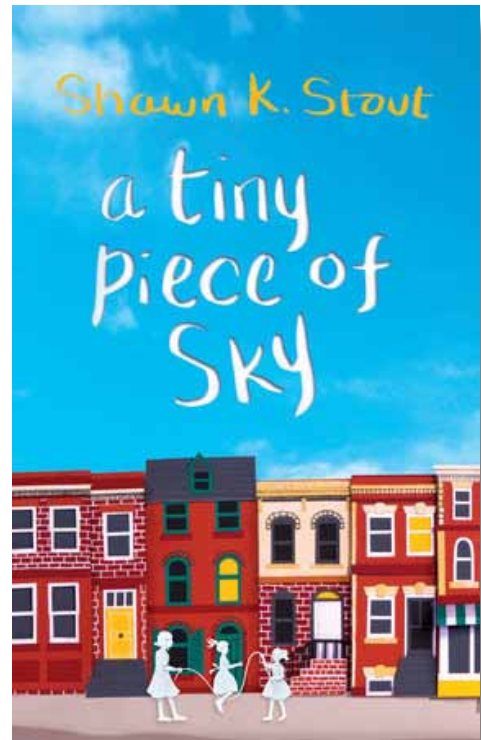


A Common Core
State Standards-Aligned
Educator's Guide
for
*A Tiny Piece
of Sky*



Grades 4 to 7 ISBN: 978-0-399-17343-1

Written by Shawn K. Stout

Published by Philomel Books
(an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC)

Synopsis: *World War II is coming in Europe. At least that's what Frankie Baum heard on the radio. But from her small town in Maryland, in the wilting summer heat of 1939, the war is a world away.*

But when some people in town start accusing her father of being a German spy, all of a sudden the war arrives at Frankie's feet and she can think of nothing else.

In a heartfelt, charming, and insightful novel that is based on true events, Shawn K. Stout weaves a story about family secrets, intolerance, and coming of age that will keep readers guessing until the end.

Guide created by Debbie Gonzales



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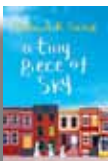
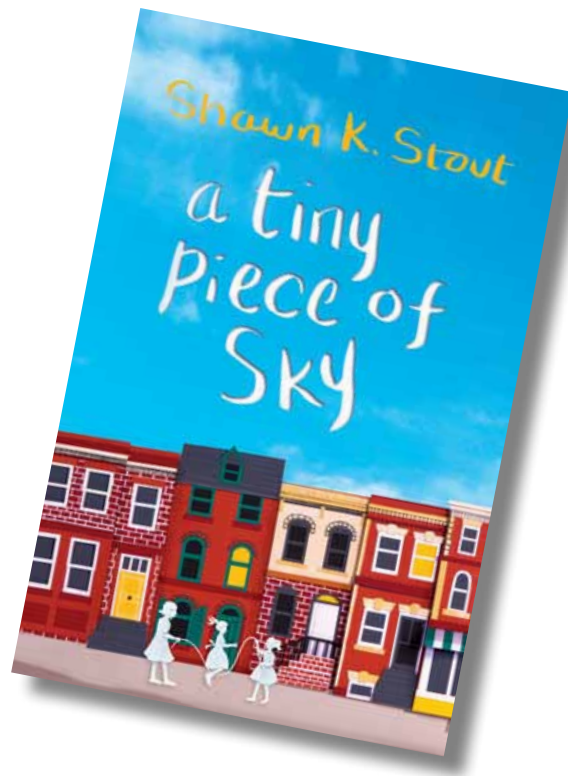
The Educator Guide Format and Personal Bookmarks Procedures

To allow for a deep study of *A Tiny Piece of Sky*, the book has been divided into four sections. Each section consists of discussion questions followed by projects and activities.

Personal bookmarks are printed on the following page. Listed on these bookmarks are the four designated chapter groupings and a space allotted for Target Completion Dates. A suggested format for a group or individual novel study is to assign weekly Target Completion Dates for students to finish reading prior to the weekly book discussion session.

Procedure:

- Print bookmarks on cardstock—one per student in novel study group.
- Trim the edges of bookmark.
- Give to student with these directions:
 - ~ Write their name on it.
 - ~ Copy Target Completion Dates in designated space below assigned chapters to be read.
 - ~ Keep the bookmark in the book for reference through the course of the novel study.

