was not productive to put debtors in prison, but rather to teach them how to be productive members of society. On some level, most individuals want to be good and they want to be positive contributors to the society even if it might not seem like it. This was Oglethorpe's idea to send the prisoners to the country to become farmers.

Life will unfold in a way that clears the path for what is meant to be! Oglethorpe's idea remained an idea until three strokes of luck came his way that brought his idea into fruition and made it a reality. He couldn't have done any of this by himself nor could he have controlled the outcome. There were invisible forces at work, a series of coincidences that could also have been considered magic.

Making change requires not just a good idea, but also a lot of muscle! Oglethorpe first had to gather and convince farmers that his idea was a good one. Then he had to submit a proposal for the colony of Georgia in America that debtors would begin as indentured servants. He had to research what crops the farmers should grow on their plantation. And he had to negotiate with the Yamacraw tribes.

Very often in life we are given the skills and the experiences that we need in order to do

our good work in the world. Mary Musgrove learned English from her father and she learned how to read to look on men's faces to gauge what they were looking for. Her mother taught her the history of her people and how to trade with Europeans. And she gained experience in trading from her husband, John Musgrove. It was the perfect combination of skills in her that Oglethorpe needed!

The best plans are those that help everybody involved! When Oglethorpe told Mary about his idea she told him that Tomochichi, the chief of the Yamacraw people, was in a position that might be helpful to him, but also that he might be able to help Tomochichi as well! Oglethorpe wasn't initially excited about a mutual exchange, but in the end they worked together to lift each other up!

We often forge our closest relationships when we work together. James Oglethorpe and Mary Musgrove would never had befriended each other as they did, had it not been for their mutual commitment to work!

Over the years the two of them became close friends as well as business associates. They helped each other through the ups and downs of life. She and Tomochichi accompanied him to a few visits to England and she was very impressive to King George. When Mary's husband John died of yellow fever, James was there to console her and he was there when she met and married her second husband Jacob Mathews. Mary helped him organize the British and Creek forces to quell a Spanish invasion of Georgia - and then she was a principal diplomat with the Carolinas who was consistently putting pressure on Georgia to accept slavery.





Connecticut: “My Daughter Can”

“My Daughter Can” is a story about Sybil Ludington, a 16 year old daughter to war hero Colonel Henry Ludington. In 1777, two years after Paul Revere made his historic evening ride to Concord, Massachusetts—Sybil had a similar experience, though hers was twice as long, took all night and was during a terrible storm. The ride was to alert patriot farmers to gather at her father’s home where they would set off the following morning to defend Danbury Connecticut from the British army.

Topics for Investigation

Connecticut History

- History of Revolutionary War in Connecticut.
- Biography of Henry Ludington and his experience in French and Indian War - proceeded by the Revolutionary War.
- Biography of Sybil Ludington and the effect of her ride on the war.

Connecticut Geography

- Map of the British siege of Danbury and the patriot response.
- Map of Sybil’s ride.
- Map of New England and New York showing Danbury and Boston.

“My Daughter Can” Study Topics

- Comparison between Paul Revere’s ride and Sybil Ludington’s.
- Life of Colonial farmers/militia.

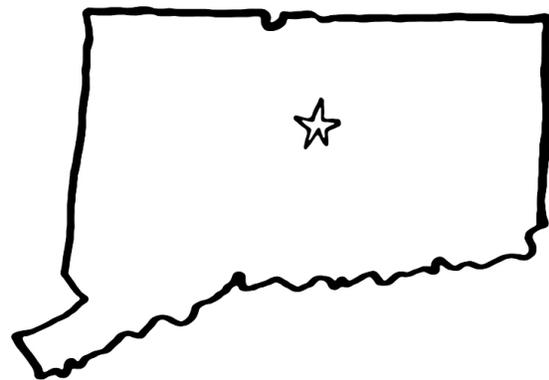
Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

Sometimes when we see a need, we are called to respond and act, even if the person whom we think needs help says they do not. Sometimes, we do it, anyway. Sybil’s father told her that he did not have a need protection, but she responded, “But I can anyway.”

Even when we are advised otherwise, sometimes we cannot

quiet the inner voice of wisdom that knows where our true passions lie. Sybil knew that she needed to be prepared for whatever adventures life was to bring her way, even if her mother suggested that the only important preparation that she needed to concern herself with was to start her own family.



We all want to have someone whom we can look up to. We are strengthened by the positive examples set by others. Sybil very much wanted to be like her father. She wanted to be brave like him, and his example inspired her. Sometimes our resolve is strengthened by someone else's success that we want one day to achieve for ourselves.

Sometimes the greatest gift that we can give someone else is the confidence that we believe in them. Sybil received this vote of confidence from her father when he looked to her to assist the seventh regiment of the Dutchess County militia.

It is important to have work that has purpose and meaning. Sybil knew that her work mattered when she was serving the Revolution! We all like to know that we are part of something bigger than we are, especially when we are doing service for something that we believe in.

Sometimes inspiration and leadership comes from unexpected places! In our story, it was Sybil who actually did the very task as the historic hero, Paul Revere, but Sybil Ludington's accomplishment even exceeded his. And in the end, it was her steadfast loyalty and bravery that was the encouragement that and the men of the Seventh Regiment from Dutchess County needed!the same things that William Penn believed in. The same is true today. History is being made





Massachusetts: “The Power of Thanksgiving”

The Thanksgiving story of the Pilgrims and Native Americans is told year after year — and at its center is a famous man commonly called Squanto. He is remembered as the great translator and teacher who helped the European Pilgrims survive in their new home near Plymouth rock. But the true story of Tisquantum (his real name) is, of course, much more complex, personal, and relatable. It is a story of tragedy, of adventure, and of an opportunity to heal.

Topics for Investigation

Massachusetts History

- Native American history of the many tribes of New England and their interactions
- History of the Puritans and Plymouth Rock
- History of European and Native American trade

Massachusetts Geography

- Map of trade routes of early American exploration
- Map of different tribal territories before the arrival of the Puritans
- Map of early Plymouth in relation to modern Massachusetts

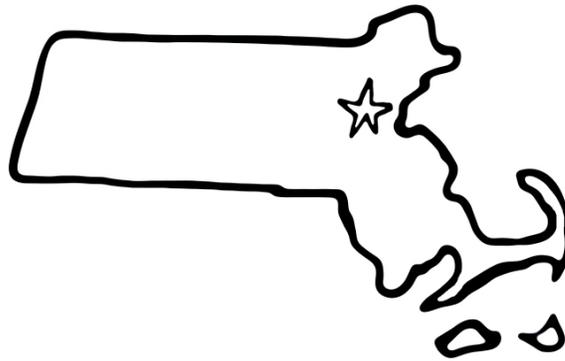
“The Power of Thanksgiving” Study Topics

- A comparison of various versions of the Thanksgiving story
- The Thanksgiving story from the perspective of Native Americans, the Puritans and the English military.

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In history there have been groups that have brought pain and suffering to humanity, but equally so, others have offered an outstretched hand of charity and compassion.



Tisquantum suffered under the hand of Thomas Hunt who stole him and a dozen other men and boys from his home on the

Massachusetts Bay and sold them into slavery in Spain. But was saved by the kindness of a group of Spanish monks who helped to return him back to England. Then in England, he was given the valuable life skill of learning English by a man named, John Stanley. It was Stanley who then made arrangements to send Tisquantum back to America.

Even when we feel wronged or upset, and even when it is with a very, very good reason, it is important to also acknowledge those who are helping us. This does not discount or excuse the mistreatment, but it does help us to find our way through it. Tisquantum felt thanks for all of these individuals who had helped him, even though he felt deeply angry at others.

When something happens that is completely and entirely out of our control, that does harm to our loved ones or to us, we can feel rage. Rage is an anger that is so strong that it overwhelms us, and we can hardly put words to it. Sometimes these things that happen are at the hand of others who, in their greed and selfishness, do real harm to others. Sometimes when hard things happen, however, they are really no one's "fault". It doesn't make it any easier, but sometimes out of our rage, we blame others who may even be innocent. When Tisquantum came back to the 'rock of his youth' and saw that he was all alone and that his tribe has been wiped out in a plague of smallpox, he wanted to blame all Europeans, even those who had helped him. It was the Europeans who brought this to his nation, and therefore he felt rage at the Spanish monks and the others, even though they personally did not bring the illness to his people.

Sometimes in the midst of our rage and loneliness, miracles can happen. Perhaps it was the ship that arrived from England carrying Puritans, that was the miracle. Or perhaps that wasn't the miracle, at all. Perhaps the miracle was that when the Puritans arrived, the first snows of winter fell, and so Tisquantum and Massasoit decided not to engage with them until the spring. Perhaps it was in the waiting and in the spring thaw that the miracle happened. Perhaps it was that the Puritans were starving and that Sammoset recalled a man named Tisquantum who could speak a little bit of English to help them. Perhaps that was the

miracle. Perhaps then it was the fact that the Puritans could help both the Abenaki tribe and the Wampanoag tribe against the Narragansets to the north. Perhaps that was the miracle. Or perhaps it was all of that together that was miraculous, and that made healing possible.

It can be hard, but it is essential, to remember that it is individuals who make up groups of people. We might feel upset or angry at a group of people for what they stand for, and yet when we look at each other eye to eye, we can learn that there are some on adversarial groups whom we can still befriend. The Puritans were Europeans, and at first Tisquantum only felt more rage toward them especially since they wanted to build their own village right where his family and friends used to live.

When we feel unsafe, we can either do an about-face and leave the situation, or we can enter, treading with care, into the territory that feels threatening. Tisquantum knew that the Puritans had something to offer them, and even though this did not feel safe, because the Europeans had always wanted something from his people. However, he also knew that staying stuck in his rage would not bring positive results to him or to his people. And so he decided first to find out what it was specifically that they wanted before agreeing to make any arrangements. He was smart, and he was cautious.

Even our "enemies" are human beings, and they have the capacity to feel the same range of emotions that we feel. Tisquantum saw the grief and desperation in John Carver's sad and fearful eyes, and Tisquantum felt compassion and pity.

Sometimes we make sacrifices and do good in the world for the future of the world, even if it is hard work, and even if we have to question our convictions in doing so.

Tisquantum decided to help the Puritans when he saw young children climbing on the “rock of his youth” playing just like he used to. He turned his rage into productive action that could change the world for the better in the future bringing more peace and understanding to all.

Sometimes the best way to heal our rage is by lending a helping hand to suffering

people who need our compassion.

Tisquantum, Squanto, did this for the Puritans. This is what creates gratitude among people and this is what we call Thanksgiving.





Maryland: "The Test Oath"

America has had some strange laws in the past that have - without question - benefited some populations over others. The Maryland "Test Oath" was one of them. When Solomon Etting moved to Baltimore, Maryland, the Revolutionary War was over and he was ready to begin his life anew. He remarried, started a new business, and when the time seemed right, he considered running for office. And that was when he learned of the "Test Oath" an oath that required candidates to swear their dedication to the Christian Church before running. That was fine for Solomon's Christian friends - but Solomon was Jewish. What to do?

Topics for Investigation

Maryland History

- Impact of religion on U.S. history, particularly in Maryland
- History of Baltimore
- Role of geography in the Revolutionary War

Maryland Geography

- Journey of Solomon Etting's family from Pennsylvania to Maryland

"The Test Oath" Study Topics

- Study of different religious communities that have been persecuted in the U.S.

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

Hope is something worth cultivating. In the darkest and most challenging times, it helps to hold onto the hope of a brighter day. This can give us the strength to carry on. For Solomon Etting, he was kept buoyant during

difficult times with the support of parents and friends, and also by the promise that in America second chances were always available.

Freedom is something worth treasuring. It is a basic need for

human beings to be able to express ourselves in freedom and to follow our inner voices that tell us what our truths are. Individuals like to have choice, and individuals have, in all times of history, sought for freedom of speech,



belief, and religious expression. It was the desire for freedom that brought the Etting family in our story to America. This is the same story told many times over, not just in historical fiction but also in reality.

Taking risks can be worthwhile. It can be scary to move to an unknown place, but the risk is worth it, if it means that we can live in freedom. But very often once we find ourselves in a new setting, we garner the strength to bring our natural talents to the situation and to grow and to thrive. This is just what Elijah and Shina Etting experienced when they moved to Pennsylvania. They were skillful, helpful, courageous, and hard-working, as a result, they forged relationships and started a successful business.

The one constant in life is change. When Solomon moved to America, his initial experiences were very positive. But those turned upside down during the Revolutionary War and when Solomon first learned that America may not be the land of religious freedom that he had first thought. However, things turned up again when the war was over, and business for Solomon went well. But then he learned about the Test Oath. With so many twists and turns in his life, it was hard to know what Solomon should expect – except for the unexpected!

Integrity is a precious thing. There are times in life when we cannot agree to certain requirements asked of us if they compromise our integrity. We just can't do it. As much as Samuel Etting wanted to be a lawyer, he could not take the Test Oath which required a declaration of a belief in the Christian religion. He just could not do it.

Sometimes, the only way forward is to fight for change. There are times when we not only cannot agree to certain things when they compromise our own integrity, but we also feel so strongly about those compromises that we simply cannot stand by without trying to make a change. Not only could Samuel not

abide by the Test Oath, but also he exclaimed, "We must do away with the Test Oath!" Standing by making this change was a risk, because many agreed with what the Test Oath stood for.

Effective policy comes through listening and respect. "Politics is the art of the cause – standing for something you believe in – championing something that is so important to you, you are willing to spend years of your life fighting for it." Politics, or arguing both sides of an issue was required in disputing the need to make changes to the Test Oath. The dispute required careful listening, respect, and open-mindedness from all parties, from all perspectives.

Compromise is sometimes the next step forward. Sometimes when we make change, we cannot always demand getting our way, but rather, we might settle for a compromise – an agreement where varying points of view can be respected. And sometimes the changes are gradual and take time.

Patience and persistence often pays off. The change did pass – though not right away. Kennedy focused on the language of the oath, on changing the oath to be more about truth and law rather than Christian faith. The first year the Maryland legislature was unmoved and the same supporters as people in the past voted in favor – but not many more. Kennedy was surprised and discouraged to hear that those who were opposed included men who were clearly against Jewish people being leaders in the community – just because they were Jewish. The next year, luckily, more men were swayed, but the debate got even uglier and meaner. There was shouting and relationships were stretched over the bill. The third year it very nearly passed and then finally – on the fourth attempt – after a long and difficult battle – it did pass ... by one vote. Jewish people could now run for office in the state of Maryland.





South Carolina: “Experiment in Freedom”

In “Experiment in Freedom,” we learn about the citizens of Mitchelville, South Carolina – all newly freed slaves early in the Civil War. When the Union Army takes control of Hilton Head Island off the coast of South Carolina, they have the challenge of what to do with the over 1,000 freed slaves that remained behind. General Mitchel proposes that they form their own town – governed and run by the ex-slaves themselves. This is a bold move, to be sure – but one that brings with it surprising success.

Topics for Investigation

South Carolina History

- S. Carolina History
- Civil War History
- History of slave trade in America
- History and culture of the Gullah people of the coastal south.

South Carolina Geography

- Slave Trade Routes from west Africa to the Caribbean Islands and South America to Charleston, South Carolina.
- The Coastal Islands of the Carolinas
- Map of historic Gullah region as compared to modern day

“Experiment in Freedom” Study Topics

- The Gullah language and culture
- Other models of reconstruction after the Civil War.

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

New ideas come to life from the single seed of someone having the courage to voice an opinion. All it then takes is a small number of others to believe that it is worth taking the risk to test the idea. Ormsby Mitchel had such a new idea for Mitchelville. Change will not happen without new ideas and a few people willing to test the waters. Don't hold back just because the idea seems outlandish. It could change the world!



Sometimes it is not obvious how to solve a problem, so you have to think outside of the box. Thinking outside of the box means that you don't choose the obvious solution or follow the strategies that have worked in the past.

Don't underestimate what your capacities are until you step into a new role and try!

And don't underestimate the capacities of others until they too have had a chance to grow. In Mitchellville, South Carolina ex-slaves were put in positions of government, and although they had not been trained for this, they were more than capable. This is, in its essence, the American story – learning new skills and rising above any limited expectations.

People coming together and banding around when idea with unification and enthusiasm can make change happen at breakneck speed! Mitchellville came into being in a flash when there was unification and cooperation.

Listen deeply to the life stories of others.

The citizens of Mitchellville all had rich and honorable pasts. Even when they were dishonored, they held a sense of pride, and their legacy lived in them to become successful citizens of Mitchellville.

Going to school are having a school in your home is nothing to take for granted.

Mitchellville was the only community in all of South Carolina to have mandatory schooling for the children, and the children were considered so very fortunate to be educated, just as you are.

Sometimes compromises need to be made.

This story is about not everything working out in the end like we would always wanted to. Things didn't get easier for the people of Mitchellville. Gabriel's greed was hard, government officials and aggressive behavior meddled with the town, but still the citizens of Mitchellville was proud of what they built.

Hope doesn't always make sense, but sometimes it's all you've got.

New ideas come to life from the single seed of someone having the courage to voice an opinion. All it then takes is a small number of others to believe that it is worth taking the risk to test the idea. Ormsby Mitchel had such a new idea for Mitchellville. Change will not happen without new ideas and a few people willing to test the waters. Don't hold back just because the idea seems outlandish. It could change the world!





New Hampshire: “A Meeting on the Green”

“A Meeting on the Green” is historical fiction that takes place in Keene, New Hampshire two days after the “shots heard round the world” of the Battle of Lexington and the official beginning of the American Revolutionary War.

The story focuses on the relationship between two best friends, Abitha and Ester, and how the Battle of Lexington creates a temporary rift between them. Ester’s father is a patriot, or a part of the growing number of American colonists who wish for independence. Abitha’s father, however, leans toward being a loyalist, or someone who wishes to remain a part of the British government. When 29 Keene men volunteer to march to Boston to fight – and Ester’s father is counted among them – Ester takes our her upset on her friend.

It is a story that frames the Revolutionary war through a lens that is often forgotten: that Americans were not in agreement around claiming their independence. And it asks the question, “how can one be a loyal friend AND disagree with them on fundamental political questions?” Clearly it is a story relevant to today just as much as in 1776.

Topics for Investigation

New Hampshire History

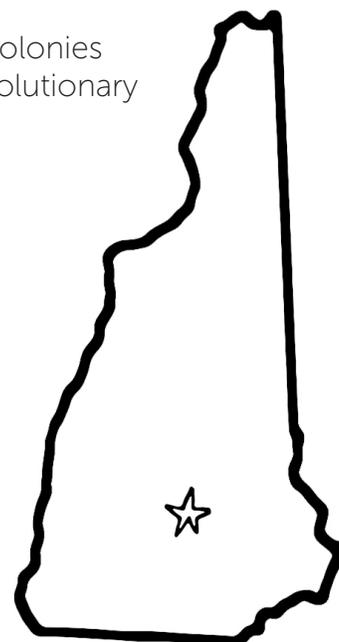
- A study of the British Colonies and how they were governed
- A timeline of events leading up to the Revolutionary War
- A comparison between patriots, loyalists and Tories
- Biographies of key Revolutionary War leaders and soldiers

New Hampshire Geography

- Mapping the route of the march to Bunker Hill
- A Map of the 13 colonies
- A Map of key Revolutionary War battles

“A Meeting on the Green” Study Topics

- Mapping the route of the march to Bunker Hill
- A Map of the 13 colonies
- A Map of key Revolutionary War battles



Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

Though this is historical fiction and the characters have been developed to accommodate a story, their attributes and development may be useful as reference points and inspirations.

This is a story of exploring the inherent contradictions in the trajectory of history, and how one such significant dispute affects two young children as individuals and as friends. Although the story is placed in just preceding and during the Revolutionary War, it is a story that has particular relevance in our time.

From this story, the Child Might Learn:

We have an opportunity see our friends and each other anew each day. Very often children can get locked behind a preconceived decision or 'reputation' that other children have of them. We serve our children when we remind them that children, and adults alike, are always changing and growing, and we can hold the faith that the person that we knew yesterday has the chance to become a new person with new attributes tomorrow.

It can be hard to stand up against the pressure from a friend in making decisions against our own best judgment or adult guidance. Often there are consequences when we do not follow our own instincts.

True concern and compassion for the other, and particularly our friends, is what we are looking to find regardless of your (or even your parents') political leanings.

"It was as if they personally understood that agreements ... were fleeting – that difference and difficulty would always be with them – that this new country, the United States of America – was a place filled with hope and

arguments and conflict and striving – so much striving. But none of that was worth more than what the two of them had. For they learned that they had something more precious than money or peace or even freedom. They had true friendship."

From this story, the Adult Might Ask:

For parents, this is the story about how a child's natural curiosity and interest in the world will naturally want to be fed. Where do we draw the line between giving our children and students the just the right amount of information or too much? Regardless of age appropriateness, it's going to be different for each child, what he/she has the bandwidth to understand and process. Listen and watch.

Children can benefit when adults are aware of how our political leanings can affect our children and their friendships. We can each ask to what degree we want our children to know our political leanings, so that we can help shape them is thinkers for the future, and how much do we need to consider that he/she may be too long young to hold opinions especially when they create a wedge between their friendships.





Virginia: “Twigs and Trees”

In “Twigs and Trees,” Lizzie Walker learns from her grandmother the value of creating big change (trees) by starting small and simple (twigs). Her grandmother, Maggie Lena Walker, knows this from her own experience as the first woman ever to charter an independent bank in America. She learned this lesson from her own mother, a former slave who raised her children washing clothes for the wealthy families of Richmond. Lizzie is impressed and inspired by the lesson and can imagine a way in which she can benefit her community by starting with something small.

Topics for Investigation

Virginia History

- Biography of Maggie Lena Walker
- History of African American Civil Rights, post Civil War
- Biographies of early African American leaders

Virginia Geography

- Map of Virginia and Richmond, its capital

“Twigs and Trees” Study Topics

- A look into the Independent Order of Saint Luke
- The role of banks in African American civil rights
- Examples where a small change had huge results

Topics for Reflection

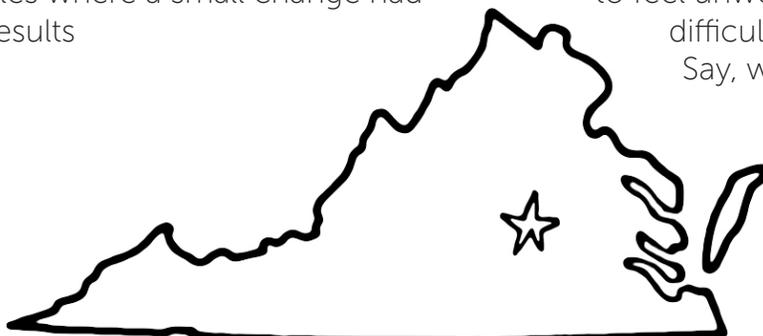
From a Child Development Perspective:

The intergenerational cycle of care has a natural beauty and order to it. In the beginning of our story Maggie Walker, Lizzie and Polly’s grandmother, needed care, and we see how Polly tended to her well-being. It is important in our youth to find ways to give our loving care to our elders, the same care that they extended to us in our youth.

Sometimes we say we don’t feel well in our body, when really we don’t feel well in our heart. Lizzie could not face going to school because of the pain that she felt emotionally. Lizzie’s wise grandmother says to her:

“You know it is quite common for people to feel unwell when there is something difficult happening in their life.

Say, when they don’t want to do something — or when something difficult is expected of them. Do you think that might be a part of what is happening for you?”



When we are with someone we trust, we know when we have to tell the truth, even if it's hard to do. Lizzie knew that her grandmother was wise enough to know that she was hiding behind her “tummy ache,” and she was actually relieved to tell her what was really not feeling well — it was her feelings that weren't feeling well.

It can be scary and overwhelming to explore the unknown, and not just to explore a new place, but also to explore a different culture.

Lizzie was proud of her identity, even though African Americans were not treated equally in the 1920s and 1930s. She was confident as a speaker, but still the task of speaking in front of so many people in different schools and different cultures was overwhelming to her. Hard for her was knowing how to both represent her people while also being respectful of other cultures. This takes sensitivity, bravery, and intelligence, and she had to build her confidence to know that she had all three.

It can be very helpful to talk about your fears in detail to someone whom you trust, so that you can “right size them” and decide how to face them in a way that is safe. Lizzie's grandmother asked her to tell

her what she “couldn't do,” and this helped Lizzie to sort through what she thought was the “worst thing that could happen.” In doing so, she realized that step by step, she could build her confidence to face these fears. Little by little, we tackle the small doable, tasks — the little twigs. We bundle the little twigs together, and like a strong tree, we too become bigger and stronger and better able to do the very things we never thought we could.

“Well the idea is that you focus on the small easy ways to bend twigs first — and as the tree grows, those small twigs will become bigger and stronger and then become the shape of the tree itself.”





New York: “All Have Our Part”

“All Have our Part” is a story about the Erie Canal, 19th century American Immigration and westward expansion. It centers on Biddy, the twin daughter of two Northern Irish Immigrants who came to America and were met with immediate prejudice and racism. They persevered to eventually own and run their own Erie Canal “packet boat,” but then became prejudiced and racist in their own way, against Italians, Chinese and Jewish people. Biddy then becomes the catalyst for empathy, education, and connection.

Topics for Investigation

New York History

- The history of Immigration in the United States – especially through New York City
- How the Erie canal was built and then led to a massive move west
- How the history and culture of the Northern Irish affected New York and the nation

New York Geography

- A map of the voyage from Northern Ireland to New York City to Syracuse
- A map of the voyage from Sicily to New York City to Cleveland
- A map of the Erie Canal with all its stops from Albany to Buffalo

“All Have Our Part” Study Topics

- Culture of Northern Ireland as compared to Sicily
- Compare the waves of immigration in US history
- Study of racism in America and how it has evolved

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

“Letting Go” of what we know is sometimes needed when we try something new.

Biddy’s parents and others had to leave behind the life that they knew and take the risk for something better, but also new and unknown. There is risk involved in finding a better way!

Humor or teasing at the expense of another is not funny or kind.

Much as Biddy loved and adored her father, she knew that his jokes were not very nice. She also defends Sam to her father and brother who insult him.

She shows us that we don’t have to laugh at things we don’t find funny, and we can stand up for what is kind and good.



Usually, it's best to speak up, but sometimes it's better to hold our thoughts to ourselves.

At times, it's the kinder thing to do. Bidy knew Sicily was in Italy, but she didn't correct her father for fear that he wouldn't let Sam on their boat.

Reputations are hard to overcome, but they CAN be overcome! Bidy's father discovered

what he and Sam have in common, and he found that Sam had a lot to teach him from where they differed that he never knew before. With tolerance, patience and love, we see that we all have our part!





North Carolina: “You Are Not Your Father”

When Levi Boyd learns who his father is, he is flooded with many emotions. He is shocked because he is learning this from his friends rather than his mother. He is angry because his mother never told him the whole truth. And he is ashamed because it turns out that his father — a man he never met — was the notorious pirate Blackbeard.

Topics for Investigation

North Carolina History

- History of Piracy in the Caribbean and American Colonies
- Biography of Edward Teach (Blackbeard)
- History of Colonial trade

North Carolina Geography

- Trade routes of American Colonies to England and the West Indies
- Map of the barrier islands of North and South Carolina

“You Are Not Your Father” Study Topics

- The complicated ethics of piracy during this time in history
- How trade worked with Europe and the islands of the Caribbean

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

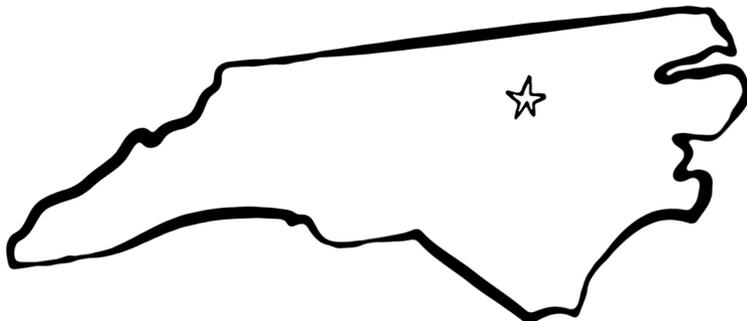
It can be very difficult when people don't see us for who we are, but rather through the judgments they make about us. Levi was upset because his friends rejected him and the dock boys suddenly wanted his company all because of something over which he had no control — that the notorious pirate Blackbeard was his father.

It can be very helpful to have a peaceful spot to go to when we feel sad, scared, or angry. When Levi was overwhelmed by the confusion and upset of learning who his father was, he ran to his small rocky nook — a place that was all his own.

We may have a lot in common with our parents, but we are also our own people.

Each one of us has parents, and while we may have inherited certain traits or learned certain lessons from them, each one of us is unique for who we are. As Levi's mother told him, he was not his father —he was his own person!

Everybody has a story that is private and personal, and that



story can be very different from the public one. Levi learned so many things about Blackbeard, things that the legends never told — about his kind heart and his forgiving nature. And in this tale, Blackbeard never knew about Levi. And maybe if he had, he would've made a different choice than to have returned to piracy. We don't really know a person until we sit with them and try to understand them.

To love someone unconditionally is to see the person for who he is and to accept him even if he is not the person we want him to be. Levi's mother told him that she would

love him no matter what, even if she didn't always like his actions. This is really true love.

We make choices in life, and it's important that we make choices that lead us to having self-respect. Levi could have chosen to be more like his father, but rather he became much more like his other parent — "like his hard-working, smart strong and loyal mother."





Rhode Island: “The Cohan Family Mirth Makers”

The story of George M. Cohen tends to focus on the ambition, drive and dedication of the young actor, director and producer - but his family’s start in Providence, Rhode Island holds a special place in the history of American entertainment. His father, Jerry Cohan was born in Ireland and emigrated to Boston to become a harness maker. It wasn’t long before he took a risk and focused all his efforts on joining the burgeoning world of vaudeville entertainment. He met his wife and the two of them started a family act that would become popular in all of New England.

Topics for Investigation

Rhode Island History

- History of American Theater and Vaudeville
- Biography of George M Cohen

Rhode Island Geography

- Map of New England and New York City to show a possible “tour” of the Cohen Family Mirth Makers
- A Map of Broadway

“The Cohan Family Mirth Makers”

Study Topics

- A study of the kinds of acts in Vaudeville
- Study of all of George M Cohen’s musicals

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

Some people have a gift for bringing joy to others — it is their service to the world.

What would we do without the people who make us laugh? For Jerry Cohan, making people laugh was his calling. It was his work; it was what he was born to do.

Finding joy has nothing to do with having money. While having resources does give us some level of comfort, but it is not our source of true happiness and joy. Jerry Cohan was very poor when he was a



boy, but he was very happy. He was happy because he lived in a family where there was song and laughter, and this was what he loved most in the world—to smile and make others smile.

We have to follow our own heart. Some people might compromise following their true passion for having more material comfort. For some, this doing so still leaves plenty of room to experience joy and purpose in life, but for others in working in a job because of the wages, they give up a part of themselves to. We know when the compromises we are making are too great. Jerry noticed that his family had stop singing and telling jokes when they owned the saddle and harness shop in South Boston. Their days and nights of song and dance were no longer. He longed for the days to bring the joy back into his life and into the life of his family.

When we take risks, even big ones, we may be surprised to see how life often supports us. Jerry left Boston and settled in Providence, Rhode Island. This was a big risk! He was giving up his security and taking a gamble on his and his family's future. He went there because his sister lived there, and that was the support he needed. She told him about vaudeville. And he became a Vaudeville performer. When he was performing in his first show, he met his future wife, Nelly. She stepped to perform with Jerry, when his leading lady didn't show up one night. Little did they both know that she would in time become a star performer, as well! All of these events occurred in ways that Jerry never could have predicted, or even orchestrated. He took a risk, and he was supported, without even knowing how!

An invaluable gift we can give our children is to let them become who they were meant to become. While our children may follow

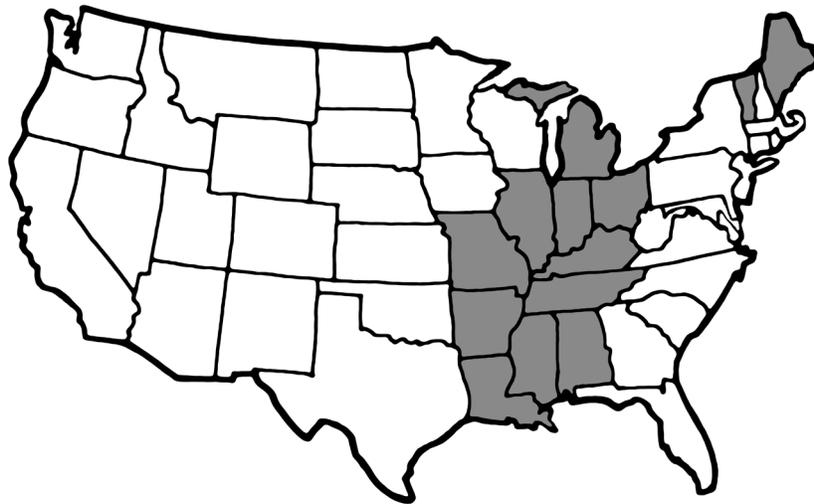
in our footsteps, having been influenced by our guidance and choices, most times they will tread upon new territory as they explore their own futures. Jerry and Ellie's daughter, Josie, was able to perform with the Cohan Family Mirth Makers, but little George, he was different, and was destined to develop his talents in unique ways. Because Jerry cut him free and let him find his way, George found success when he might otherwise not have.

It is important when we see obstinate behavior in our children, for example, to question if there is something going on another level that is motivating this behavior. George knew that he wanted to stay in the family business—show business—but somehow intuitively he knew that being a song and dance man was not the right fit for him. He was at heart a writer, but he was too young to know this, and so his rebellious behavior spoke with his words could not.

There are many ways to find one's path to happiness. When Jerry Cohan was younger, his happiness was to be found singing and dancing with his family, even though they were poor. He was also happy in his older years, and yet it had nothing to do with no longer being poor. Jerry continued to do what he always wanted to do, to make people smile, but he also had a satisfaction knowing that his children were doing what they also always wanted to do. The joy he gave to others was the same joy given back to him!



FIFTY: The Stars, the States, and the Stories Study Pages — Collection Two



Each story in the FIFTY collection focuses on a remarkable American from a different state. Below are some recommended topics to inspire further investigation of the history and geography of the state, as well as themes that can support our children's growth and development.

Though this is historical fiction and the characters have been developed to accommodate a story, their attributes and development may be useful as reference points and inspirations.



Vermont: "Gift of the Dragon"

"Gift of the Dragon" is about how HS Marvel, a young cheese factory mechanic from Rome, NY, decides one day to fulfill his dream of hunting a real-life monster. In this case it is the Lake Champlain monster "Champy" - a legendary sea dragon that is rumored to reflect back whatever you bring to the lake. For some it is pride, for others it is conquest - and for HS .. it turns out to be love.

Topics for Investigation

Vermont History

- History of Lake Champlain
- History of Steamboats
- Vermont history in relation to New York and New Hampshire

Vermont Geography

- Map of Lake Champlain and route of SS Ticonderoga
- Map of sightings of Champ over the years

"Gift of the Dragon" Study Topics

- Monsters of the World
- Dragon symbolism in United States
- Impact of Champ on culture of Vermont and New York

Topics for Reflection

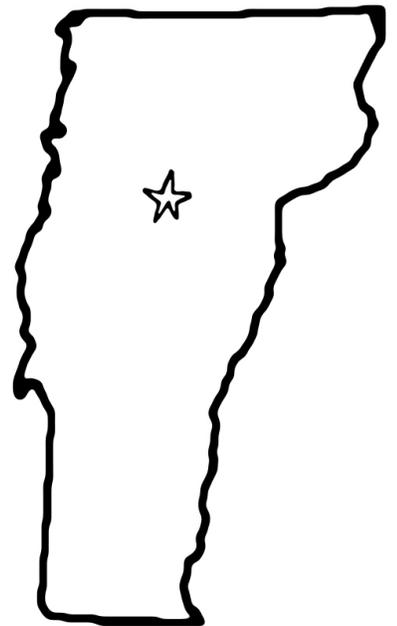
From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Sometimes in life, we have to respond to a "call". A call or calling is a voice that sounds in our hearts and tells us something that we simply have to do.

It's not a voice that is shaking her finger at us like an authority, it's more like a trusted friend who takes us by the hand and tells us that we have to follow. This is what HS responded to when he was inspired to find the monster and claim the prize.

When we make a plan, we cannot anticipate everything that will happen, so we have to



trust ourselves that we will be able solve problems when we have to. When HS purchased a ticket to board the SS Ticonderoga steamship, he did not know what lay ahead, but...

"...he figured whatever challenges he faced, he would find a solution. If he was going to be a real adventurer, then solving problems was going to be a part of his normal experience."

At certain times in our lives, our hopes can be dashed, but in times like this it is important to keep the faith and be determined. HS was discouraged when others were also looking for the reward for finding the sea monster, and he was also discouraged when he was told there was no sea monster and that it was nonsense. But he held firm that he wanted to complete the search, regardless.

It is important to be honest with ourselves about our motives—the reason we do things. If our motivation is fame and money, that's not necessarily a bad thing. But we should be aware when it is those things that are encouraging us to fulfill a dream.

It's important to ask ourselves if that's really enough. Money and fame can be a substitution for what we are really looking for, and in HM's case, it was not really in the end what he wanted.

What we put out into the world and how we treat others will be reflected back to us. The Abnaki people knew this.

"They knew that whatever they brought to the lake would be reflected back at them. That Tatoskok — the name they gave the creature of the lake — would show them with whatever anger, curiosity, greed and kindness they brought with them... Whatever you bring to Champ will be reflected back to you."

The choice is ours as to how we want to conduct ourselves and what we are looking for in our lives. HM started out looking for one thing—fame and money—but ended up finding another! Love!





Kentucky: "Electrification"

Mildred Watkins Chandler, wife of Kentucky Governor Happy Chandler, is hesitant about one of her husband's big initiatives: bringing electricity to rural farms. She understands the benefits, but wonders if anyone is considering the costs: what do we give up when we increase speed, productivity, and efficiency. Lucky for her, one of those rural farmers agrees.

Topics for Investigation

Kentucky History

- History of the New Deal including the Rural Electrification Administration
- Biography of Albert "Happy" Chandler

Kentucky Geography

- Map of Kentucky's cities that had electric power in 1935 and then all the rural areas that did not.

"Electrification" Study Topics

- What are the benefits of modern technology and what do we give up when we choose them?
- What are the personal and social costs?

Topics for Reflection

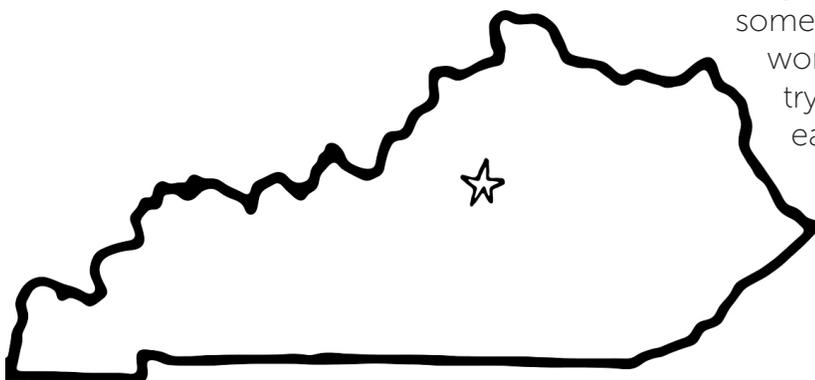
From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Grown-ups can sometimes forget the "child in them." Mildred Watkins Chandler knew that there is a "child in everyone." What does that really mean? This might be something that is hard for a child to understand (for the very reason that they are still a child!) but it would be a wonderful thing to discuss with your young one.

One of the ways that we show another person that we really care about them is by showing that we are truly interested in them. For Mildred, this meant connecting with them by slowing down in the moment, looking them in the eye, and talking about something they loved. And what a wonderful opportunity for us all! Let's try it. Slow down in the moment, look each other in the eye, and talk about something you love.

There is something magical about the way that food can connect people. Perhaps it had to



do with taking care of each other's needs. Perhaps it's because enjoying delicious, savory, and comforting food is so very nurturing. Perhaps it is coming together to express gratitude for the bounty of life as suggested in the words "breaking bread together." Perhaps it's because people come together and slow down to give love and attention to their food and to each other. Ruth Mills Street knew how to bring peace and satisfaction to relationships through her gift in preparing food for her friends.

The clock has nothing to do with joy and magic. So often in life we have to pay such close attention to the clock to get to our scheduled appointments or activities or to put limits on what we do from one minute to the next. But isn't it true that the clock really has nothing to do with joy and magic? There is a "place outside of time" where:

"...everything happens in a split second — everything happens faster than thought — it is a place where there is no 'considering' or 'understanding' — you can only act and react. It is a beautiful place — almost outside of time."

For Senator Chandler, this place of "no time" could be found in baseball. For Ruth, it was in watching the peaches ripen of their own accord — in "peach time."

We gain so much when we can be more efficient — but at the same time we can lose something, as well. Mildred and Ruth were concerned that once electricity came to Kentucky — something they were very excited but also nervous about — it might change what happens in those "sweet connections that live outside of time."

"Is everything better when it is done faster, more efficiently, and with less effort?" This would be a great question to discuss with our children. What kinds of things can we do

because we are freed from having to tend to the details of some of our routines? But what do we also lose?

There are benefits and drawbacks to modernization. What does it mean to be "old-fashioned"? What are some of the good things about being old-fashioned, and what are some of the advantages to be more "modern"?