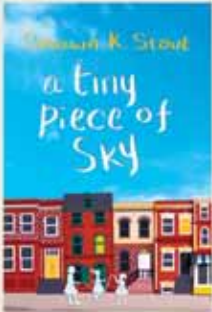


Stout, Shawn K. *A Tiny Piece of Sky*. New York: Philomel, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-399-17343-1
www.shawnkstout.com www.debbiegonzales.com



Personal Bookmarks

This bookmark belongs to _____



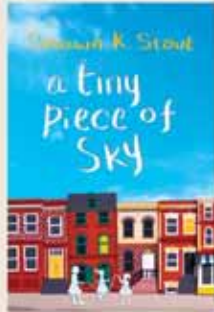
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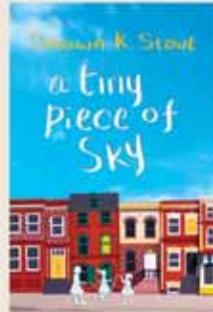
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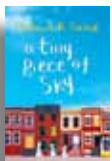


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to be read by _____

Chapters 48 to Author's Note
to be read by _____



Discussion Questions - Page 1 to Chapter 12

And, honestly, what good was collecting scabs if you didn't have anyone around to admire them (p. 1)?

- Discuss your initial impression of Frankie Baum. Determine what pridefully owning and maintaining a collection of scabs reveals about her character.
- Explain what Joan's ability to "...call up a fresh batch of tears" reveals about her character.
- Describe Frankie and Joan's relationship. After reading only one page of the book, tell all you know about the girls.
- Note that, on page 2, the narrator asks the reader, "Are you frightened?" Consider the narrator's voice in the story. Observe how this conversational tone serves the story.



Photo Credit: www.conceptcarz.com

"Probably costs a pretty penny, too," said Leroy. "A Studebaker Dictator. My father says he would never buy a Studebaker Dictator, not unless he was a supporter of Hitler" (p. 15).

- Consider how the statement above illustrates levels of conflict – that between Leroy and Frankie, Mr. Price and Mr. Baum, and the question of dictatorship and national loyalty.
- Notice the staging on page 16, in which a campaign banner is "...hanging in Fritz's spirit shop window, just above Daddy's shoulder." Discuss what this image suggests about the balance of power in Hagerstown.

There was something about Hermann's confidence, in everything that he did and dreamed of doing, that made others believe in him, no matter how strange his ideas (p. 38).

- Describe your impression of Hermann Baum's character.
- Recall when he was younger and the way in which he lost his eye. Explore the consequences for the risk he took back then. Is opening a restaurant considered to be a risk? How so?
- The word *dream* can be defined in two distinctly different ways. A dream can be a vision, an illusion, an expression of imagination. Or, more concretely, a dream can be more like a goal, something solid to achieve. Identify which definition best suits Hermann's dreams in this situation. Explain your answer.

She glanced over at Mother, ever so innocently, and to Frankie's surprise, Mother was looking right at her with half of her mouth turned up in a smile. Then, Mother gave the tiniest of nods (p. 49).

- Discuss the irony of Mother's actions in this scene. Explain why a woman who constantly insists that her children behave in socially acceptable ways would allow Frankie to turn up the radio while a guest was present in their home.
- Explain why Hermann avoided Mr. Price's questioning about his birthplace. Tell why the Chamber of Commerce would be interested in this information.
- Identify what Mr. Price's repetitive cigar puffing suggests about his character.
- Describe how the lines of dialogue blasting from the radio mirrors the conflict between Mr. Price and Frankie's father.



“Close one,” said Frankie. “Now hold on and don’t let go” (p. 65).

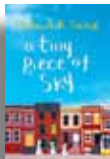
- Consider this scene in which Frankie “grabs for the reins” when Dixie uncontrollably ran through town. Notice that the youngest sister acts more decisively than her older sibling in the situation. Discuss what Frankie’s action reveals about her character.
- Explain what Joan’s willingness to allow Frankie to take the lead says about her nature.
- Explore the symbolism of the scab being shaped like a Hercules beetle.

“He ain’t upset,” whispered Amy. “He just ain’t got no heart” (p. 80).