"I don't know to be honest. I do think it will deliver all that it promises — speed, efficiency, productivity ... but Ruth, I have to wonder what we will give up for that. Call me old fashioned, but I really don't mind things being slow and not so focused on being productive."

Patience comes when we allow things to unfold in their own time. Peaches are most sweet when they ripen without hurry. Mildred also felt that the perfect sweetness from peaches transported her to a familiar place outside of time where there were no worries and no regrets. (Maybe this has something to do with her finding the child inside of her self?)

Modern electricity is actually nothing more than a tool. Governor Chandler reminds us that it tool that can be turned on and off. It is up to us to know how to use it well!





Tennessee: "One of Us"

When a reporter suggested to Roy Acuff, the famous country musician and Grand Ole Opry regular, that he run for governor in opposition to the popular Democratic candidate, Roy thought he was joking. Soon after, to everyone's surprise, he was backed by the Republican party and toured the state as its nominee. Though he ultimately lost that election, he continued to think Tennesseans deserved a leader that was more like the common people. Years later, Roy Acuff found himself before a room full of country music fans, introducing the President of the United States — a man whom he considered to be "one of us."

Topics for Investigation

Tennessee History

- History of Country Music
- History of the Grand Ole Opry
- Biography of Roy Acuff
- Biography of Richard Nixon

Tennessee Geography

- Map of Nashville and location of Grand Ole Opry

"One of Us" Study Topics

- How country music reflects the "common man's" experience
- What makes a good politician

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Don't let other people's opinions discourage you. Just because another person does not appreciate what we have to offer, this by no means is an indication that we should let their opinion affect us negatively. Other people's opinions do not determine our value, our self-worth, or our talent. Some of the greatest and most accomplished people in history have received one rejection after another before they were able to make their mark on history. Roy Acuff was not discouraged when the governor criticized country music. He simply said, "That is an unfortunate response. He'll miss some fine entertainment."

But sometimes you can let other people's opinions spur you into action.

Sometimes another person might see light in us that we might not otherwise see in ourselves — and then it is



time to take a risk and try something new. Fred Rose believed that Roy was just what Nashville needed as governor. This never would have occurred to Roy, but with Fred's enthusiastic urging, he mustered the courage to run for office. Because he believed in him, Roy came to realize that it wasn't such a bad idea after all.

We never know how our life story will unfold and affect the lives of others. Even the simplest things that make us who we are can have a large impact on our future or on someone else. Who would have thought that Roy's yo-yo tricks would one day impress the President of the United States!

Even if we explore different interests than those of our parents and grandparents, we still are influenced by their legacy. Roy was a musician. Although music was his passion, his family's history of leaders and politicians was also part of his story and made him all the more qualified to run for governor. That was not something that he would have imagined for himself and his future, but politics were a part of who he was whether he knew it or not.

Not winning doesn't mean that the race wasn't important. We can still carry a significant message to others by our words and our example even if we don't come in first place. Even though Roy was at a disadvantage in winning the election (not being a politician), he had something to offer just by being a "common man who knows how to play the fiddle and sing." Roy spoke to the people in a way that a more

formal politician never could have, and in doing so, he changed the perspective not only of politics in Nashville, but also for the Republican party which was looking for a way to connect to the people.

We don't have to be anybody but ourselves in order to make a difference. It was Roy's love for music and simple fun that truly made him a politician that people could relate to.

When a door is closed, watch for new opportunities to arise. Even if we do not win, we can still be changed by the experience. Having run for governor, Roy began to pay attention to politics in a new way and he offered support and help where he could. It was ultimately his love for music and his new interest in politics that brought him to perform for the nation's First Lady and meet her husband, President Richard Nixon.

Individuals in the public spotlight have more facets to their lives than reporters and history books can represent. We see in our story how a President of United States was able to connect with Roy Acuff, a common man. They discovered that they had more in common than either of them had thought — including an appreciation for country music and the yo-yo! Remember — even Presidents can be common people, too.





Ohio: "The View from Above"

"The View from Above" is historical fiction that uses historical and biographical facts as its foundation. John D. Rockefeller did take only one flight in his life, and Blanche Noyes was his pilot. We hope you enjoy the story and then use it to learn more about all the history and geography connected to the narrative.

Ohio is a state that has been central to the "American Experiment" — especially in transportation, manufacturing and big business.

Topics for Investigation

Ohio History

- History of oil business - Standard Oil and monopoly
- History of transportation - river boats, trains, cars, flight
- History of flight - Wright brothers and Dayton, Ohio
- The "Robber Barons" - Rockefeller, Carnegie and others
- Biography of John D. Rockefeller
- Biography of Blanche Noyes

Ohio Geography

- Show relationship between Cleveland and Lake Erie and other Great Lakes
- Show Cleveland, Ohio in relation to California with Women's Air Derby Race
- Show Cleveland, Ohio in relation to New York State (John D. Rockefeller's birth city and upstate mansion)



"The View from Above" Study Topics

- Women's Rights: history of women pilots
- Breaking of Monopolies: Standard Oil and other monopolies
- Wealth gap of the 1930s between extreme rich and extreme poor of Depression
- Biography of Amelia Earheart

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Though this is historical fiction and the characters have been developed to accommodate a story, their attributes and development may be useful as reference points and inspirations.

This is a story of the value of personal determination, fortitude, strength and kindness that our children can win when they contend with strong headwinds in the form of workplace discrimination.

In this story, your child might learn that:

Blanche, a strong, young capable pilot, discovers a shared experience with a 90 year old captain of industry. We might find common ground with the most unlikely of people!

Blanche's grit, strength, skill, and resolve make her a hero worthy of emulation – she's a good person. A model for other good people.

Although this fictional depiction of Mr. Rockefeller reveals that his business tactics are not all respectable ones, we learn that he is most proud of the charity and quiet caring he learned from his mother.

And most importantly: there are lessons to be learned and truths to be gleaned from sources that are not only unlikely. Sometimes we may find that we have misjudged by virtue of preconceived notions of age, gender, and class.





Louisiana: "Gumbo and the Petticoat Insurrection"

When Ambroisine Melange arrives in the French colony Louisiana, she is immediately disappointed. Where are the beautiful buildings? Where are the gardens filled with vegetables? Where are the handsome men she was promised? But what proves to be the most disappointing of all is the food — nothing but corn mush when she was promised the most delicious French cuisine. But then Madame Langlois stepped out onto the Governor's porch and presented something that turned Ambroisine's experience upside down. A delicious stew that is called ... Gumbo.

Topics for Investigation

Louisiana History

- History of France's colonization of America
- Study of the "Frying Pan" or "Petticoat" insurrection
- Biography of Madame Langlois

Louisiana Geography

- Maps of Louisiana - the colony, the Louisiana purchase and the modern state
- Map of New Orleans

"Gumbo and the Petticoat Insurrection" Study Topics

- How Gumbo changed over time and is influenced by different native and immigrant communities

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

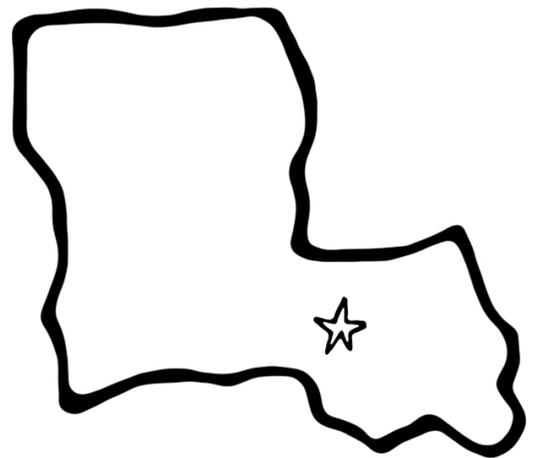
In this story, your child might learn that:

We have to trust our instincts when we are invited to move out of our comfort zone and into a life that presents a greater risk.

Ambroisine was secure in her life in Paris, even though it did not offer her much opportunity for change and advancement.

But when she was promised a life of adventure with a handsome and successful husband, she was skeptical even though those around her

immediately accepted the offer to go to the colony of Louisiana. Ambroisine's doubt turned out to be well founded.



Sometimes when we create expectations for how much better our circumstances will be in the future, we can set ourselves up for disappointment. This was certainly the case with les filles à la cassette, who has been promised a life of luxury as well as the wealth guided by “civilized” husbands, but what they met was unbearable heat, a wild landscape, rudely built houses and, worst of all, unappetizing food!

An activist is someone who dedicates their time and energy to make change for something that they truly believe in; a cause for the Good! Anyone can be an activist. You don’t have to be a bold revolutionary to make real change. But what is important is that you make a conviction and a promise to yourself to stand by it. This is what les filles à la cassette did when they created what later was called the Petticoat Rebellion, refusing to participate in colonial life when all they were given in return were empty promises.

When we stand by our convictions, and when those serve what is right and good, we are often assisted by resources and people to help us. Madame Langlois, the governor’s cook, was just the assistance that the women of the Petticoat Rebellion needed! And Madame Langlois was also helped by her assistant, Cici. It was with her assistance that Madame Langlois created the delicious and nourishing stew that fed and delighted the young women marching in protest! It was Gumbo!

Making change is often not a one-sided endeavor. Sometimes the change we want to happen in the world also happens within us. True, the young women from France did advocate for things to be different in Louisiana, but at the same time their perspectives eventually softened, and what they initially resisted about Louisiana, the men (and the food!), they came to appreciate. The first bite of that delicious stew, Gumbo, was their introduction to life in

Louisiana being a good and wonderful place. It was not Paris. No. It was Louisiana! And they learned to love it there without having to change it. They deserved the respect that was owed them, but they could also give it in return.

Not only is it valuable to learn new life skills, but perhaps even more important, is to learn about new people. The girls from France learned how to cook wild game with new spices and garlic and celery, they learned how to build bigger homes and till farms, but also they got to know people from the Choctaw tribe and the Alabama and Cherokee. They met Cici’s companions from Ghana, Benin and the Caribbean. It was the people who really added spice to her life.

When we fight to make change, sometimes life opens up for us and presents us with opportunities that we never could have imagined. Ambroisine demanded better food, and it was her appreciation for better food that ultimately led her to meet her life partner, Hans.

Of course it’s fine to have expectations, but also, it’s important to be open to being surprised as to how those expectations are fulfilled! The promises that Ambroisine had been given long ago in Paris had indeed come true. Just not in the way she had could have ever anticipated!

Sometimes the most unexpected combination of foods makes the most delicious recipes. And sometimes the most unexpected combinations of people and friends and family and cultures make for the most dynamic and varied relationships! Such was the case with Ambroisine’s Gumbo had a dash of France, a hint of Louisiana, and pinch of Germany and a garnish from Spain. It was perfection!





Indiana: "Geodes and Gnomes"

Miriam loves her rock collection like other children might love their pet mouse or stuffed animals. She talks to them and takes good care of them and — remarkably — they talk back to her ... or at least the rock fairies do. Their friendship comes in handy when Miriam's Uncle Jack, a geologist for Indiana University, is asked to study an area in central Indiana where a road is being planned. He brings Miriam along and lucky for him, she is able to let him know some very important geological information about a nearby mountain.

Topics for Investigation

Indiana History

- A Geologic history of Indiana over 350 Million years

Indiana Geography

- Map of the changes in North America over 350 Million years to the present
- Map of Route 37 in central Indiana

"Geodes and Gnomes" Study Topics

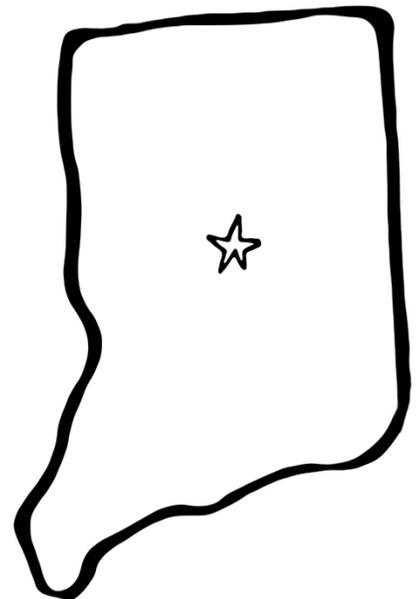
- Study of different kinds of rocks and how they are formed, especially limestone and geodes

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

Our story this week teaches us about the exquisite geography of Indiana and about the noble, quiet work of a geologist professor teaching at Indiana University. It places a greater emphasis on a child's relationship with her precious rock collection than it places on people at various points in the unfolding of history.

We learn from the character in our story, Miriam Greeley, how much her rock collection means to her. We learn about Miriam's relationship to her rock collection, how much it taught her about science and history, and about



how it trained to have a capacity for deep, quiet listening. Our Schoolhouse notes for this story lend a shine not only to precious stones, but also to the value of collections for children.

In this story, your child might learn that:

- We learn by collecting. Children can gain knowledge as they learn more about their collectibles.
- Children learn to be good stewards and they learn how to take care of their possessions when they collect what they love.
- Children can learn organizational skills by cataloging their collectibles.
- Children learn to respect other people's property when they understand that items can have emotional and not just material value.
- Depending on what they are collecting, children can learn lessons about budgeting and managing valuables.
- Children can make connections with other people who share their same interests.
- It's fun to grow a collection!
- It's gratifying to admire a collection!
- Children can explore their own identities when they get to know themselves through what inspires them.
- Children can find camaraderie and comfort in their relationship to the items in their collection.
- Parents and children can spend valuable time together helping a child find things to add to his or her collection.
- Starting a collection young and life can lead to an interest in lifelong learning.
- A child's relationship to his or her collection can support and sustain a child through times of personal challenge.

Here are a few examples of how our collections in childhood inspired and helped the Sparkle Team when we were younger:

Meredith: When I was a little girl, my parents were going through a very challenging divorce. I collected beanbag frogs. I treasured them. They were made out of all different fabrics, all different colors and textures, and they were all different sizes. I created a frog kingdom, each frog having a specific role to play in its community. In that world everything went just as it needed to. It was a place where I felt safe and secure, and I looked forward to coming "home" to it every day.

David: I collected baseball cards (still have them). I focused on the 1978 season and know every card by heart. They are dear to me and I feel about them the way Miriam feels about her rock gnomes. Plus — the mustaches are crazy.

Cortney: When I was little I collected stickers in sticker books. The kids on my street varied greatly in age so I didn't have many friends within 2-3 years of my own age. But interest in stickers spanned the age range and also seemed to bridge the gender gap, so boys and girls from 5 - 10 all participated in sticker-collecting and swapping and we would sit and share, and trade, and make sticker books together.

Lisabeth: I collected stuffed animals. They lived in the storage under my window seat, and I had them all sorted by type. The horses were tucked with the horses, the dogs with the dogs, bunnies with bunnies. The unicorn had her own spot — next to the horses. I even kept a little log of their names (sorted by type of animal of course) and would regularly check to make sure they were accounted for. I found it very soothing and satisfying.





Mississippi: “Boll Weevil and the Blues”

Chester Arthur Burnett left his mother’s home in the Mississippi Delta because he had had enough. His righteous and downright mean Uncle caught him humming a tune that he had overheard one of the sharecroppers singing and called it “The devil’s music”. Chester knew it wasn’t the devil’s music, but he did want to know more about what this music was. So he went barefoot nearly a hundred miles to his father’s home - where he met two men that would introduce him to the music and his own destiny.

Topics for Investigation

Mississippi History

- Biographies of Howlin Wolf, Charley Patton and Henry Sloan
- History of Delta Blues
- Account of cotton sharecropping and the boll weevil

Mississippi Geography

- Map of the mississippi river
- Map tracking the boll weevil’s introduction and spread throughout the south
- Historical map of the Blues and how it spread north

“Boll Weevil and the Blues” Study Topics

- Music and cultural influences that created the “Blues”
- How the cotton industry affected America

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Telling the truth is a relief. When we start down the path of telling a fib, it can grow and grow and grow, making it hard to keep up with the story we have created. So it’s always a relief when we just come to the truth. Chester had begun down a path of dishonesty when he lied about his age, but then when he told his father’s name at the porch of the juke joint he was relieved when the man knew his daddy.



There are people that we meet in life that we know we’re going to change us forever. We can feel it deep down in our bones somehow. There is something inexplicable about human connection. When Chester saw

Charlie Patton and heard his booming voice, he knew immediately that there was a deep connection that he would have with this man, or at least with this man's music.

It is important to trust that feeling deep inside when you don't feel safe. And just as important to do what you need to to get away from that unsafe situation and find grown-ups who can help you find safety. This is just what Chester did when he ran from the situation with his uncle to find his daddy at Deerwood Plantation.

We cannot forget our good friends who were in situations like Chester living along the Mississippi River in the time of history when he did or others who live in equally challenging situations now.

Perhaps the most profound lesson to be learned from this story is that good can prevail, even in the hardest of situations.

Challenges from our circumstances, history, and the Boll Weevil can be overcome if we put our head, heart, and hands toward making change and by listening to the deep in resonant tones in the guidance of the Blues. This was, in essence, Chester's story.





Illinois: "Crossing the River"

"Crossing the River" focuses on the Mormon migration from Missouri to Illinois in the 1830s. Drusilla Hendricks had a particularly challenging voyage in that her husband was wounded and her children were hungry - and the sudden exodus from Missouri needed to take place in the winter. When she and her family came to the western edge of the Mississippi, she saw that the river was still frozen but that the ice may be too thin to cross. What to do?

Topics for Investigation

Illinois History

- History of the Church of Latter Day Saints
- Biography of Joseph Smith
- An account of the Battle of Crooked River

Illinois Geography

- Map of the movement of Mormon people west from New York to Ohio and onward to Salt Lake City
- Map of Drusilla's travel east from Missouri to Quincy Illinois

"Crossing the River" Study Topics

- LDS (Mormon) as an American Religion.
- Comparing LDS with other large spiritual institutions and religions
- Compare the Quincy experience with other Refugee experiences

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Faith and Trust are very similar, but they are slightly different. Faith means having to rely on being taken care of by something that you can't always see. We

can trust ourselves or our friends or our parents, but having Faith means that we have to trust that things will work out, even if we don't know how. Making it a hundred and sixty miles east in the winter with two young children and a wounded husband would not be easy for Drusilla. But doing it anyway was a true test of her faith.



To many, be of service is the greatest joy in all the world. This is the foundation of the Mormon faith—a deep and abiding love for

each other and all people - and that being alive to help others is the greatest gift of all.

When we stand hand in hand in community, we make each other stronger. When we find people who share our beliefs or our interests, and we stick together, we can support and even protect each other when as individuals we may feel threatened. James had only to remind Drusilla that they were not alone, even though their Mormon beliefs were being questioned.

There are times in life when we make choices, and times when choices are made for us. Drusilla knew what she had to do in crossing the river, and faith or no faith, she felt she had no choice. It was a matter of conviction and a matter of survival, even if it meant going on a perilous journey.

There is nothing more reassuring and comforting than one human heart reaching out to another. Drusilla and her children did make it across the river; and perhaps it was an act of God that helped them across. In the end, however, it was the love, kindness and hospitality of a fellow friend, Mrs Doggett, who kept them safe and who nurtured their weary souls.





Alabama: "It's Rocket Science"

Pat McCauley, a novice reporter for the Huntsville Times, is finally entrusted with a real scoop: an ex-Nazi scientist who is now working for the U.S. government wants to talk to the press. Pat is thrilled and makes arrangements to meet with the mysterious man, but is not prepared for the scope of conversation and what this means for the future of American Rocket Science.

Topics for Investigation

Alabama History

- History of NASA and the space race
- Biography of Werner von Braun

Alabama Geography

- History of NASA and the space race
- Biography of Werner von Braun

"It's Rocket Science" Study Topics

- Operation Paperclip and the enrolling of ex-Nazi scientists to work for U.S.
- Use of the free press and public opinion to influence national policy.

Topics for Reflection

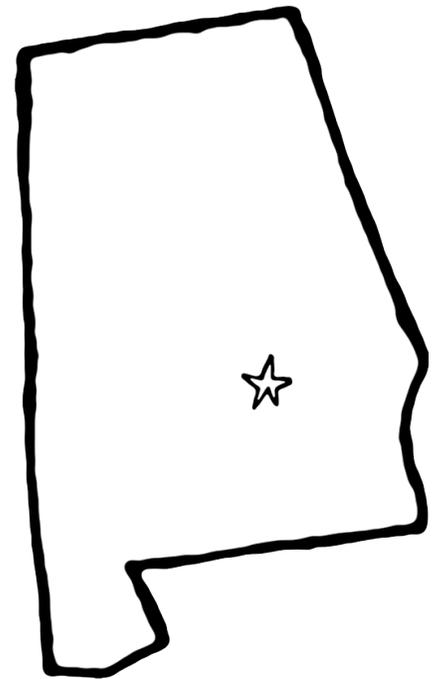
From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Even when we dream of doing "big and significant" things in our lives, it is also good to remember

that the small things count, too.

Pat had imagined himself as a "crackerjack reporter" when he graduated from college, but he ended up making a big difference in the lives of many working at a small town newspaper. There are many ways to do service and have an impact in the world.



At the same time, it is important to hold fast our dreams and our ambitions. The time did eventually come when Pat received all that he had ever wanted — “to be acknowledged and then trusted with an important lead” in newspaper reporting.

There may be times in life when we are put in very complicated situations and we have to make a difficult moral decisions. There were many scientists who contributed to the invention of weapons that in the end may have caused some harm. These scientists may have felt they had no other choice or even that they were doing something useful for the advancement of civilization and technology. Sometimes life does not present us with an easy solution to our dilemmas. Von Braun in the story was one such character who had to face his conscience and make a decision that he could ultimately stand behind.

Sometimes the very same item can be used either for a destructive or unhelpful purpose or for an exciting, service-oriented purpose. The rockets that were being engineered in the time of our story could have been used as weapons or as vehicles to explore outer space!

Educating others can sometimes be the best way to sway public opinion — even more than using persuasion or might. If we can help people to understand the importance of a certain action, then we create a unified front where all can stand together out of principle. By encouraging Pat to write about the possibilities of exploring space and actually going to the moon, Von Braun was encouraging him to use his influence so that people could be educated and make a different choice about the rocket’s usefulness.

Be open to possibility, and listen and learn from others. You never know what you will find out from the ideas of someone else and how this might change your views forever! While we cannot say for sure, Pat may, in fact, have had a hand in the first human being ever walking on the face of the moon.





Maine: "From the Ashes"

Hannah Thorlo's home town of Portland, Maine burned to the ground twice in her lifetime. The first time occurred when she was one month old and the British Navy burned the town as punishment for their participation in the Revolutionary War. The second time happened 91 years later, during a celebration of the first Independence Day after the Civil War. Both times, Hannah was carried out of her house to safety. And both times her home town built itself back up — out of the ashes.

Topics for Investigation

Maine History

- History of Falmouth and Portland, Maine from 1775 to 1866
- History of fire prevention in the Colonies and USA

Maine Geography

- Map of Falmouth and how the "neck" became Portland
- Map of east coast shipping trade routes and railroads
- Map of downtown Portland and the progress of the Great Fire

"From the Ashes" Study Topics

- How Hannah handles grief and loss
- A study of resilience in early America
- An appreciation for how difficult life was in the early days of the country

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

The world is filled with heroes (Part 1). One definition of a hero is someone who performs truly selfless acts for the benefit of others.

Hannah's father, Josiah, was one such person. In the Portland fire of 1775, "...once he knew his family was safe, he went back into the fire to look for more survivors — and he never returned."

We don't run out of love. Love is one of those things that we do not run out of. The more we give, the more we have to give. Hannah was confused that her



mother could love both her father and the man she remarried, Will Burgess. Her mother explained that she had love enough to go around and she was not choosing one man over the other. And later when Hannah's brother died, she grieved sorely, but then years later, her great-grandchild, Samuel, came into her life reminding her of Duncan with cool strong eyes and a serious look. Through Samuel, she found her way not only back to the special place only Duncan could fill in her heart, but also to a deep and lasting love with Samuel. And it was her special connection to Samuel that truly helped her through the ups and downs of normal New England life.

When we lose someone, we grieve. It is natural, healthy, and human to do so. But even in the midst of sadness, we might also discover a deep knowing that we can honor what we have lost by living life fully. This is what Hannah did to honor the life Josiah, her father, had lived.

The world is filled with heroes (Part 2). Another definition of a hero is someone who has the capacity for remarkable resilience and astonishing strength even when faced with tremendous hardship. It's difficult to know whether this resilience comes from inner courage or from the love of those around us (more likely a combination of the two). In putting one foot in front of the other and carrying on in the face of tragedy, Hannah became a hero.

When faced with enduring, exhaustive challenges, look for the moments when you can pause and catch your breath. Even someone running a marathon needs to have refreshment throughout the race. Although Hannah had to face and overcome many adversities, she was also very aware of the

grace that was bestowed upon her in her life. There were, indeed, times of prosperity in Portland — she married, she had a family she loved, and of course, she lived a full and rich life.

Struggle can build endurance. When we go through hard times we build a muscle that gives us the confidence and assurance that we can face our challenges with strong hands, a cool head, and a steady heart.

When Hannah's husband and her son lost their jobs, Hannah's reply was, "Our town has been through worse, and it will rise from the ashes again." And it did.

People gain wisdom through grief. Listen to people who have lived through challenging experiences. They often have the wisdom to help us in darker times of our own. Hannah had lived through so many challenges that when Samuel lost his favorite Uncle Nathan and when Portland burned yet a second time, she was able to offer Samuel the very wisdom that she had received from her own mother: "We will rise from the ashes, Samuel. We will mourn and grieve and then live life to its fullest."





Missouri: "Rainbow Bridge"

Miss Powell loves her hometown of St. Louis, Missouri and it troubles her to see it in apparent decline. When she hears a proposal from a local councilman to build a monument near the historic courthouse, she is determined to lend a hand. She assigns the class of 1931 the task of drawing pictures of possible monuments — and the result is not only profound, but remarkably accurate.

Topics for Investigation

Missouri History

- History of St. Louis as the Gateway to the American West

Missouri Geography

- Map of St. Louis before and after the Arch
- Map of the Louisiana purchase and the significance of St. Louis

"Rainbow Bridge" Study Topics

- Study of the design process of a monument
- Study of the influence of mythology and religion on architecture and design

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

When we care, we show true interest. When we show interest, we invest. Miss Powell truly cared about her hometown, St. Louis, and she truly cared about her students. She showed this by taking an interest in the history of her hometown as well as its potential regentrification. She also took an interest in her students' capacities as designers for the new monument that would honor Thomas Jefferson and the great expansion westward.



"Art is not what you see, but what you make other see." — Edgar Degas. Miss Powell's students had many creative interpretations of what they thought the monument should

look like, but it was Geneva's drawing that was most compelling because it revealed something that was not there. It was a simple arch that suggested a rainbow bridge. It was "more than special and even more than beautiful." To Miss Powell, the rainbow bridge was the expression of something that was an embodiment of Truth, of a connection of the east to the west. It perhaps also signified the connection between the St. Louis of her past and the one of the future, or even also the connection between heaven and earth. Geneva's art was more than what was seen — it was what it made Miss Powell able to see.

Sometimes we don't know the significance of things when they're happening, but their importance is revealed to us in the future.

Although Miss Powell very much appreciated

Geneva's drawing, she had no idea that 30 years later the monument that would be built, the Gateway Arch, would be exactly like the drawing that Geneva had created so many years earlier. Although this story is historical fiction, such magical coincidences can happen in our own lives. This is just part of the mystery of being alive. Some things we can only marvel over, even if they cannot be explained. In the case of Geneva's drawing, it could well have been that the Truth that Miss Powell saw 30 years earlier — the connection among all — was the thread that was enduring.





Arkansas: “Throwing Curve Balls”

“Throwing Curve Balls” is a story about Dee Brown and a baseball game that transformed his picture of Native Americans forever. The story follows young Dee as he meets two important Native American figures: the famous Pawnee baseball pitcher for the Arkansas Travelers, and a young Creek boy named William Brown. Dee is so impressed with them both that many years later he writes “Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee,” a novel about Western Expansionism from the perspective of Native Americans.

Topics for Investigation

Arkansas History

- The Great Flood of 1927 and its implications for all states in the Mississippi River System
- History of Baseball and Integration
- The Trail of Tears and its effect on Native American Tribes around the country.
- Biography of Dee Brown, librarian and author

Arkansas Geography

- Map of the Mississippi River System (including the Arkansas River)
- Tracking the “Trail of Tears” and the movement of tribes from their native lands to “Indian Territory”
- Chart of the effects of the Flood of 1927

“Throwing Curve Balls” Study Topics

- Study of Native American Removal and Migration
- Book study of “Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee” by Dee Brown
- Topical study of “prejudice”

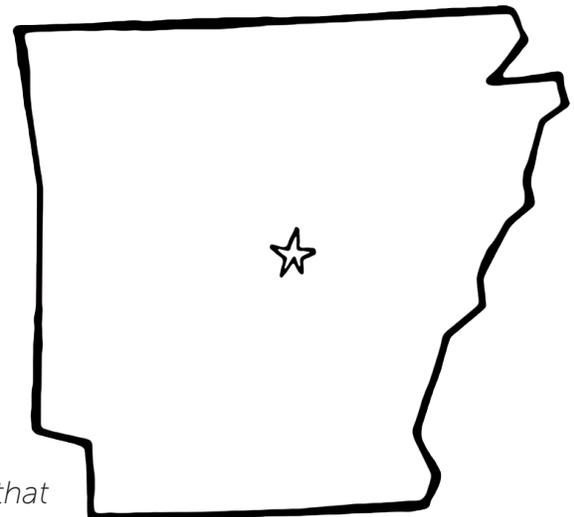
Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

We all change. We all grow and develop and experience new things in the world that can change who we are. Dee meeting William, along with the events of the Flood of 1927, changed him forever – and in ways he never could have predicted.

From the story: *“We all grow and develop and experience new things in the world that can change who we are. Sometimes it’s a natural event like a huge flood or a man-made event like a war that bring the change – and other times it need only be meeting the right person at the right time.”*



Sometimes the majority, even when powerful, is not always acting in the most conscientious ways. It is important to remember that going along with the crowd is not necessarily always the true path. And when you are part of the smaller minority, that is when you must band together to make the voices of the few are all the more strong. This is what our Native American friends had to do.

We must look into the hearts of individuals and people, and not make judgments based on labels or reputations that others give to them. It is important to remember that what is commonly held about a group of people or about individuals is not necessarily the truth. Dee came to see that all that he had heard about his Native American friends, was in fact, conjecture.

From the story: "Now... we know that anytime a person decides that a whole group of people is a certain way ... it will lead to trouble. This is why people sometimes don't feel welcome, or don't feel understood or seen. No one wants to be batched into a judgment like that. Luckily, whenever a group of people is judged in that way like that, there will be people who step forward... These people are so important because they connect us together – make us realize that we have more in common with each other than we may have thought."

Be open to surprise! You never know when someone will love the same books as you do or maybe even share a name. And you never know what someone else is truly capable of! So, be curious, be open and love the surprise of discovering things you never thought possible from those whom you don't know as well as you might think!





Michigan: “The Gotham Hotel”

In 1959 there was only one fancy hotel in the country that was owned, run, and patronized by African Americans: The Gotham Hotel. It was not only where Ella Fitzgerald, Sammy Davis Jr., Billie Holiday, Joe Lewis, and Cab Calloway stayed when visiting Detroit, but it was also the place where Langston Hughes, C.L. Franklin, and Martin Luther King Jr. expressed the “dream” of what America could be — a “promised land” where everyone truly is equal.

Topics for Investigation

Michigan History

- History of Detroit and its African American Paradise Valley district
- History of “The Great Migration” of African Americans from the rural south to the industrial cities of the north
- Biographies of Martin Luther King Jr., C.L. Franklin (and his daughter Aretha), and Langston Hughes

Michigan Geography

- Map of Detroit and location of the Paradise Valley and Black Bottom neighborhoods
- Tracking the migration north of southern, sharecropping African Americans to Chicago and Detroit
- Map of the “Freedom March” in downtown Detroit

“The Gotham Hotel” Study Topics

- Comparative study of Langston Hughes poetry and MLK speeches
- Study of “The Freedom March” of Detroit and other Civil Rights demonstrations — their effect and legacy



Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Separation can be difficult. Sometimes people whom we really love and care about need to move away, and this can feel really sad. This happens more often than you would think — ask any grownup. Such was the case with Daisy and her dear friend Aretha. This does not mean that the friendship is over, but it does mean that the two friends need to make room for something new.

Your talent can help others. We all have a special talent that we can contribute to the world to make it a better place. Aretha had a beautiful, soulful voice. Daisy, instead, had a knack for making people feel welcome. One is certainly not better than the other, and both are needed in our world — and this is true for each of us.

Being left behind can be hard, but there is hope for the future. It can feel painful to be the ones left behind when our dear friends or family seem to be exploring new opportunities. At times like this, we can do a few things. We can hold on to ambitions of our own and plan for times when we, too, will be adventuring. Or we can look at where we are with fresh and new eyes, renew our gratitude, and wait for new adventures to come to us. Little did Daisy know the adventures that were on their way to her even after her friend Aretha moved on!

Hard work pays off in respect earned. Sometimes we have to work extra hard to earn the respect and trust of others, whether it is our teachers, our parents, or the people for whom we work. Daisy had to prove herself worthy and able to meet the high standards of Mr. White, the owner of The Gotham Hotel. But in earning his respect,

she also earned special privileges and a promotion.

Rainbows can arrive even on cloudy days. Sometimes when wake up in the morning, it just seems to be a gray day — but it won't necessarily stay that way. Color can come flooding in any moment. On the Saturday morning that Daisy was to be paid a visit by Aretha, she was feeling quite sorry for herself. But little by little her day got better and better.

You can use your influence to help others. Daisy took special care of Eddie Chapman, the busboy. He came from a very poor family, and he was very grateful to have a job. Daisy kept an eye out for him and was pleased when Mr. White was generous and appreciative of Eddie, her favorite busboy.

A home base is important. Everyone needs a place where they belong and where they feel like they can be themselves entirely. The Gotham Hotel was a "home" for many African-Americans at the time that it was thriving.

Each of us is special, whether we are famous or not. Daisy knew this. She had met many famous people at the Gotham Hotel, but their fame did not necessarily impress her. She could say that they were all interesting in their own way, but not just because they were well known.

Values hold more meaning than fame. It is not our fame that makes us extraordinary, but our values, convictions, and accomplishments. Although Daisy had met many famous people, it was the work of Martin Luther King Jr. and Langston Hughes that she found most impressive because of the positive impact that their work was having on the world.

Peace can bring the best action. Sometimes the most powerful way to make a powerful change is in a "passive," nonviolent way. Our

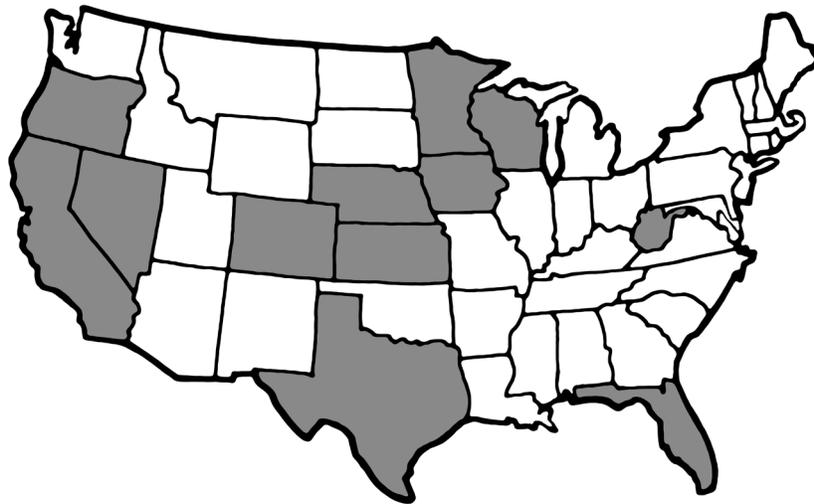
strongest posture is one where we are sitting still and speaking the truth while being open and vulnerable. This is what Dr. King exemplified.

Look for ways that your dream can become reality. When we have a dream or an ambition and we put our entire heart, mind, and soul into it, events in our lives unfold to help us to reach our goals. The book that Langston Hughes gave to Daisy spiraled into connections with Dr. Martin Luther King, an invitation to a march, and an event that

altered American history. That one little book changed Daisy's life and the lives of others forever.



FIFTY: The Stars, the States, and the Stories Study Pages — Collection Three



Each story in the FIFTY collection focuses on a remarkable American from a different state. Below are some recommended topics to inspire further investigation of the history and geography of the state, as well as themes that can support our children's growth and development.

Though this is historical fiction and the characters have been developed to accommodate a story, their attributes and development may be useful as reference points and inspirations.



Florida: "Of Paradise and Peril"

"Of Paradise and Peril" is Civil War-era historical fiction about the meeting of two men in what is now known as Tampa Bay, Florida. One man, Wade P. Hood, is a sailor from a southern barricade runner (small steamboat) who falls from his boat and swims to shore. The other man, Count Odet Philipi, is a black Frenchman who has built Florida's first grapefruit orchard, and is now a proud successful southern businessman during a time when southern businesses were all struggling. Count Odet cares for Wade and helps him return to his native Alabama, but the Frenchman also offers strong opinions on the nature of war, of integrity and of business.

Topics for Investigation

Florida History

- An introduction to the American Civil War and Florida's involvement
- A history of trade with Britain and other countries from southern states
- The fascinating biography of Count Odet Philipi and all the anecdotal histories ascribed to him.
- History of big hurricanes through history

Florida Geography

- The unique shape of Florida and where it fits with the other Confederate states
- Trade routes to Cuba, the Bahamas and then Britain
- A map of the Northern Blockade along the east coast and around Florida to the Gulf of Mexico

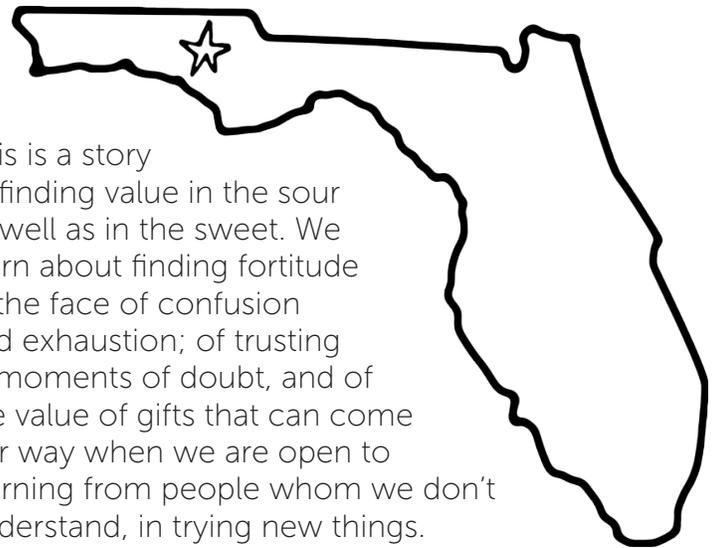
"Of Paradise and Peril" Study Topics

- Slavery and its relationship to the Civil War
- Trade before, during and after the Civil War
- The seeming contradictions that are a part of Florida – the sour and the sweet

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

Though this is historical fiction and the characters have been developed to accommodate a story, their attributes and development may be useful as reference points and inspirations.



This is a story of finding value in the sour as well as in the sweet. We learn about finding fortitude in the face of confusion and exhaustion; of trusting in moments of doubt, and of the value of gifts that can come our way when we are open to learning from people whom we don't understand, in trying new things.

In this story, your child might learn that:

Wade held on to the promise of light in the midst of the fear and pain of being thrown unexpectedly overboard. We learn from him that there may be something bigger than we are guiding us and giving us hope.

There are gifts to be had when we meet others with openness to what we don't understand. Count Philipi was like no other man Wade had ever met, and he was able to teach him as well as befriend him. From this example, our children learn to be curious and kind instead of fixed and closed when we encounter "differences" in skin color, political leanings or nationality.

"Before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you've depended on more than half the world. This is the way our universe is structured, this is its interrelated quality. We aren't going to have peace on Earth until we recognize the basic fact of the interrelated structure of all reality." ~Martin Luther King Jr.

We are all interdependent. And there are so many other to be grateful for for that interdependence. There is not one thing that we eat, or one piece of furniture that we use, or one article of clothing that we wear that didn't require "half the world" to get it to us. We get a taste of this as we hear a bit about the journey of the grapefruit from Key West to the bowl of fruit that was offered to Wade.

"Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?" ~ Abraham Lincoln

The invitation to help an enemy for "your enemy today may be your friend of tomorrow."

In addition to experiencing the "sweetness" of life, the value also of enduring a little hardship along the way, too. The grace of a "little bit of sweet" is balanced by the "resiliency" gained from "a little bit of sour."





Texas: "Natural Beauty"

In "Natural Beauty", a German POW captured in North Africa gets off the train in Marfa Texas where he will be living until World War Two is over. At first he is confused by the wide open plains and distant mountains and tumbleweeds of West Texas, but it doesn't take him long to appreciate the air, the climate, the colors and the delicious food of this part of the world. In time he decides to honor his temporary home by painting some murals depicting the Latino-American culture of the area - murals that can be seen in Marfa to this day.

Topics for Investigation

Texas History

- History of World War Two - especially the European Campaign
- History of German POWs and camps in Texas

Texas Geography

- Map of Europe and North Africa as relates to USA and Texas
- Map of forts in Texas
- Map of Fort Russell

"Natural Beauty" Study Topics

- Mexican American culture in Texas
- Topography and Climate of West Texas
- Study the Murals in Marfa painted by Hans Jurgen Press

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Even in a conflict so dramatic as war, we have to remember that some situations are not clear-cut and "black and white".