- Explore Amy’s comment about Mr. Stannum. Explain what she meant by stating the Mr. Stannum had no “heart.”
- Describe what “having a heart” means.
- Frankie noticed that Leon Washington, the line cook, kept his head lowered when he spoke “...like he was afraid of what he might see in others, or what others might see in him” (p. 76). Discuss what this action reveals about Leon’s character.
- When Frankie first met Seaweed Turner he was repeatedly tossing a washcloth about the kitchen (p. 76). Tell what this action suggests about Seaweed’s commitment to his job.
- Examine the source of Mr. Stannum’s irritation. Identify what he meant by stating that he had “*this*” to work with. Is he more frustrated with the facility or the personnel? Explain your answer.



Photo Credit: Smithsonian National Museum of American History - Dorothy's Ruby Slippers



Who Am I? - Character Analysis

Objective: To craft narratives, based on in-depth character analysis, using the first-person point of view perspective.

Materials:

- *A Tiny Piece of Sky* - Page 1 to Chapter 12
- Who Am I? - Character Analysis Graphic Organizer (Guide, p. 8)
- Pencil
- Paper

Procedure:

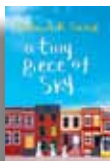
- Using the **Who Am I? - Character Analysis Graphic Organizer** as a guide, instruct students to consider the following aspects of character:
 - ~ Identify the character's unique traits. Note aspects of their behavior that serve to reveal their inner nature. List actions that show who the character is.
 - ~ Examine the character's traits to discover what they want. Discover their motivation. Describe the desires that make them tick.
 - ~ Search through the text to discover lines of narrative or dialogue that support claims about each character.
- In three or four sentences, write an introduction of each character from the character's point of view. Use the information gathered in the **Who Am I? - Character Analysis Graphic Organizer** develop voice and intent. Instruct students to use a narrative voice in the paragraphs, one that represents the character's perspective.
- Discuss character analysis summaries with class.

CHARACTER	CHARACTER TRAITS	CHARACTER WANTS	CITE EVIDENCE
FRANKIE BAUM			
HERMANN BAUM			
SEAWEED TURNER			
MR. STANNUM			
SULLEN WATERFORD PRICE			

Describe the character's traits. Tell what they are like as a person.

Define what the character wants. Describe the action that supports your claim.

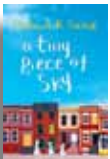
Discover and cite lines of narrative or dialogue found in the specific section of the text supporting your claims.



Who Am I? - Character Analysis (Page 1 to Chap. 12)

Record your impressions of the following characters. Briefly describe their character traits, identify their desires, and cite evidence supporting your claims. In three of four sentences, write a introduction of each character from their point of view. Use voice and tone that would best depict the character's nature.

CHARACTER	CHARACTER TRAITS	CHARACTER WANTS	CITE EVIDENCE
FRANKIE BAUM			
HERMANN BAUM			
SEAWEED TURNER			
MR. STANNUM			
LEROY PRICE			



Discussion Questions - Chapters 13 to 27

Once outside, even as she was so confined, she found that she could breathe. She looked up at the narrow strip of sky that lit the small space around her, and with stiff soldier arms followed the alley all the way to the street (p. 83).

- Consider the symbolism presented in this short phrase.
 - ~ Examine the way Frankie held her arms while moving through the confined space. Explain how the description serves the plot.
 - ~ Note the timing of the soldier arm description, just before Leroy sniffed Frankie's hair. Determine the connection between Frankie's military-like posture and Leroy's comment. Identify how the two lines establish tension between the characters.
 - ~ Discuss the visual image of the "narrow strip of sky" above her. Tell how this description connects with the theme of the story.
- On page 84, while moving back down the narrow alley way, Frankie discovers a painted sign reading "COLORED ENTRANCE" on the kitchen door. Explain the reasons why the entryway to the restaurant is designated in this way.

"Now, I'm not saying he's done anything wrong," continued Mr. Price, "but I guess I'm not saying he hasn't either. There are a few others in town of German ancestry, of course, but they've all been very cooperative and forthcoming, unlike Mr. Baum. Tell me, Mr. Stannum, have you by chance seen anything unusual around here" (p. 106)?

- Discuss Mr. Price's motivation in discussing Hermann Baum's ancestry with Mr. Stannum. Define what he wants.
- Observe Mr. Stannum's response to Mr. Price's inquiry. Explain why he is hesitant to support Hermann Baum's American patriotism.
- Consider how Mr. Price's insinuations breed a sense of deception and discontent within Mr. Stannum and Frankie.
- The word *prejudice* means influencing another's beliefs without basis. Identify how Mr. Price's comments were a form of prejudice. Determine other situations and events within the story in which prejudice information breeds discontent.