Fritz struggled as a soldier, even one loyal to his mother country, to fight the Americans who produced such beauty and imagination in art and literature.

And Fritz was

even confused once he found himself in Marfa,

Texas. He knew he

was in "enemy territory", but he felt a certain freedom that he had not previously experienced.

In addition, he loved the food!

Much as we sometimes want to make a clear line between "them and us", we are often reminded that we are all sharing in a human experience with more in common than we



might know. This even occurred as time passed and the German soldiers became more comfortable with the American civilians and some of the soldiers. Fritz shared more with the “enemy” than he ever imagined possible.

Even in the most dire of situations, there can be opportunities to learn new things.

As a prisoner of war, Fritz still saw an opportunity to learn how to cook the delicious foods he was eating; he learned about new cultures, and he even discovered his capacities as an artist.

There is great heartache in war, and this can not be denied. In addition to the fighting, it is very hard to be separated from your family and the people you love. Although Fritz made friends and even found opportunities in his situation, he missed his wife terribly.

Every culture has special festivals and celebrations honoring what is most valued in its biography and story. For the Mexicans one such festival is Cinco de Mayo. Learning a culture’s festivals can teach you so much about their history, values and personalities. Be curious! Celebrate and learn!

The blending of colors adds spice to life! Fritz came to question what it meant to be “only German”, and he found it far more interesting to add new foods to his palate, colors to the walls, beliefs to his thinking, festivals to his celebrations and people to his friendships...

and as a result, his life became more rich, interesting and satisfying.

The bonds we make in life change and stay with us for our days and add color to the painting of our life!

But they were also grateful for what they had experienced in Marfa. They had been treated kindly. They were treated with respect and humanity. They had not felt like prisoners as much as ... well, almost like neighbors. As they were packing and getting ready to board the train to the coast, Fritz lingered in the dining hall. He studied the mural he had lovingly worked on and realized that it would likely be painted over when the Fort became an American Fort again. Why would they keep something like that in their dining hall. This made him feel sad - not because he had worked hard on it or because it was particularly well painted - but because ... it captured something precious to him...colors, dancing, spices, war and celebration and just ... an appreciation of this place that had once been his enemy’s territory and was now ... his home.





Iowa: “Farmer’s Holiday”

Milo Reno and his wife Christine watched a fancy new car from the bank pass by their farmhouse and they both knew where it was headed: to deliver a foreclosure notice to a neighboring farm. As Milo remembered how Iowa farmers joined together to feed the troops in the First World War, he got an idea — an idea that would re-unite farmers once again and remind the government and banks just how important farmers are.

Topics for Investigation

Iowa History

- Biography of Milo Reno and Iowa Farmer’s Union
- History of farming in the United States, especially during WWI and WWII
- History of John Deere Farm Equipment

Iowa Geography

- Map of most common farm crops grown in United States

“Farmer’s Holiday” Study Topics

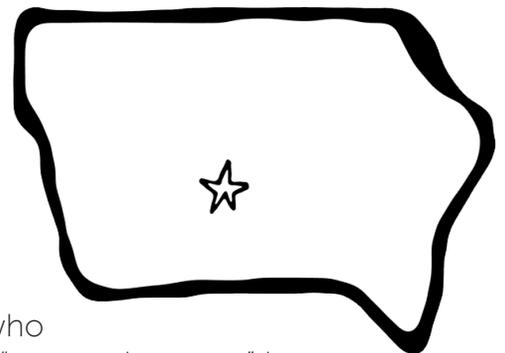
- Comparison between labor union initiatives in Farming, Mining, Factory workers, etc.
- A better understanding of farm subsidies and how they work

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

You have more in common with others than you think. Very often in life, if we wait long enough, we will come to have shared experiences with those whom at one point we thought we had little in common. Such was the case when Milo came to feel tremendous compassion toward Isaac Shields, a man who had one been a “personal enemy.” Isaac had become like all other farmers — and he needed help.



There is great satisfaction that comes from doing hard work and making gains. Milo was proud of the farm that he and his wife, Christine, had built. With very few resources and a bank loan, they purchased the land and equipment that they needed to grow their farm. They were gratified and proud.

Changes are inevitable, but hope is certain. Very often in life we experience times of progress, and times where we can be discouraged. This can be challenging, but important also to remember that the tables can turn it anytime and when we are discouraged, hope for the future can sustain us. Just after the period of time when Milo's farm was prosperous, the war ended and everything began to change, including Iowa's luck. But even that did not keep Milo from believing that the future would bring hope!

There is power in numbers. Some individuals in the world tend to be more concerned with their own personal gain than with the welfare of others. However, even when feeling overpowered by someone else's capacity to control, banding together with like-minded comrades and helping each other to stay true to the cause can result in the reestablishment of an equal balance in power. Although Isaac Shields did wield power over struggling farmers, in the end it was the community that proved stronger than the individual.

Collaboration yields greater benefits than you might imagine. Sometimes when our own best interests are threatened and we feel scared, we may feel as though we have to compete with fellow human beings as opposed to working collaboratively with them. This can be a very difficult impulse to work against, but important to try. Even though it might not seem like it, working together makes ways that we can lift each other up, even in the most dire circumstances. Such was the case with the farmers when their plight was so difficult and they felt they needed to fight each

other to survive. But in the end, it was their commitment to one another that brought them back to prosperity.

Compassion for others — even your enemies — brings surprising rewards. It can be counterintuitive, but great things can happen when we extend well wishes toward people in our lives who challenge us. If we remember that even "difficult" individuals are looking for the same things we are looking for — love and belonging and security and safety — then we can find compassion and extend a helping hand, even to them. This was the brilliant insight that Milo had when he remembered that all the farmers were working for a common purpose — to feed the nation — and that they all needed to help each other, including Isaac!

Small actions can result in powerful movements. We can make a big change in small step-by-step increments. It doesn't all have to happen at once. Milo's plan to unite and make farmers powerful again could not have happened overnight. It took months and months but eventually, step-by-step, arm-in-arm, they were victorious!





Wisconsin: "Love Finds You"

"Love Finds You" is about an important decision that young Juliet McGill needs to make: should she go against her wealthy New York family's request and marry a Wisconsin Territory fur trader and Indian agent, or should she return home and find someone 'better suited' to her place in society? Her answer is made when she hears a story about a native American woman named Glory of the Morning and her unlikely suitor.

Topics for Investigation

Wisconsin History

- History of Wisconsin Territory and Statehood
- History of French Fur Trade and settling of Great Lakes region
- Growth of Chicago from Fort to Town to City
- Biographies of Juliet McGill and John Kinzie

Wisconsin Geography

- Map of Great Lakes
- Route from the town of Chicago to Winnebago Island

"Love Finds You" Study Topics

- Leadership in Native American Tribes - especially Great Lakes Tribes
- The role of the Indian Agent
- Trade between tribes and French and English

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Growing up comes with the promise of many exciting adventures, but also with the responsibility of making decisions for yourself. Juliet knew

that she needed to go out and explore the world and to leave New York, at least for a while.

This was very exciting

to her, but then

she was faced with a great life question as to whether or not he should go against her parents' wishes to marry

the man that she loved. There is enough time in adulthood to decide the 'big things' for ourselves, so enjoy the comfort of mother and father and the grownups knowing what is best for you when you are young!



The world is such a vast and colorful place, and there are so many interesting and exciting people to meet in it! Juliet discovered, in leaving the Northeast, a very different life when she traveled to Chicago. She discovered the ways of the Potawatomi people as well as the lives of fur traders! This was the world she had never known.

We must look to the elders for wisdom and guidance when we lose our way. There are people in this world who have gained access to knowledge that comes from deep, deep within as well from realms beyond. We must listen to these people and make their life story part of our life story. Glory of the Morning was one such person whose life experiences were great teachers to be honored.

Sometimes we find love and friendship in unlikely places. Glory of the Morning was just like the dawn, “living right at the edge of what her people could accept”, and falling in love with a Frenchman was certainly unexpected. Sometimes we cannot predict the people who will come into our lives to change us forever and with whom we feel a deep connection.

“Love Finds You meant to her that a person cannot plan the perfect love - cannot make love happen on our terms - with the people we think we want. No - we don’t find love - it finds us.”

The differences between and among people can bring them together, but we must respect and make room for the differences, too. One does not need to adopt the cultural

beliefs of another person, but as long as there is mutual respect, then we can coexist. Glory of the Morning and John decided to part ways, but they did so with love and respect, while honoring their differences.

Sometimes stories don’t work out like we want them to, and that can feel complicated in our hearts. Juliet wanted John and Glory of the Morning to “live happily ever after” and she had mixed feelings that they parted way. However, there were many valuable gifts won from their separation.

“Well she continued to lead her people through several wars - wars between tribes - battles and treaties with the French, battles and treaties with the English and then battles and treaties with the Americans. She became a famous chief of her people and was known for her giddy smile. And they say that the source of her smile was the enduring love she had for Joseph - a love that could stretch across great distances and then beyond death.”





California: “Following your Friends”

“Following Your Friends” is a story about Ralph Lazo and his choice to join his friends in the Manzanar Japanese American Relocation Camp in California. In the spring of 1942, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Ralph’s Japanese American friends are told to leave their homes and move to a war internment camp for the duration of the war. Ralph, who is Mexican American, decides to protest the policy by joining Manzanar and remaining with his friends. There he not only sees the terrible conditions of the camp, but he meets some incredible people.

Topics for Investigation

California History

- History of Asian immigration to the west coast
- History of World War Two - especially the Pacific campaign
- Details of the Japanese Relocation Camps

California Geography

- Map of all the relocation camps
- Map of Japan in relationship to California
- Map of California and distance from Manzanar to Los Angeles

“Following your Friends” Study Topics

- Japanese American culture
- Daily life at the Manzanar Relocation Camp
- Biographies of famous detainees.

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Abiding friendship requires commitment.

This is a story about loyalty, about standing by your friends and staying true to your convictions.

Sometimes we have to do what we know is the right thing even if it means personal discomfort and sacrifice, even if it means that we don’t always play by the rules in order to stand up for what we know is right. Ralph

had to endure great challenge in following his friends, but there was no question to him but that he had no choice. In spite of the difficulties, there was ease in knowing he was doing right by his friends.



Sometimes our love for our friends or family makes it such that the sacrifices that we make for them come from a place of deep joy. Ralph's life in the camp was not easy, but he was glad to endure the conditions for the sake of the loyalty he felt to his friends.

True friends stick together! Ralph stood by his friends because they had had stood by him. When the Mexican-Americans in Ralph's school didn't embrace him, he was taken up by his Japanese-American friends. No cultural/racial differences, political unrest or worldly worries or disputes among nations was going to get in the way of that.

Sometimes friendship is heartbreaking. When we risk being so attached to someone, we also risk that they will leave.

In addition, when we love and empathize with our friends, also feel the pain that they experience.

One can endure hardship when surrounded by loving friends, but also when one keeps a positive attitude. Aiko spoke about the gardens, Gordon loved the orchards, Sue appreciated that there was time for writing, and Yoshito was grateful to be able to go to school. And all of this was within the barbed wire fence of the relocation camps.

Even when one has to endure difficult odds, surviving challenging circumstances can contribute to getting skills to be an even more productive and successful adult. Sue became an activist Gordon a cell biologist. Aiko took political action against relocation camps. Especially when your friends are at your side! None of them let their confinement to define what they are capable of. From the story:

"Don't let others tell you who you are or what you are supposed to do with your life" he often told them, "And if you are feeling doubtful or unsure, just look to your friends. True friends will be there for you ... no matter what."





Minnesota: “This House”

When Louise Wahinoge moves her family to a small city outside of St. Paul, she purchases a house that has a long and powerful history. Not only is the house where the famous Mayo Clinic was founded, but it is also connected to one of America’s most famous food companies. This information comes to Louise in a most remarkable and magical series of accidents.

Topics for Investigation

Minnesota History

- Biography of William Mayo and Mayo Clinic
- Biography of Carson Cosgrove and Green Giant Vegetables

Minnesota Geography

- Map of Minnesota — pinpoint where the historic home is located
- Overlay current map with Dakota tribal map

“This House” Study Topics

- Study of the relationship between geography (noting the presence of flint) and biography
- Why is this house central to so many huge successes?

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

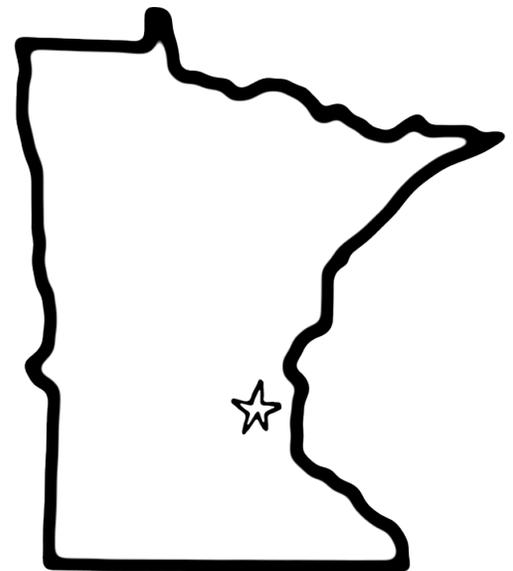
In this story, your child might learn that:

Our dreams can tell us things that we might not otherwise know.

It’s important to listen to them when they speak to us, because sometimes the messages that we hear can be a sign: they might guide us about making a decision, teach us something about ourselves, or help us to

discover and navigate our feelings. Louise woke up from a dream feeling like she had been giving a message — and she listened.

A fresh start can help with the healing process. When we lose someone we love, sometimes we need to make changes in



our lives — not to forget our loved one, but to create a fresh start. Louise had tried to stay in St. Paul, but it was painful for her because living there was a constant reminder of having lost her husband. So she sold her house and moved. It was just the right thing for her to do — not in order to leave her husband behind, but to bring him with her into her future rather staying in their past.

Our guts can tell us things that we might not otherwise know. It's not just a dream is that can give us messages. Sometimes we have this little feeling in our gut that tells us what is true for ourselves. When Louise moved from St. Paul, the first house the realtor showed her was the one she immediately knew was right for her and her children. There was something that whispered in her ear. Sometimes we don't even think about it — we just know.

Sometimes our emotions are triggered by the most unexpected things, and when that happens, we can just allow it. Who would think that a phrase "Flint is for choosing" would bring Louise to tears, but it did. The message in her dream combined with the memory of her husband upon waking combined with the fact that she was very tired resulted in her feeling a tenderness that lead to tears. Perhaps what also brought her to tears is that before falling asleep she asked for a sign, for some guidance about how she was going to make her new life work, and when she heard a message in her dream she cried from the power of having heard back.

Curiosity is a treasure chest. With curiosity, we gain new capacities and new skills. Louise had come to know a great deal about working on homes. She didn't set out to explore any of this, but when she

would visit her husband at work, she would become interested and start to ask questions. Everyone enjoyed her questions, and they were happy to tell her whatever she wanted to know. Little by little, she became quite skilled.

Sometimes it happens that we receive just what we need at just the right time. As Louise was pulling up the floorboards in her home, she discovered a book. And it was the writing in the book that lead her to her future. She never would have known to look for that book had she not been renovating her home. Life gave her just what she needed at just the right time.

Sometimes coincidences happen in our lives that are so uncanny we have to stop and marvel. Louise was dumbfounded at the similarities she saw between the writing in the book and the dream that she had had. And who could have predicted that there would be a knock on the door just as she was reading a book by a woman who knew all about the arrowheads that she had dreamt about?

"Be careful what you decide to do, because odds are it's going to be successful." What a wonderful way to consider all of the positive possibility in your life. Very often we protect ourselves by preparing for failure. We even tell someone to "break a leg" before they go on stage. But now Thea warns Louise to be careful of what she decides to do, not because she will fail — but rather because she will succeed!





Oregon: “We Will Vote”

It is the final stretch for Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in their cross-continental exploration of the Louisiana Purchase. Morale and rations are low, and a decision needs to be made — should they stay put on the north shore of the Columbia River, travel west along the river, or cross the river to the south shore? Each of the choices has benefits and challenges, and Meriwether Lewis isn't sure which to choose — that is, until he proposes that every member of the party vote.

Topics for Investigation

Oregon History

- History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition
- Biography of Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, Sacagawea, and York
- History of the Louisiana Purchase

Oregon Geography

- Map of Lewis and Clark's route to Oregon
- Map of final weeks of the journey along Columbia River
- Map of the mouth of Columbia river and establishment of Fort Clatsop

“We Will Vote” Study Topics

- Voting in America and how it changed and expanded over the years
- Leadership styles - comparing Lewis, Clark, Sacagawea and other leaders

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Even those who have been acknowledged for great accomplishments in history are human beings with the same range of emotions that those of us “less famous” have. It does not

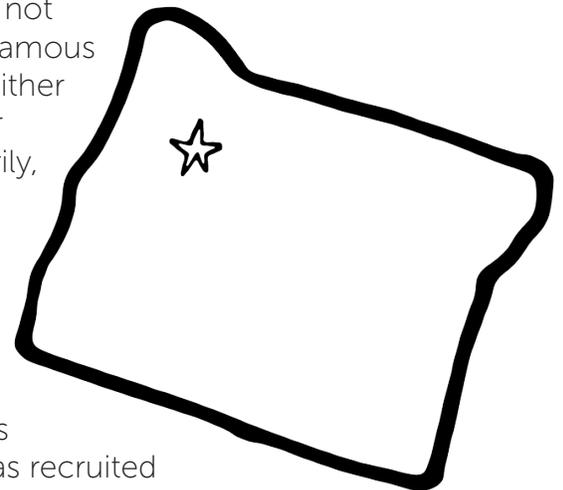
matter how famous a person is, either historically or contemporarily, they are

people, just like the rest of us. Lewis Meriwether, of the

famous Lewis

and Clark, was recruited by President Thomas Jefferson

to accomplish an expedition of vast scale and great ambition, but even he struggled with the weightiness of exhaustion and discouragement.



No one, not a single one of us, accomplishes anything alone. Meriwether Lewis knew that he needed help on the expedition, and so he asked to partner with Commander William Clark. Captain Clark, although a confident leader himself, knew that he too needed support. He agreed to participate in the expedition only if his companion, York, could accompany him.

When we work in true partnership with others, we combine our strengths, which benefits all. Both Clark and Lewis brought different capacities to the Corps of Discovery and both of their strengths were required for the success of the expedition.

“But as far as our company is concerned,” Lewis confided to Clark, “We shall be equals - both Captains with equal power.”

This proved to be a very wise decision, as it turned out - because While Lewis felt the full burden of responsibility, Clark focused his attention on leading. While Lewis worried about fulfilling Jefferson’s goals, Clark concerned himself with the survival and health of the company. While Lewis prioritized capturing, studying and sending samples of plants and animals to President Jefferson, Clark prioritized morale, proper food and rest - and discipline if needed among the Corps company. It was Lewis who made sure border and property agreements were in place with Native American leaders, while it was Clark who saw the need for quality guides, reliable boatmen and steadfast hunters. In short, Meriwether Lewis held the expectations of President Jefferson while Clark held the needs of the company.

Help comes to us in unexpected ways. In spite of Lewis’ and Clark’s abilities and shared leadership, it turned out that the most valuable member of their crew was Sacagawea, a young Shoshone woman:

In fact the most valuable person in their company turned out to be a young Shoshone woman, named Sacagawea, who had not only translated for them, but her quick thinking saved their supplies and lives several times along the way. It was she that fished out all of Lewis’s scientific notes from an overturned canoe - and it was her presence that calmed suspicious parties of Mandan, Salish and Nez Pierce Native Americans.

In life, sometimes we are forced to make decisions where there is no perfect outcome. At such times, we may need to choose the option that satisfies the most, even if not everyone will get what they want and many need to compromise. At such times, it often wisest to take a vote. When we vote, the majority outcome is the victorious one, this at the heart of American Democracy. And this was just what Lewis proposed that the company should do; vote, when there was no ideal option in proceeding with the expedition.

When we vote, everyone’s voice is considered equally. In such a way, everyone might not get their first choice, but if we do what is right for the will of the majority, then perhaps we can let go of our personal preference and do what is best for all. In the Corp of Discovery, sergeants and soldiers and privates, the leaders and the lower rank lower ranking officers, each took equal responsibility.

It is not just in the vote where ideally everyone has equal voice. Written into the doctrine that defines the identity of the United States, The Declaration of Independence, which was penned by Thomas Jefferson, all “are created equal”. In our story Meriwether Lewis and William Clark model of this by giving equal respect to a woman and a slave, neither of which would otherwise been honored as partners at that time in history.

And so it was decided. With everyone - all men and women counted - in agreement, they set to work. There were materials to gather - there was food to catch and salt - there were canoes to hollow out - and all of it would be done by the men and women of the

Corps of Discovery - a company where every person had an equal say - accepting equal risk and reward ... of the successful winter and then voyage home ... that lay ahead.





Kansas: "The Rivalry"

In the states of Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri, high school and college football is very important to many families. This is especially the case for the Barafato family - and it is football that not only brings the family together - but later creates the biggest rift. When Tony Barafato joins the Kansas Jayhawks football program and his younger brother Nickie joins the Missouri Tigers team, they learn how deep a football rivalry can go.

This story references a civil war rift between Kansas and Missouri and the violent conflict that forms between "slave states" and "free states."

Topics for Investigation

Kansas History

- History of the Kansas/Missouri conflict over Kansas becoming a state and its relationship to the Civil War
- History of the Kansas/Missouri football rivalry

Kansas Geography

- Map of Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri as it relates to the Barafato family

"The Rivalry" Study Topics

- How sports can be an opportunity and challenge when working through political, social and civil issues (history of rivalries, protests, etc)

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

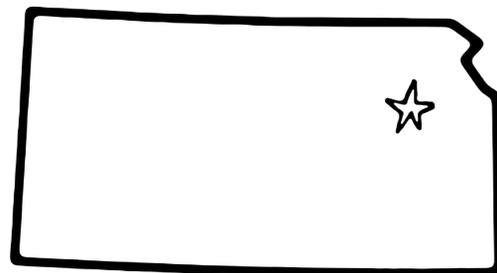
DISHSOAP!

Why dish soap?

Because it is an emulsion.

You need to use dish soap to break down the fats that make our dishes greasy. Oil and water are insoluble. That means that one of them cannot be dissolved into the other. In a way, it's like saying that they "don't have anything in common."

One substance is "water-loving" and the other substance is "water-not-loving", so they can not get along, and there is a rivalry.



There was also the rivalry between Tony and Nicky, and between the University of Kansas Jayhawks and the University of Missouri Tigers, and the discrepancies in the retelling of history, and Kansas and Missouri during the Civil War. They were all rivals. The ideas they represented could not co-exist. And there was a big discussion, maybe even what we could call a talk-fight, at the Berrafato Thanksgiving table...it was like oil and water. No one could really hear what the other was saying. There was a 'right' side and a 'wrong' side depending on what side you were on.

Until Stephanie helped everyone to see the other's perspective, to find a little bit of themselves in a collective experience, to bring compassion and understanding to a conflict. She helped everyone to break their stubborn and fixed ideas into smaller parts so that everyone could find what little parts they had in common. And there were many. But not until there was a listening of the parts instead of a stubborn rejection of the big idea!

She was the emulsion.

Emulsions, in essence, help two substances to unite. They break down the parts of the liquid into teenier tinier parts so they can blend and harmonize in ways that they can't when they are independent. Oil and water separate, but if you add an emulsion, they can find a common ground and come together. You can wash the grease off the plate because the water and the oil are together instead of remaining separated. Mayonnaise is an emulsion! Hand cream is an emulsion! Sometimes you can emulsify liquids mechanically, and you don't need chemicals. Churned butter is an example of an emulsion of fat droplets in water.

Either way, when you emulsify, you in a way, listen to each other, make room for each other, and you say, "We can be together side-by-side." The rivalry is softened and we come to mutuality.





West Virginia: “Follow Your Own Noon”

John Nash and his sister Martha were very different. Where Martha was sociable, funny, and engaging, John was solitary, curious, and awkward. The people of Bluefield, West Virginia wondered if there was something wrong with John, but his mother paid no attention. She knew that he actually had extraordinary gifts yet to be manifest — and she was right. All the awkward interactions John had experienced in his youth would translate one day into an elegant mathematical theory that would win him a Nobel Prize.

Topics for Investigation

West Virginia History

- History of Coal and Electric Power in the Appalachian part of the country Biography of John Forbes Nash

West Virginia Geography

- Map of West Virginia pinpointing the location of John Nash’s home town

“Follow Your Own Noon” Study Topics

- Overview of Game Theory.

Topics for Reflection

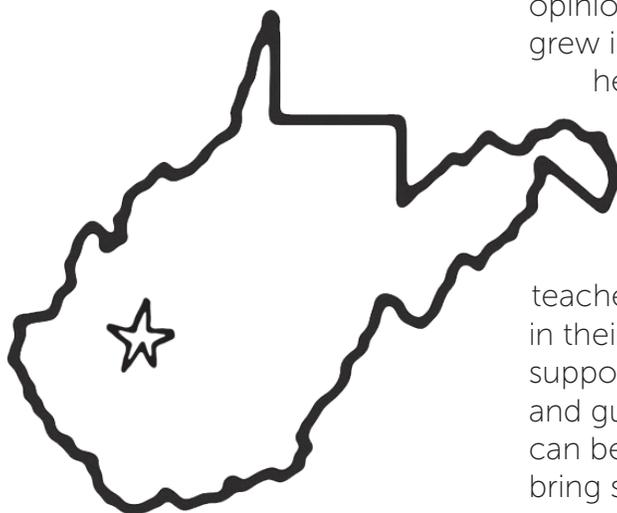
From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Being curious about differences has benefits. Looking at differences with a curiosity to learn more (rather than forming a fixed judgment that something is “wrong” with someone else) is a more open and compassionate way to approach another person. When Virginia Nash noticed the differences between her daughter Martha and her son Johnny, she did not jump to an immediate conclusion or even form an opinion. She just observed the difference and grew in her desire to understand more about her children.

Each adult brings their own special gift of love and support.

Parents, guardians, grandparents, aunts and uncles, family friends, and teachers — each adult offers the children in their lives part of the tapestry of love and support that we weave together to protect and guide them. Sometimes these adults can be very different, but they may each bring something that the child needs. Virginia



Nash was truly interested in children and how they developed whereas John Nash, Sr. encouraged his children by making sure that they had the resources they needed.

Sometimes all that we need when we feel alone and misunderstood is one person who sees the truth in us. When Johnny's community found him to be different and odd and struggled to accept him, his mother (and teacher) recognized that what made him different also made him remarkable. She saw his unique intelligence and understood that the challenge was not to change Johnny so that he fit in, but rather to change his schooling so that it was the right fit for him.

Children want to be good — and sometimes they need extra help from the adults in their lives. At certain times, children may look to adults to receive just what they need, even if they don't know what that is. Johnny behaved poorly in school because his learning needs were not being addressed and he wanted to be successful. He just wasn't being taught in a way that inspired him and helped him to be his best. He was lucky to have a teacher who knew that — and parents who listened.

Siblings can help each other to thrive. Siblings can be very different from one another. Sometimes these differences or challenges show up as what can be called "sibling rivalry," but sometimes those differences are the thing that helps each person to be his or her best. Johnny's sister tried to show him how to be more social.

She encouraged him to join her on outings with her friends. This was not always easy for Martha, and sometimes she was even embarrassed, but her love and devotion to Johnny remained true.

The journey toward valuing yourself is worthwhile. It is so important to have people in our lives who celebrate who we are, but perhaps even more important is that we celebrate who we are. Johnny knew he was unusual, and even though his mother was very accepting of him, he needed to come to his own understanding of his value. We give our children love and support by telling them how much faith we have in their abilities — and we should do so. In the end, however, true self esteem is won when we feel accomplished in ourselves. Sometimes that can mean having to go through hard times and building muscle to get to the other side of the challenges. There is a fine balance between needing support and needing to do things for ourselves.

To follow your own path takes strength, but it comes with great rewards. Once we find that sense of self-worth, once we recognize that it is the things that are different in us that make us truly unique and special, then we can add our highest contribution to the world. And this is exactly what happened for John Forbes Nash, Jr.





Nevada: "The Telegram"

James H. Guild has a unique challenge: his telegraph company has been asked by the Governor of Nevada Territory to send the longest telegram ever sent - over 250 pages of text! He agrees to the task, but knows that the only two operators that can handle that amount of work ... can't stand each other. One is a republican and the other is a democrat during one of the most contentious elections in American history: Lincoln vrs McClellan. And the fate of the union rests ... on them getting the job done.

Topics for Investigation

Nevada History

- History of Nevada Territory
- History of Morse Code and the Telegraph technology
- The Presidential race between Lincoln and McClellan

Nevada Geography

- Map of the United States distinguishing between those of the Union and those of the Confederacy.
- A Map of the Territory and the State of Nevada

"The Telegram" Study Topics

- A study of how the different communication systems: pony express, telegraph and telephone - changed national historical events.

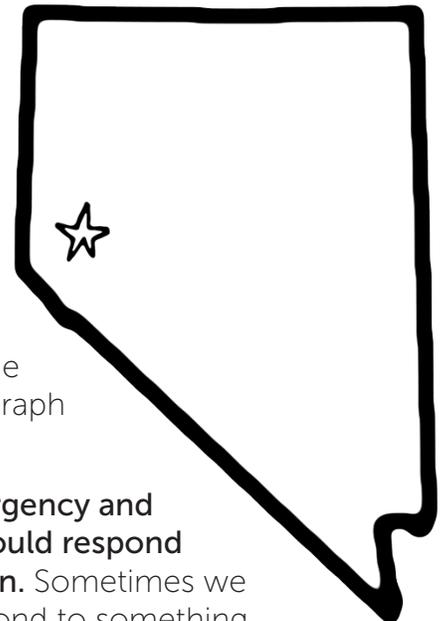
Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Sometimes we have to step outside what is comfortable for us and take risks when the needs of others are at stake. And sometimes you don't even ask why, you just do it! This is what James H. Guild had to do when it was made clear to him that the fate of the entire United States was resting on The Carson City Telegraph Company.

Where there is urgency and real need, we should respond without hesitation. Sometimes we are asked to respond to something even if it requires great effort or personal cost, and sometimes we have to trust that we will be rewarded sometime in the future, if at



all. W The Governor of Nevada had a request of the Carson City Telegraph Company, and he knew that the task was an arduous and costly one. All that the Governor could do was promise that he would be able to pay the fee later, and James had to trust him at his word.

In life and in our work there is a code of ethics that we abide by. That means that we make decisions that keep our actions good and pure for the benefit of others. Even in the telegraph industry, there was a code of ethics. You did not read the telegraph contents, you just sent it. We have to take a code of ethics very seriously, and only under the most extreme circumstances do we question our commitments to them.

Sometimes we use the word “hate” when what we really mean is “I don’t understand you”. We must be very careful when we use that word. It is so strong and leads to dire misunderstandings and even acts of aggression. Certainly in times of war, individuals may stand so squarely on the other side of an issue that their passions lead them to think that they truly hate. It is important that we look at that word when we use it and try to soften it and understand the perspective of the other.

When we are called to serve something great and good, there are instances where we must put our personal differences aside.

This actually helps us to remember that we share the same goals as people in wanting the best for all, even with our ideas about how to get there may differ. Hodge and

Ward stood on different sides of the issues which were involved in the Civil War. Their skills were required to do what was needed to get the telegraph written. Other than their opposite position in the war, they actually had a lot in common even beyond their skills at deciphering Morse Code. In looking past their differences and coming to work on something in collaboration, they could connect more with what binds them rather than emphasizing what separates them. Doing good work together can be like adding dish soap to oil and water when you wash the dishes-it can be the emulsifier that brings two opposites together, so that they can not only coexist , but also be useful.

Sometimes even if we can’t find common interest with an individual, we can be reminded that there are values that unite us as people.

Hodge and Ward were reminded that The President of the Union had asked them to do a job based on what was written in the Declaration of Independence, namely that we all deserve life liberty and the pursuit of happiness. All of us do, not just some. They had to put aside their small individual differences and their small individual opinions and do work for the “Union”. And in doing so, something great happened at their hand. Nevada territory became a 36th State in the “Union. **Because they could unify, so too could others.**





Nebraska: “Omaha Claim Club”

Gertrude Wiley was fed up with the Omaha Claim Club. She understood its benefits and origins, but in 1860 it looked more like a handful of greedy rich men who wanted to keep everything for themselves than an organization that cared for the community. She generally tolerated their oppressive ways — until her nephew became their target and Gertrude stepped forward and refused to be intimidated.

Topics for Investigation

Nebraska History

- History of Kansas/ Nebraska Territory through statehood
- Study of the Omaha Claim Club and its founders

Nebraska Geography

- Map of Kansas/Nebraska Territory in comparison with modern Nebraska
- Map of early Omaha and how it has changed.

“Omaha Claim Club” Study Topics

- Map of Kansas/Nebraska Territory in comparison with modern Nebraska
- Map of early Omaha and how it has changed.

Topics for Reflection

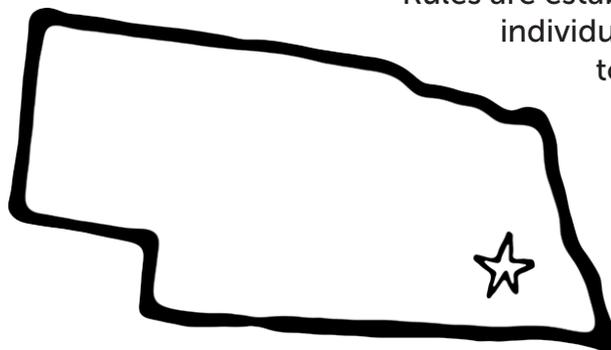
From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Thrift and grit are important skills to have to forge a successful life out of challenging circumstances. Thrift is being in the habit of saving and using your resources very carefully. Grit is courage and endurance. In our story, Gertrude models for us just how useful those personality traits can be!

While being independent can be equally as helpful as thrift and grit, we can forget that we live and work and grow best in community making each other stronger together. We all rely on others whether or not we know it! Gertrude also models for us how to be independent.

Rules are established to help individuals and communities to work more harmoniously together. Sometimes we need to follow rules, even if we don't always want to. Sometimes we create new



rules that we think will be better for all. The pioneers created new rules when they formed their own organization called the Claim Club. Sometimes even rules made to take care of the interests of others can do harm if they are misused by the wrong people. The rules of the Claim Club were originally set up to make sure that neighbors got along and that no one had an imbalanced advantage. But the rules were not followed properly, and the mission of the Claim Club needed to be challenged. And Gertrude while he saw to it that it would be!

Generosity leads to happiness. Generosity is the medicine needed for greed and selfishness. One might not think that giving things away whether it is possessions or our care would lead to our feeling richer, but that is often what happens. Being greedy and selfish leads to unhappiness. Those who took over the Claim Club were used to getting more than they needed and taking care of their own interests without regard for others. And this led to bullying and intimidation that made Gertrude so furious!

People who use greed and power against others can often intimidate us from

standing up for what we know is right. We can be afraid that we'll get in trouble if we complain. This is why we need each other. Doing something alone can be scary, and even unsafe, but if we stand arm in arm with our neighbors, then we are protected and unified. And together we can turn complaining into action and this is just what Gertrude and her neighbors did.

There are times when our cleverness and our wit is needed far more than our muscle when resolving our disputes. Gertrude used her intelligence to re-interpret the laws that were being abused by the members of the Claim Club. She proved to Cam the hypocrisy in the laws as they were written enforced, could equally so be used against those who made them. It was all a matter of interpretation. It was this combination of thrift, grit and neighbors banding together in solidarity with an added splash of intelligence that ultimately led to the Claim Club being disbanded and the values of life liberty and the pursuit of happiness being attained!





Colorado: “One Hundred and One Nights”

Lester and Allison Clark make a good team. Between his gift of storytelling and her follow-through, they make a plan to leave London and set up a tailoring business somewhere in the American Wild West. Everything goes to plan and ten years later the ambitious couple and their twin daughters begin their biggest adventure: traveling along the Sante Fe Trail. Little do they know what hardship awaits — but lucky for them, storytelling and fortitude eventually win the day.

Topics for Investigation

Colorado History

- History of the American West and Southwest as it shifts from Spanish to Mexican to American control
- The development of the Sante Fe Trail and other western trails
- Biography of William Bucknell and other adventurous traders and packers

Colorado Geography

- Map of the Santa Fe Trail with its “Mountain” and “Cimmaron” routes
- Map of the Great Sand Dunes of Colorado and study into how they came to be
- Track the Clarks from London to NYC to Saint Louis to Santa Fe

“One Hundred and One Nights” Study Topics

- How storytelling exists in every culture around the world and is almost a common language.

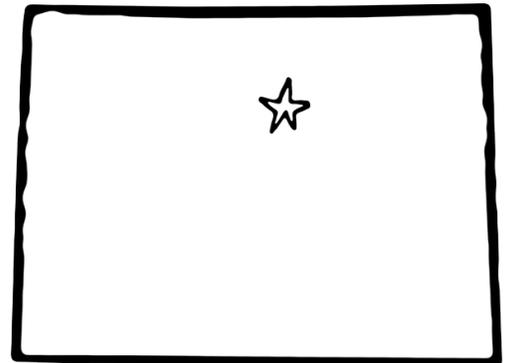
Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

It’s so fascinating that there are so many different personalities in the big fat world — let alone within one family — let alone between twins!

Although Ada and Lily are identical twins, there is so much that is unique about each of them.



In addition to celebrating the differences that create the beautiful tapestry of humanity, it is essential that we continually seek that which connects us. One of the ties that binds for Lily and Ada is their love of their father’s stories.

There is so much that is profoundly valuable about the bedtime story. We Sparklers know

how important a story is, and we know how important routine is, and we know how special rituals are, and we know how important bedtime is! Put all that together — and you have the bedtime story! It is no small wonder that Ada and Lily look forward to theirs every night. And to their father's credit, he chooses just the right adaptation of just the right story!

Hearing just the right story at just the right time can be a powerful guide in our lives.

If we pay attention and listen carefully, clues can await us within a story that can help us to answer questions about our lives that we may otherwise struggle to find our way through. Those clues may also give us inspiration! If we look for the "signs," they are there! Allison feels strongly that the tale of Al-Nadim is their family's message to travel West.

Listening to or reading stories can be a profound exploration into understanding the ways of life and beliefs among various cultures.

This is so important in our world today. When Lester and his family come to the head of the famous Santa Fe Trail, he learns about the world by telling and listening to stories from all corners of the globe — from the past and the present.

Whenever you travel or explore a new adventure, whether it requires packed bags for a long journey, or maybe even a backpack for your first day of school, it's important to put a few stories on your packing list.

Stories are essential for any adventure. Lester and Allison know that. They feel confident that with fortitude and a few good stories, they will be fine as they travel the Santa Fe Trail.

Once we set out to reach a new goal or arrive at some destination, we can find that the path ahead is more perilous and

challenging than we originally expected.

However, with determination and healthy distractions to take our minds away from the immediate discomfort, we are eventually supported to reach our goal. When Adam and Lily complain to their father that the trip is taking longer and is harder than they expected, Lester offers a healthy distraction, telling the girls that once the story of Al-Nadim is finished, they will be there. In this way, the magic of the story can distract us from our discomforts, especially when the story mirrors our own experiences.

Be receptive to magic happening as you listen to a story.

If a story calls to you in some way, chances are very good that it is telling you something about your life. This is absolutely the case with the Clark family and how many parallels they find between their adventure and the Al-Nadim's.

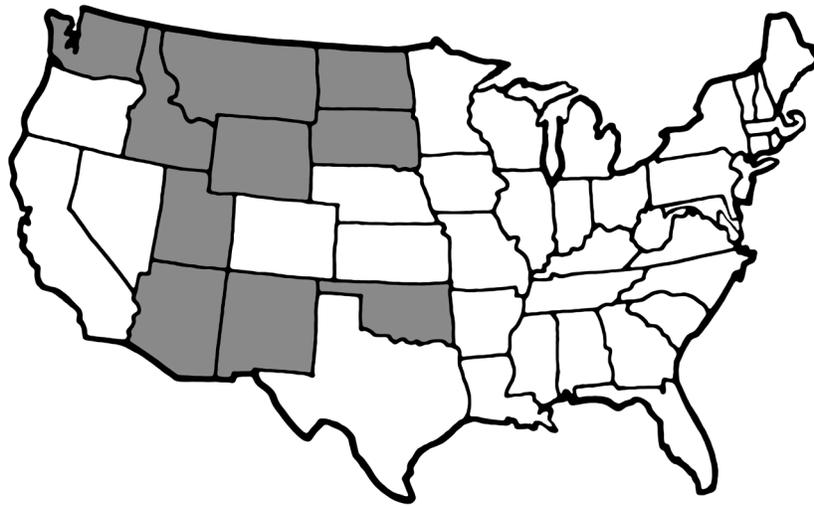
Dunyazad, the mother of the Al-Nadi family, says this: "Never forget the magic. In this world the most unexpected things can always happen." The Clark family experiences one magical moment after another on their adventure, but perhaps the most magical of all is how the story of the Al-Nadim family mirrors their own.

When you give up hope, find a story that restores it.

The story of The Arabian Nights gives the Clark Family just that!



FIFTY: The Stars, the States, and the Stories Study Pages — Collection Four



Each story in the FIFTY collection focuses on a remarkable American from a different state. Below are some recommended topics to inspire further investigation of the history and geography of the state, as well as themes that can support our children's growth and development.