"I don't mean one of those Germans, not those Nazi Germans, the ones making trouble and war. But I mean being from Germany, or having family there. Does anyone say anything to you about that" (p. 127)?

- Explain how it could be that Elizabeth was unaware of the suspicion of her father's ancestry while Frankie was tormented by the possibility.
- Examine Elizabeth's denial that her father had done or was doing anything wrong. Tell why Elizabeth resists jumping to conclusions in the matter of clarifying Hermann Baum's ancestry.
- Determine ways that Elizabeth and Frankie share similarities and differences. Explain why they are not particularly close as sisters.



Daddy smiled, but he couldn't see her, not really. It wasn't entirely his fault, Frankie knew. How could he see her for who she was with only one good eye (p. 143)?

- Tell what is meant by the phrase "...see her for who she was." Identify what Frankie hopes her father will see in her.
- Frankie tells her father that she is capable of doing any restaurant task needed. Daddy assures her that he is aware of her versatility based on the fact that she is a Baum, a respected member of their family. Explain why Frankie does not share this same acceptance regarding her father's heritage.
- Examine the manner in which Mr. Baum observed himself in the mirror. Tell why he stared at his reflection with hands dropped to his side and mouth dipping low. Interpret his behavior. What's happening to him in this scene? Is Frankie having the opportunity to see her father for who he was? Explain your answer.

"Well," said Mr. Hoffman, "We seem to have a difference of opinion." He adjusted his rolled up shirtsleeves, exposing his thick forearms. He spoke directly to Frankie. "Look here, you want a dozen chickens, here they are. But, if you want them cleaned, we can do that for you, for an additional cost. But its going to take another day" (p. 154).

- Interpret the action in this scene.
 - ~ Discuss why Frankie is invited to wait inside the butcher shop while Amy is directed to remain outdoors.
 - ~ Tell why Frankie decided to wait in the back of the shop with Amy rather than in the coolness of the shop.
 - ~ Explain why Mr. Hoffman directed his comments in the quote above to Frankie. Identify what the action of rolling up his shirtsleeves symbolizes.
- Instead of stating that there may have been a miscommunication about the order, Mr. Hoffman says that they seem to have a "difference of opinion." The word *opinion* is defined as a belief, an assumption, or a suspicion. Determine and discuss Mr. Hoffman's source of suspicion.



Photo Credit: www.movieposters.com



Baum's Restaurant and Menu - A Historical Perspective



AN EATING PLACE OF THE WIDE RENOWN

Fruits and Juices:

- 10¢ - Chilled Tomato Juice
- 15¢ - Pure Orange Juice
- 10¢ - One-half, carefully cut Grapefruit
- 10¢ - Prunes in heavy, home-cooked syrup
- 10¢ - Large Italian Purple Plums
- 10¢ - Sliced Bananas in Milk
- 15¢ - Sliced Bananas in Cream
- 10¢ - Fancy Spiced Crabapples

Eggs and Omelettes:

- 20¢ - Two Eggs Cooked to Order
- 40¢ - Bacon & Two Eggs
- 65¢ - Country-cured Ham & Eggs
- 5¢ - Bread & Butter
- 35¢ - Omelettes Made to Order
- 25¢ - Plain Omelette

Tavern Specials:

- 25¢ - Hot Blue Plates
- 25¢ - Cold Platter Combinations
- 25¢ - One dozen fresh Shrimp
- 65¢ - Genuine Calf's Liver, Potatoes, & Cabbage Slaw

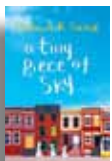
(A Tiny Piece of Sky, p. 87-88)

Photo Credit: www.etsy.com

(NOTE: The menu items and price listings presented in A Tiny Piece of Sky are taken directly from the author's grandparents' restaurant menu, Beck's Tavern and Restaurant, which opened in 1920.)

Consider the menu sample to the left when discussing the following statements:

- Examine the prices per item. Tell how these prices compare to the prices of modern day restaurant options.
- Discuss the differences and similarities of the Baum Restaurant menu and that of a modern day eating establishment. List the food options that might be found on a modern day menu and those that would not. Explain why some items would be left off of a contemporary menu.
- Identify modern day major chain restaurants that might offer similar food items.
- Research the term *Hot Blue Plates*.
- Mr. and Mrs. Baum state that the food they are offering is "American Food." Explain how these options meet the American food classification.
- Describe examples of modern day American food. Examine the differences and similarities in food quality and preparation.
- Research German food. Recreate a menu listing German breakfast, lunch, and dinner options. Consider the differences and similarities between the American and German cultures with regards to their food choices.
- Create a menu with similar offerings as the Baum Restaurant's that reflects modern day prices per item.
- The word *renown* is defined as famed, distinctive, and highly acclaimed. Consider how choosing the word "renown" reflected Mr. Baums' (and the author's grandparents') vision for the restaurant.