Though this is historical fiction and the characters have been developed to accommodate a story, their attributes and development may be useful as reference points and inspirations.



North Dakota: “Snow Dancing”

Olav Nelson hates winter — at least compared to summer. As far as he is concerned, there is nothing to do in North Dakota in the winter other than sit in the sod house and wait for the thaw. But then Sondre Norheim, an old Norwegian from across the river, visits. He shows the Nelsons why he loves winter and looks forward to it all year long — because of a sport and form of travel that requires the cold and snow. And it’s called “skiing.”

Topics for Investigation

North Dakota History

- History of Immigration to North Dakota - in particular the Norwegian Community
- Biography of Sondre Norheim
- History of skiing

North Dakota Geography

- Map of North Dakota as it relates to the Dakota Territory
- World map connecting Norway and North Dakota

“Snow Dancing” Study Topics

- Climate and Topographical comparison of Norway and North Dakota and conversation about why that community decided to move there.

Topics for Reflection

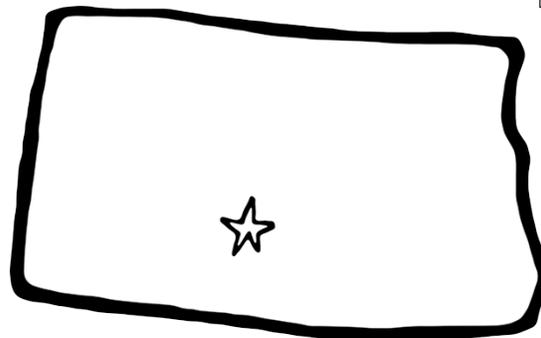
From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Real work is meaningful work. There is true purpose in the tasks that simply must be done no matter the season and no matter whether we like them or not. Resiliency is built when we do the work just because there is work to be done without imposing whether we like the work or not on the task. For Olav and his family, “There was work to be done every day—regardless if the snow and cold was inspiring or discouraging.”

It can be hard to practice gratitude even when we want to. But still, it’s important to practice! Sometimes we take for granted our good fortune, and sometimes life is hard enough that we just plain don’t feel grateful.

But somehow Gratitude always wins. It reminds us that in life very often it’s a matter of where we put our attention and not necessarily our circumstances that determine how thankful we can feel. For Olav, it was much easier to feel grateful in the summer than in the winter,



but his father reminded him repeatedly to practice Gratitude, anyway.

When we have closed minds and fixed attitudes, we can miss out on experiencing life to its fullest! Olav had decided that he was not interested in hearing how wonderful winter was in spite of how many of the Norheims had visited in the winter. And not being interested in hearing about their experience of winter, Olav missed hearing their stories, and a life without stories is a life without Sparkle!

As long as we are not hurting another with our insensitive tone or unkind words, being honest and open is the best way to communicate. Olav was preparing to be disingenuous about his opinion about winter, but then his sister Anna told the truth by saying, "He hates winter." There was silence because it was uncomfortable, but without the honesty, a genuine conversation with Sondre never would've happened. And Olav would never have discovered that he was not the only one who didn't like winter! Although Anna was only four, and couldn't do anything but be honest, her authenticity was refreshing.

Sometimes we are learning new skills, we will stumble and bumble and fall and even fail, but if we get up and try again we may eventually become quite skilled and have fun at the same. Sondre told Olav how many obstacles he had to overcome when skiing for the Queen, and then Wooosh! He won AND discovered ski-dancing, or slalom, all at once!

There was a magical transformation that took place when Sondre added skiing plus dancing to equal slalom. Like a chemical reaction! You can put flour and sugar and eggs into a pan, but until you add heat when you bake it, it's just flour sugar and eggs. The magical ingredient is heat, and like the caterpillar to the butterfly, the change takes place in the magical space.

Personal transformation is much the same, in that if we are closed and we don't make room for the magic space, we will not change and grow. When we allow ourselves to have new life experiences and we are open to change, there is magic and we transform. We learn new things, we become stronger and more resilient. The magic for Olav was his transformation from not liking winter to now being able to slalom, and in that "he has found a new love—skiing! And winter - in one moment - completely transformed. Hours ago he hated winter - and now he could feel ... that it was about to become his favorite season of all."





South Dakota: “Trying to Do Some Good”

“Trying to Do Some Good” is a story that takes place in the gold rush era of the Dakota Territory. Most people have heard of the rough-and-tumble Wild West character Calamity Jane and her gun toting, hard talking, men’s clothes wearing reputation. But like many of the larger-than-life heroes and villains of the American West, the truth is much more subtle and complicated. For when an outbreak of smallpox threatens the town of Deadwood, South Dakota, it is not the doctor or the marshall or even the caretaking women of the town that step forward to help, but Calamity Jane herself that sacrifices her own safety to be of service.

Topics for Investigation

South Dakota History

- Tracking the various “Gold Rush” episodes in American history
- Compelling biographies of Wild West characters like Wild Bill Hickok, George Custer and Calamity Jane
- History of Westward Expansion

South Dakota Geography

- Tracing Jane’s path from Missouri around the west and eventually to South Dakota
- Map of Dakota Territory
- Map of Black Hills and the gold rush towns

“Trying to Do Some Good” Study Topics

- The impact of epidemics in America – including smallpox
- The impact of westward expansion on the western Native American Tribes

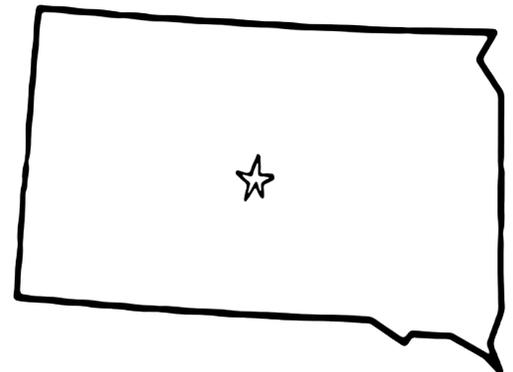
Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn about:

The importance of the dedication of service to others. Calamity Jane, expecting nothing in return other than the satisfaction of doing good in the world, dedicated her life in service in consideration of others. Children thrive knowing that there are people in the world committed to the well-being of others, and it is important to give them such a role models who have made a real and lasting positive change in the world.

The ability to see other people through kind and grateful eyes, even when they, themselves, don’t see themselves as such.



Burgess saw Calamity Jane's heart, not that she was "just a muleskinned vagrant."

The perseverance required to endure and overcome illness. When we endure and overcome illness, it can make us stronger, but also it might change us. Smallpox did leave its victims with scars from the pox, but it also left them immune to getting it again!

That sometimes real confidence is required to be who you truly are. Calamity Jane was a unique woman and person in her time. She had a strong identity, and confidently broke out of the mold of what was expected of women and even individuals at that time.

Sometimes our life tells us that we need to make different decisions than the ones we planned on originally. People come and go in our lives and if we change for the better, then our actions may follow suit. Burgess changed his life plan, once he met Calamity Jane!

Even if you can't help everybody, doing good makes a difference! In our story, Calamity Jane was a dedicated healer, even though some still died of smallpox.

Sometimes, to make lasting and positive change in the world, and to try to do some good, raising a calamity is what is needed, and not just obedient compliance! Calamity Jane sure raised a ruckus or two!





Montana: “The Marriage Bar”

Jenny Bell Maynard seemed to have created the perfect life. She was now living where she always wanted to live - her hometown in Horse Plains, Montana. She was doing what she always wanted to do - teaching elementary school in the one-room schoolhouse where she was once a student. And she had just met the love of her life and was engaged to be married. There was one thing, however, that could potentially unravel it all: the Montana Marriage Bar. This was an old rule that stated only single women could legally teach in the state, due to unfair reasoning that married women no longer need an income. Luckily she and her husband were able to create a plan that would allow them to marry while letting Jenny keep her job. But it came with consequences...

Topics for Investigation

Montana History

- History of Montana Territory and State
- History of women’s rights in the American West

Montana Geography

- Map of Montana and location of Horse Plains

“The Marriage Bar” Study Topics

- Discussion around both sides of the argument as it pertains to women’s rights and from a historical perspective

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Children benefit from both warmth and discipline. It is a very delicate balance to strike,

but one informs and supports

the other.

Jennie Bell

looked up

to her teacher,

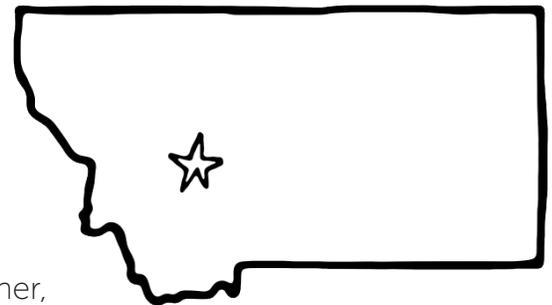
Miss Foley, who

provided the perfect balance of strict and

kind. She had high standards for her students,

but she was also very compassionate and

kind when things were difficult.



Teachers often help students through life’s challenges. Thank you to our teachers! We can all think back to a time when a teacher

helped us through a difficult period in our lives. Frequently, Jennie looked to her teacher, Miss Foley, during the harsh times growing up in Horse Plains, Montana.

Vocational calling can be clear to some even in childhood. Sometimes we know even when we are very, very young what we want to be and what work we want to do in the world when we grow up. Others have to search for a while. But for some, there is a strong calling — an intuition — and we know what we are meant to be, even at a young age. For Jennie, she knew that she wanted to be a teacher.

Teachers know that family is the most important thing to child. It is important to find teachers who educate the whole child: not just providing the academics, social education, the visual and practical arts, not even outdoor experiential education and community service. The whole child includes all that the child brings from home. Miss Foley knew that the hard part of being a teacher comes when personal matters from home enter the classroom.

We all need mentors in our lives. When we are young, we need people to look up to — people who set positive examples for us and to inspire us. But even when we are older we need role models to help us to strive to be a better person. We also often need help in our professional lives when we are just beginning to learn our trade. Jennie Bell was so fortunate that Miss Foley was that person for her. She needed her guidance in particular to address the complexities of being a young teacher, especially when children brought their families into the classroom. Jennie needed Miss Foley's wisdom to know how to best teach little Adelaide and to address the family woes that she brought to school.

A good teacher's commitment does not waiver. Because the business of growing up can be tricky indeed, it is so

important to know that we have adults upon whom we can count. For a child, teachers can be a main source of stability.

Anyone who guides us and helps us to be our best or to learn new things is a teacher. A teacher does not need to be someone who stands before us in the classroom. A teacher can be a coach or a music instructor, or even a neighbor or friend. For Jennie, her husband Bradley was not merely her husband, but also an important teacher.

Grown-ups sometimes have difficult moments in their jobs. Just as a child can have difficult times in school, so too can adults experience struggles in work life. Miss Jennie had to endure some challenges in her teaching as she was finding her way, but with love and commitment, she knew that eventually skill and ease would replace the confusion, frustration, worry, and upset. It just takes patience and trust with a lot of determination.

Life sometimes presents us with difficult decisions. Sometimes in life we want things that may not seem compatible and we are forced to make a tough choice. For Jennie, given the Marriage Bar in Montana, she was forced to choose between teaching and marrying the man whom she loved, Bradley Ernsberger.

Life sometimes presents us with tricky ethical problems. Sometimes, when forced to make difficult decisions, we are put in a challenging ethical position where we might decide to bend rules or to make compromises. For Jennie and Bradley, they got married in spite of the Marriage Bar, but they did not tell anyone that they had done so. This was the only way they thought they could reconcile their love for each other and Jennie's love of teaching.

Walking through difficult life decisions can prepare us to be leaders in our

communities. Sometimes, when forced to make decisions that seem impossible, we can be the vehicle for change. Jennie thought that the Montana Marriage Bar was unfair, so she and her husband, with the dedication of others, worked to get the law changed.

Change often happens slowly. Sometimes change takes time, and sometimes we don't even benefit from the things we fight to change. Jennie was a grandmother before

the Marriage Bar was dropped — forty years after she set out to change the law. But she planted the seed for change, and it would not have grown had she not done so!





Washington: "Follow the Sun"

Follow-The-Sun, a woman from the Spokane tribe of eastern Washington, overhears that the United States has declared war on the English - and that the English has dispatched several ships to overtake fur trading forts in the mouth of the Columbia River. This is concerning for many reasons - but she is most worried about her husband, a Canadian trader currently stationed at one of those forts. She then takes it upon herself to travel the hundreds of miles along the Columbia River to warn him - and along the way, sees some of most diverse and beautiful country in the world.

Topics for Investigation

Washington History

- History of the Columbia River Exploration
- History of the Fur Trade in America
- Account of War of 1812 from a west coast perspective

Washington Geography

- Comparison of eastern and western Washington
- Map of Columbia River
- Map of 1812 west coast campaign

"Follow the Sun" Study Topics

- Look at the behavior of English, American and Canadian trappers before, during and after the war of 1812
- Comparison of native american tribes along the Columbia River
- Wide variety of plants and animals in eastern, mountain and western regions of Washington

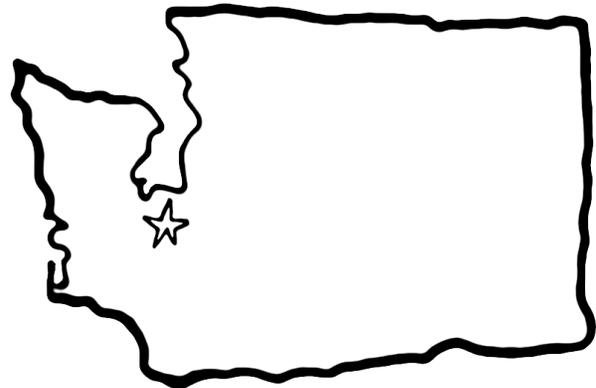
Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Setting our sights on pleasant thoughts can help us to endure times of discomfort.

Follow the Sun joyfully thought of the wedding as she did her work at tanning and



felt her loneliness after Jaco left to build another fort for the Pacific Fur company.

When we spend enough time in the natural world, we get to know it so well that it becomes like an old friend and a place to return to again and again for guidance and

comfort. When it was time for Follow the Sun to set out to find her husband and warn him of the British, she knew the Columbia River like a dear friend. It was central to her life and she could navigate its twists and turns, just like we sometimes must with family and friends.

When we set our sights to accomplish something, there are invisible forces that support us. Determination can translate into strength. When Follow the Sun announced that she would arrive at her destination in 10 days, traveling the perilous journey that others had not made in less than 20 days, she was confident that she could not only make it but that she would make it safely. She was empowered and protected by her intention and her strong commitment.

There are times when we have to listen to the voice that tells us what must be done, even if there are no guarantees or assurances of what will meet us at the other end of our path.

Follow the Sun Morning ... realized that yes - she did know what she was doing as far as the river was concerned - but no, she did not really know what she would do once she arrived. What if Jaco wasn't there? Would she try to tell the others anyway? Would they believe her?

The world is truly beautiful. There is so much stunning beauty to marvel at. Be sure to keep your eyes open to both the small and large miracles that our beautiful planet. Follow the Sun was both comforted and

inspired by the beauty of the Cascades, mountains that were so tall and elegant, and of the " bright blue water of the Big River cutting through the wide open range of orange grass, dusty green sage and cliffs of white rock."

Knowing that you are needed can also give you the strength to press on. Follow the Sun had to endure tremendous adversity as she traveled to her husband-to-be, but knowing that her efforts were required to warn him of the British plan to take the fort give her enduring strength.

Even competitors can become stronger when they work together. When the British and American fur trapping companies collaborated, they supported each other against the British army. Together we are stronger. Together we are safer.





Idaho: “A Brave Day Indeed”

“A Brave Day Indeed” is historical fiction about a railroad town called “Sandy Point” (later became Sandpoint) and a conversation between Wild Horse Tavern owner Delia Horton and future President of the United States Theodore Roosevelt. They share parts of their biography and the conversation then homes in on how to handle bullies when they stand in your way. The “Brave Day” that Theodore refers to is from his youth when he followed his father’s advice to “make himself” and face personal challenges that come to fore on his first day of summer camp.

Topics for Investigation

Idaho History

- History of the Railroads – in particular the Northern Pacific Line and all the “railroad towns” that were built.
- History of the Wild West: the hunting, trapping, mining and logging that brought pioneers to the northwest.
- History of Women’s Suffrage on a state level and then nationally
- The biography of Theodore Roosevelt – from his difficulties as a boy to his successes as a man.

Idaho Geography

- A map of the Northwest Territory and edges of each of the states that include important rivers.
- A map of the Northern Pacific Railroad that connected the midwest to the Puget Sound.
- A look at northern and southern Idaho and how the mountains and rivers played into the development.

“A Brave Day Indeed” Study Topics

- Political parties and the birth of the Progressive Party
- Biographies of people who overcame serious health issues in their youth
- Biographies of women in the suffrage movement



Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

Though this is historical fiction and the characters have been developed to accommodate a story, their attributes and development may be useful as reference points and inspirations.

In this story, your child might learn that:

Life circumstances can be hard, but still, we can take the example that Delia set to show that regardless of the obstacles we face, we can put measures in place to make a positive change.

Life works in wonderful and mysterious and serendipitous ways! We see one such example of this in the random encounter of (the fictitious) Theodore Roosevelt and Mrs. Scott Dunaway. There is an invisible thread that leads us to meet and connect with just the very people whom we need to!

The unity of small voices can band together to make big change!

When Delia and Theodore talk, they realize that they are not alone in their grief. There is great opportunity in sharing your story and reaching out to others who share the same one as you. This helps us to feel less alone and more connected.

One way to disempower the bully is not taking on the negativity that is sent toward you. Bullies are those who like to tease, and yet, they are remarkably easy to disarm. Another way to put this:

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

(This quote is most often credited to Eleanor Roosevelt, First Lady and wife of Franklin, not Theodore, Roosevelt.)

In facing challenges, there is a balance to be struck between accepting the circumstances, but also doing what you can to manage it. There is great power of transforming yourself with determination and commitment. We can accomplish great things when we set a goal and stick to it. Practice kindness and gentleness toward yourself, but do strive. In other words...

Make Yourself! The resiliency and strength of the human being is marvelous. There is a voice within in each of us telling us that against all odds, we can take it upon ourselves to do what needs to be done!





Wyoming: "The Golden Rule"

"The Golden Rule" is a story about the genesis of one of the most famous department stores in American history - and it all started in a small coal mining town in Wyoming. The "Golden Rule Stores" were developed and expanded by James Cash Penney and built on the idea that customer service was the most important part of business: that the staff must always treat people the way they want to be treated. And the idea worked!

Topics for Investigation

Wyoming History

- History of coal mining and railroad in Wyoming and the Rocky Mountains
- Biography of JC Penney (and Sam Walton - founder of Walmart who worked at JC Penney)
- History of department stores in the USA

Wyoming Geography

- Map of the spread of JC Penney Stores from Colorado to Wyoming, to Utah and then beyond
- Map of Rocky Mountains and coal mining country
- Map of Kemmerer downtown triangle

"The Golden Rule" Study Topics

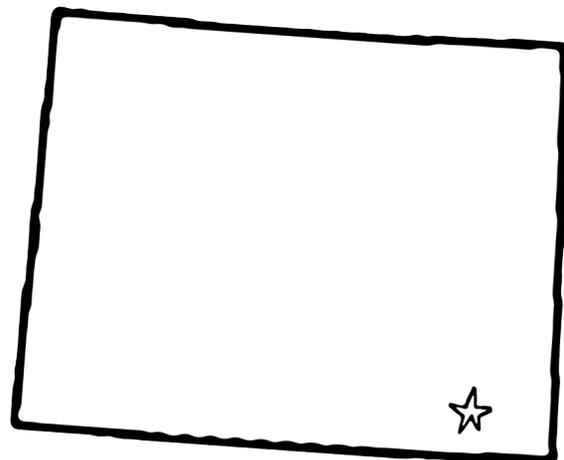
- The culture of historical coal mining towns and the many civil rights violations
- How capitalism and 'the golden rule' can be complicated.

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

The Golden Rule does not just mean being nice, it means that you treat others how you want to be treated because it's what's best for them, not necessarily because it's what's best for you. You will certainly benefit from



the exchange of kindness, but the Golden Rule's magic lies in considering the needs of your neighbor even before you consider yourself. Cal Reinhold said he would be kind

to the man who had ripped his coat, but still, he did not say he would offer him any gesture of generosity, and so he did not get the job for Mr. Penney.

It is important to remember that following the Golden Rule is not just about doing it when it's easy for us, but in following it in all of our affairs, even when it's challenging. It

can be very easy to be nice to people that we like, or to be generous with people by giving away things that we don't much care about, but it can be harder to extend a loving hand to someone of whom we are not terribly fond or to give away something that we actually treasure. James Penney wanted to help people to understand that the Golden Rule didn't just apply to people when they were in church, but in all aspects of their work and home life as well. "It must apply to everything."

When we are looking for friends (or when our children become adults and are looking for coworkers) it is important to find people who uphold similar moral values. These kind of workers that Mr. James Penney is looking for are ones who are kind and who treat others fairly. Finding such people proved to be far more difficult than he had planned, but he persevered! And the good thing he did, because that's when he met Evelyn Barnes.

"Now, the only thing he needed was a manager and the sales people. And this was no small thing. He believed that the people who ran the store and did the selling were the most important part of the equation. They were why the store was named after the Golden Rule - they needed to be men and women who deeply believed in the Golden Rule - who tried their hardest to be kind and treat people with respect."

"Following the golden rule according to Mr. James Penney may not at first seem like it's the most profitable way to run a business but in the long way he believes it's the only way to run a business. But treating people fairly and with kindness that is simply good business and again whether that is in your job or just in your life."

Be very careful when someone wants to share secrets. Sometimes people share secrets because "they are embarrassed for they have something to hide". It is fine to share personal information, but if you are told to keep a secret, just be careful about why. James considered this when Evelyn wanted to share something with him that she asked to be secret. But because she was giving him advice, he realized the conversation could safely be confidential. There was no harm in the secret she was sharing.

It may be hard for people to trust you if they are used to not trusting others, but if your actions remain consistent and honest, eventually people will see that you are trustworthy. Candidates for Mr. Penney's store were used to being taken advantage of, so it took them a while to trust the goodness from Mr. Penney's heart. And eventually the just right people came to work in Mr. Penney store, just as the just right people will come to be your friends in your life, too!





Utah: "Eyes of the Earth"

Chu Yun and Lu Yun arrived in San Francisco in 1868 with something of a plan: Chu would get a job as a geologist for the railroad and his daughter Lu - well, that was unclear. But when the railroad hiring office made it clear that Chu would only be hired as a laborer, Lu then knew exactly what she would do: pretend to be a man and join her father. They were then assigned to a very important section of the railroad in Promontory, Utah - the section where the Transcontinental Railroad would be completed.

Topics for Investigation

Utah History

- History of Transcontinental Railroad and how it changed Utah
- History of Chinese Immigration

Utah Geography

- Map of Transcontinental Railroad and point of union
- Geology of Utah

"Eyes of the Earth" Study Topics

- Plight of the Chinese in late 19th century
- Power and wealth disparity between the top and bottom of Railroad industry

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

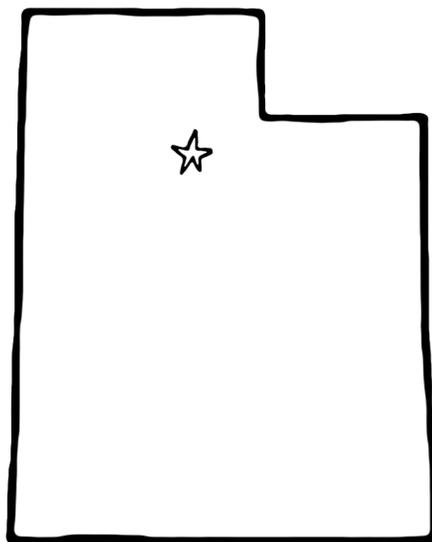
In this story, your child might learn that:

These words about Chu Yun teachings to his daughter, Lu, don't apply just to the earth, stone rocks in geology. Chu Yun's advice to pay attention and honor what is true, is a training in being alive with calm, serenity and fulfillment in our everyday experience.

"So he taught her what he was learning - how to pay attention.

How to study something for what it is rather than what we want it to be.

"The earth doesn't lie" he told her, "Rocks and stones are what they are and it is our



job to see them clearly. If you see and honor the earth it will see and honor you.”

We all need to find our place in life where we are valued and where we belong and where our gifts or seen.

Chu Yun was a scientist, not a labor!

When we look at our fellow friends, Lu Yun reminds us that we must look beneath what one sees on the outside to the ‘essence’ of who we are on the inside. “We’ve been here for a week father and I can see that the Americans barely look at us. All they see is Chinese-and don’t care about anything else...”, Lu Yun said to her father.

Because Chu Yun had taught Lu Yun how to pay attention, she was very awake and aware and could navigate life for more smoothly. This is what helped her to observe tactics in being a man that she needed in order to assist her father.

Sometimes the “destiny” that we plan for ourselves is not the one that is going to happen, so we must make the best of it.

Chu and Lu looked forward to their daily chat during a meal when it became clear that the plan that they had was a different one than what they were experiencing, and this is the first lesson in accepting ‘what is’ rather than wishing for what is not.

Although it may take some time, with trust and perseverance, the right people will want us for the gifts that we have to offer. Chu was patient and trusting, and in the end, he was valued for his expertise in geology and rocks, thereby becoming the lead engineer’s geological advisor.

Do the thing that is respectful to others and that also is respectful to yourself. Kimble quit on the spot when the people he had respected have been so disrespected.

Say ‘thank you’ to people for their hard work. While it is best to work for the sake of working hard and do what we do because it’s what’s right, it is also nice every now and again to have our work seen and acknowledged. This is what happened when Kimble’s crew was to be celebrated for being as efficient and as hard-working as they were.

At the same time, there are times when our work is not seen except by the rocks. And then, there is great value in saying nothing but knowing that the rocks know the truth.

“This rock has been here longer than anything - the trees, the animals, the people. This rock has seen everything. And it saw us. It watched us build this railroad and it knows the truth. The eyes of the earth have seen the truth - and they know what we did together.”





Oklahoma: “Migrant Mother”

The photograph that is most associated to the 1930’s dust bowl of Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas is the iconic “Migrant Mother” photographed by Dorothea Lange. The subject of the photograph is Florence Owens Thompson, mother of seven who was stranded at the time on her way to California. This story is based on her real life journey and what it meant to do whatever was needed to not only survive during a national crisis ... but to make the most of any situation.

Topics for Investigation

Oklahoma History

- History of the Dust Bowl and the reasons why it happened
- History of Oklahoma including the official “Indian Territory”
- The Migration West in the 1930s

Oklahoma Geography

- Changes in the Oklahoma map through time
- Map of the common route from Oklahoma to California

“Migrant Mother” Study Topics

- Botanical study of the natural grasses and how they can weather a drought - in comparison with growing wheat

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

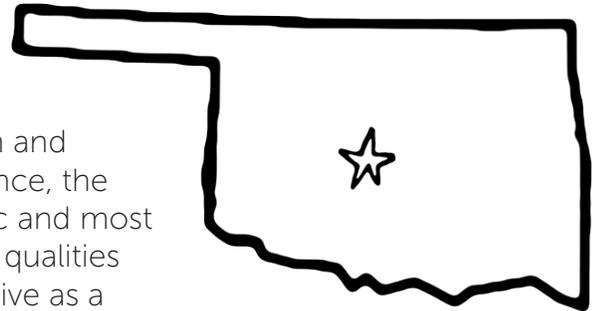
In this story, your child might learn about the far-reaching power of

sacrifice, dedication and perseverance, the most basic and most admirable qualities in being alive as a

human being. Florence Owens Thompson’s example shows us what it is to endure hardship without complaint or self-interest while caring for the well-being of others. Her legacy lives on in her children and in history.

Topics worthy of exploring with your children could be:

- Older members of your family and community hold a wealth of unexplored stories.
- Changes in environment can have a big impact on people.



- Difficult circumstances can lead to difficult choices.
- Difficult circumstances can also help to clarify the most important things in life.
- Even when there seems to be no way out of trouble, keep looking – the road will appear.
- Challenging events in our personal history shape our outlook on life.
- Happy stories are nice, but hard stories are good too.

Here is an interesting article¹ for older children about the “Migrant Mother” photograph by Dorothea Lange.



1 <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/stories/articles/2014/4/14/migrant-mother-dorothea-lange/>



New Mexico: “Running for the Rebellion”

“Running for the Rebellion” is a fictional account of the “Pueblo Revolt” that took place in New Mexico on August 9-11th, 1680. The revolt was against the colonists of Spain who came looking for gold and silver, but stayed for ranching and building Christian missions. The “Pueblo Revolt” is considered the most successful Native American rebellion against European colonists.

Topics for Investigation

New Mexico History

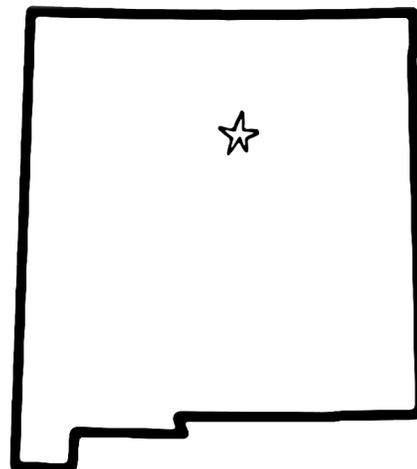
- “Running for the Rebellion” is a fictional account of the “Pueblo Revolt” that took place in New Mexico on August 9-11th, 1680. The revolt was against the colonists of Spain who came looking for gold and silver, but stayed for ranching and building Christian missions. The “Pueblo Revolt” is considered the most successful Native American rebellion against European colonists.¹
- A study of American history as New Mexico was a part of the Gadsen purchase from Spain. This can be a starting point to see which states were a part of which purchases.
- A study of the Pueblo people in particular and how the different pueblos were autonomous, having their own language and culture.

New Mexico Geography

- A study of the Rio Grande River and the Camino Real route that followed it
- A map of all the Pueblos and their various names
- A map of Native American people in the southwest
- Maps of New Spain as it spread further and further north from Mexico.

“Running for the Rebellion” Study Topics

- Biography of Pope and the Pueblo Revolt
- History and practice of the Kachinas through dance and the dolls
- Religious comparison between the Pueblos, other Native American religions and the Christianity of Spain



¹ You can use this youtube animation to appreciate the movement over 2000 years:
<https://youtu.be/yxiXlztptos>

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

Starting at birth, our children go through many different developmental milestones as they begin to separate from the adults in their lives. At 12-13 years old, they start to seek answers to the question: "Who am I?" This is just the beginning of the exciting and sometimes more tumultuous and confusing years ahead, years that Tago now certainly can relate to.

In this story, your child might learn that:

Tago is faced with a difficult choice, and the moral dilemma he faces is one that only he, alone, can resolve. Much as we can seek help from others, sometimes, we have to rely on our own wisdom to guide us.

Wrenching and confusing though it was, in coming to know what was right and true for him, Tago gained true self-assurance and confidence. This is the kind of self-esteem that comes from within. It is hard-won and yet, it is lasting, and no one else can give it to us.

Resolution to conflict is not always "black and white." Sometimes the answer is found in the shades of grey. While it can be hard to discern what is "right" from the "wrong," we often know in our hearts, in our gut, what to do. Trust that.

(And a little tid-bit for us grown-ups.)

Hard as it might be to endure our own losses as our children grow, and as difficult it may be for our children at certain points of transition, it is also important to remember that when we allow our children to go through these developmental milestones, they come out on the other side more confident, more independent, and more autonomous.

This can help our children to access their inner strength and wisdom as they navigate challenges in their lives.





Arizona: "Finding Planet X"

Wealthy businessman, mathematician, and author Percival Lowell dedicated the last years of his life and most of his personal riches on one mission: to find the mysterious "Planet X" – the supposed ninth planet in the solar system. His singular focus created the facility and calculations that would accomplish this goal, but it was the diligence and can-do practicality of a Kansas farm boy who would actually make Lowell's dream come true.

Topics for Investigation

Arizona History

- Biographies of Percival Lowell and Clyde Tombaugh
- History of Astronomy and the Lowell Observatory

Arizona Geography

- Exploration of Flagstaff, Arizona and why it was chosen for the Observatory
- Map of Tombaugh's route from Kansas to Arizona

"Finding Planet X" Study Topics

- Study of the Planets: shape, size, qualities, and when "discovered" by people. Compare these qualities with the Roman Gods after which they were named.
- More in depth study of Pluto: how it was named and why it was de-classified to a "dwarf planet."

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

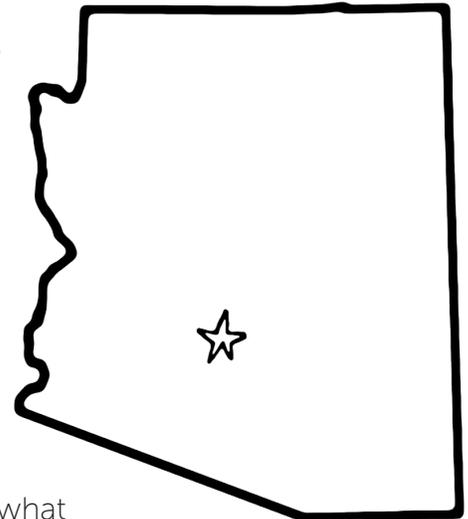
Sometimes we do not immediately reap the benefits or even see the results of our hard work, but this

does not mean that it has gone unrecognized or is for naught. If

we believe in ourselves, and if we believe in a cause, then we have no choice but to carry-on and do what is

needed! This is what Percival Lowell did when he searched for Planet X even though it was not found in his lifetime. This is a story of perseverance.

Determination is what leads to success, not fame or wealth, or even necessarily



formal schooling. Clyde Tombaugh had none of those, only the passion and the drive to become an astronomer and to 'reach for the stars'. In the end it was this passion and determination that led him to do what even Lowell Percival did not achieve in his lifetime, even with his natural advantage. All Clyde needed was to follow his dreams and study the stars was a telescope, which he purchased by doing our jobs and using some of savings he had from his parents. He didn't even have the education that college could give him. He educated himself.

Even when we are given opportunity, it does not mean that the hard work is over. A door may open for us, but we are the ones to enter it.

...neither Clyde nor the telescope disappointed. Just as he proved himself to be when studying astronomy textbooks and teaching himself optics and grinding lenses and digging a very deep hole, Clyde was tireless. The young man worked as many hours as he physically could figuring out and then employing the new 33 centimeter refracting telescope...

Even with all of our determination and careful planning, there is a dash of magic that one cannot deny when things work out almost without explanation. We absolutely

can and should work hard and plan and try to make change--all of this is necessary and noteworthy. And still we need to leave room for the magic. Clyde sent his drawings to the Lowell Observatory asking for some advice, and yet he had no expectation that as a result, Roger Putnam would see such value in them and offer him a job!

Even children can make a difference in a world of grown-ups! There was a dash of magic as well in finding name of Planet X. The name, Pluto, honors not only the Roman God of the underworld, thereby referencing the distant, mysterious planet, but also it honors the man originally responsible for searching for planet X in the first place. And it was suggested by an 11-year-old, the age of a Sparkle child!





Alaska: “A Mountain to Conquer”

“A Mountain to Conquer” is about 14-year-old Ephem Kalmakoff and his unlikely victory in a popular Seward Alaska event. When he reaches the top of Marathon Mountain and peers out over the thick Alaska fog, he is suddenly reminded of three stories he heard when he was five years old: one from his Aleut grandmother, one from the Russian Orthodox priest of Analaska Island, and one from the teacher in the Methodist home for orphaned boys. These three stories fill him with a sense of history, identity, and then mission – the mission to win the race.

Topics for Investigation

Alaska History

- Alaska’s history from the Aleut, Spanish, Russian, and then American point of view
- History of Catholic, Russian Orthodox, and Protestant evangelism in Alaska
- Biography of Benny Benson and Ephem Kalmakoff
- Unique history of Alaska becoming a state

Alaska Geography

- The Geography of “New Spain” in the 16th and 17th centuries
- Map of the Aleutian Islands
- The proximity of Alaska, Canada, and Russia

“A Mountain to Conquer” Study Topics

- The impact of the Spanish Flu on native populations
- Various amazing and unique competitions that take place in Alaska

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

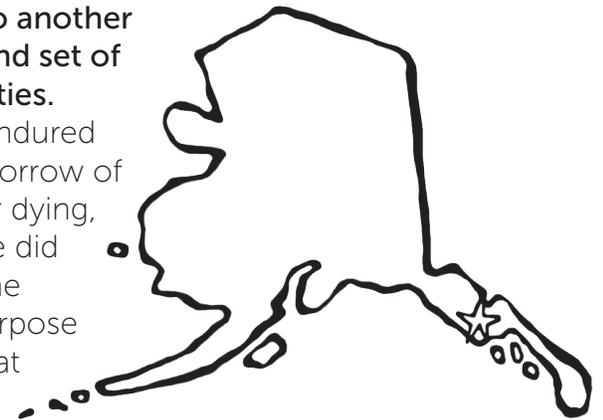
Loss, even great loss, will lead to another life path and set of opportunities.

Ephem endured the great sorrow of his mother dying, and yet, he did find a home and life purpose beyond that grief. It takes

time, and it takes a lot of support, but we can find our way in spite of such sadnesses.

Holding fast to what you believe is true takes courage and strength.

Ephem refused to race on the day of the Sabbath, no matter how their dreams of winning the race were dashed. He also was determined to wear the



racing outfit of a uniformed Boy Scout. He knew what they needed to do for their own integrity, and he stood by it.

Set goals and stick to them, even against the odds. No one would have favored Ephreem to beat the Marathon record, but no one had his determination, either.

Stories Guide Us! The stories that we love most are often the stories that guide and teach us. It was the three-stories-in-one that helped Ephreem cross the finish line! Listen to them! They speak.





Hawaii: “Queens”

When Prince Iolani learned that his father, the great King Kamehameha had died, he wanted to sail away from his responsibilities. He did not want to be King. He did not want to think about war and law and strategy and trade. He just wanted to go sailing and enjoy his life, like he had been doing for the past 22 years. Lucky for him, two of his father’s queens, his mother and his teacher, offer to help him lead the newly formed Kingdom of Hawaii. However, they need him to do something first: destroy the Kapu — the age-old code of behavior that severely restricted the rights of women. Iolani does not know what to do, so he goes sailing to help him make a decision that would change the Kingdom forever.

Topics for Investigation

Hawaii History

- Biography of King Kamehameha the First and Queen Ka’ahumanu
- How the Kingdom of Hawaii was formed
- History of how the Kingdom became a Republic and then a state

Hawaii Geography

- Map of the Hawaiian Islands
- Map of Islands as they relate to USA and Asia

“Queens” Study Topics

- Examination of the Kapu rules of ancient Hawaiian society compared with history of women’s rights in America

Topics for Reflection

From a Child Development Perspective:

In this story, your child might learn that:

We can make the same kind of impact on the world as our parents, even if we are different from them. Iolani, who “loved to sail and dance and have fun” was not like his father, a natural and powerful king and



leader. But just because Iolani was not like his father, he did find his own authentic way to lead. And at the end of our story, we see that although Iolani’s power came in a gentler

form than Kamehameha's, he still effected profound change.

There are times in life when things are expected of us that we do not feel prepared for. Iolani, from one day to the next went from being a young man with little responsibility to suddenly becoming king of the Hawaiian Islands when his father, the King, died. It was not what he wanted, and he had no choice, but he rose to the challenge.

We are not alone. We must remember, even when a test feels daunting and we feel very alone, that we are surrounded by support. It may not be obvious, but it is there. John Baptiste reminded Iolani that "no one rules alone — you will have plenty of help." This help came in an unexpected source from two most respected and revered women, the Queens — his own mother and the favorite wife of his father.

We are connected in more ways than you think. It might even be during the times when we feel most alone that it is most important to remind ourselves that we are united with others in more ways than we might know.

"Before you finish eating breakfast, you're depending on more than half the world." — Martin Luther King, Jr.

None of us are ever alone in accomplishing anything. The same is true when we feel lonely and isolated. If you remember how many people we rely on and how many resources we have for help, this can be a great comfort. This is what Iolani reminded himself of when he was left to answer very weighty questions. He remembered the people dutifully waiting for him on the shore, the Queens who raised him. They were dependable and consistent and enduring, just like the sea.

Some people are brought to us at pivotal times in our lives to help and assist, as

well as to be our role models. The Queen Ka'ahumanu was always the one who had told Iolani what he needed to do and now again she was going to play a pivotal role in a time in his life that would change him forever — the day that he destroyed the Kapu.

It can be unsettling, and even a bit scary, to break from tradition. Even if our traditions once made sense, sometimes reform is called for. If Iolani dissolves the rules of the Kapu, it means that he might not live the life of luxury that he felt he deserved, even if he would still lead a life above all others.

It takes courage to abide by what you know is right. Iolani would have to make the changes in the Kapu out in the open for all to see. His value judgments are exposed and he will need to live with the ramifications of his actions. But through his process of going to the sea and connecting with the best wisdom he had, he was able to make a choice that was consistent with his deepest, truest values.

It's important to have a "peace-stead" or safe place where we can go to gather our thoughts. For Iolani, when he was faced with the question of how to continue ruling the Hawaiian Islands, he had to go to the place where he felt most comfortable — out at sea. For him, the sea was dependable, consistent in its challenges.

Watch for moments in which you might be compelled to honor others. When we are truly grateful for others, or when their example has guided us well in our lives, there are times when we feel the impulse to stand up on their behalf or defend them. This is what Iolani did for the Queens to whom he owed so much.