Discussion Questions - Chapters 28 to 47

“Do you know what it means?” asked Mr. Stannum, looking worried.

Mr. Price held up the paper and gave it a little wave. “Yes, Mr. Stannum, I do know what this means” (p. 172).

- Determine what Mr. Price was referring to when he said he knew what the flyer meant. Was his understanding of the flyer a literal one, in that he could read the German words printed on the page, or figurative one in which the flyer might serve as a symbol for something? Explain your answer.
- Explain why Mr. Stannum appears to be worried in this scene.
- On page 171, the narrator states that Mr. Stannum may have been experiencing a change of heart. Discuss what is meant by this statement.
- The word *deception* is defined as betrayal, deceitfulness, and falsehood. Explore ways that both men are being deceptive.

“And tell your father that I didn’t know. I mean, I didn’t realize who he was” (p. 178).

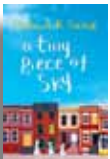
- Consider the shift in Mr. Barnard’s character in Chapter 31 (pp. 176-178). Explain why he decided not to charge Frankie for the root beer float she ordered.
- The word *irony* is defined as banter, humor, and a twist. Discuss the irony of Mr. Barnard’s phone conversation with Ava.
- The word *integrity* means honesty, sincerity, and believability. Tell why Mr. Barnard’s comment above causes Frankie to question her father’s integrity.

“Mr. Merr, what do you think will stop Hitler and the Axis powers from attempting to conquer us, once they’ve conquered Europe? It’s no secret that Hitler is recruiting spies in cities all over the world, even in America” (p. 193).

- Fear and concern about Hitler and the Axis powers were very real during the early 1900’s. Nazi Germany was at the center of WWII and the Holocaust. Hitler led the deadliest, most racially motivated conflict in human history. Examine the seriousness of Mr. Price’s claim that Mr. Baum could possibly be in support of Nazi Germany.
- Determine the true motivation behind Mr. Price’s efforts to discredit Mr. Baum’s ancestral integrity. Identify what Mr. Price really wants.
- Consider Mr. Travers’ reaction to the document printed in German. Discuss why Mr. Price seemed eager to silence Mr. Travers’ questioning.

There is more Joan. I just found something and I don’t know what it means, but Daddy has a secret, maybe more than one (p. 211).

- Discuss Grandma Engel’s reaction when Frankie asked her about the old picture she found. Explain why she would not identify the woman depicted there.
- Contrast Elizabeth’s firm belief in her father’s integrity (p. 206) and Frankie’s questioning it. Tell how the two sisters could maintain such different points of view.
- Examine how Joan gives Frankie a sense of true belonging in their home. Consider how not having Joan close contributes to Frankie’s worries about her father’s secrets.



"I see." Seaweed scrunched his face. "Guess a deal don't mean the same when it's with a Negro. Ain't that right" (p. 216)?

- Explain why, in this scene, Seaweed assumes that Frankie intended to avoid asking Mr. Baum if his band could perform at the restaurant.
- Discuss why Frankie is surprised that having a German ancestry could be considered to be shameful, harmful, or even dangerous to others.
- Compare and contrast Frankie and Seaweed's experience with and interpretation of prejudice. Tell of ways that are similar and different.

"No," said Marty. "I don't mean that. I mean this. I'm sorry for this." He picked up the balled-up paper and unfolded it, smoothing out the wrinkles on his stomach (p. 228).

- State your response to the boycott notice Marty gave to Frankie.
- Consider Marty's character. Explain why he gave the notice to Frankie. Identify the motivation behind the action. Tell why he said he was "sorry" for it.
- Contrast Marty's character with Leroy's. Identify which brother seems to be more like their father, Mr. Price. Support your statements by citing examples from the text.
- Predict Marty's sense of belonging within his family. Determine which Price family member has the most heart.



Photo Credit: A reader's footprints ~ journeying through books and foreign lands
<https://inkyfoot.wordpress.com/2012/05/15/a-graceful-debut/>

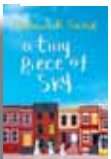
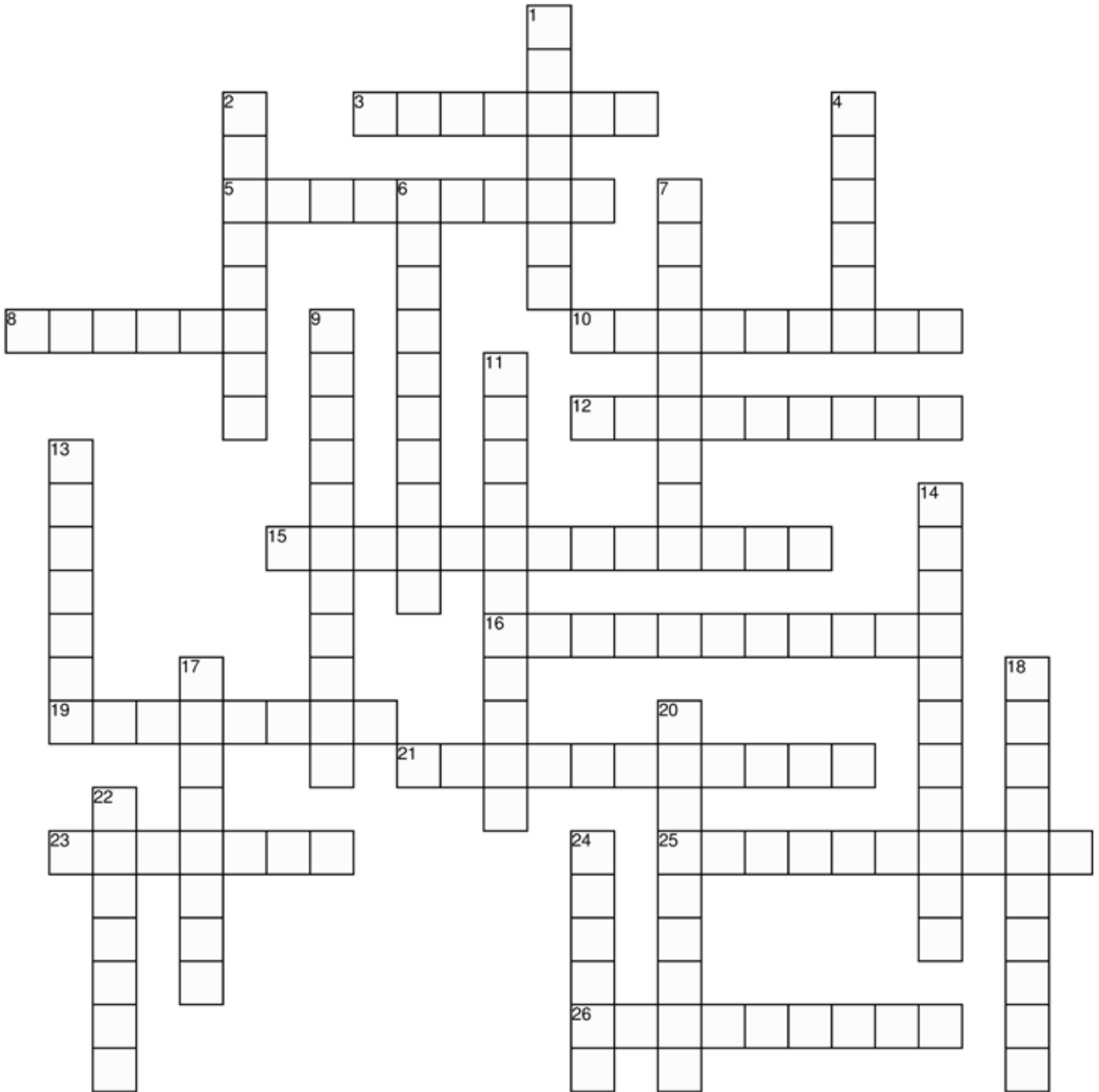


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www.shawnkstout.com www.debbiegonzales.com



Arts and History Crossword Puzzle

*Crossword Puzzle clues are found on page 14 of this guide.
Crossword Puzzle Answers are found on page 15.*



Arts and History Crossword Puzzle Clues

ACROSS:

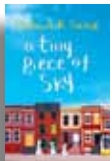
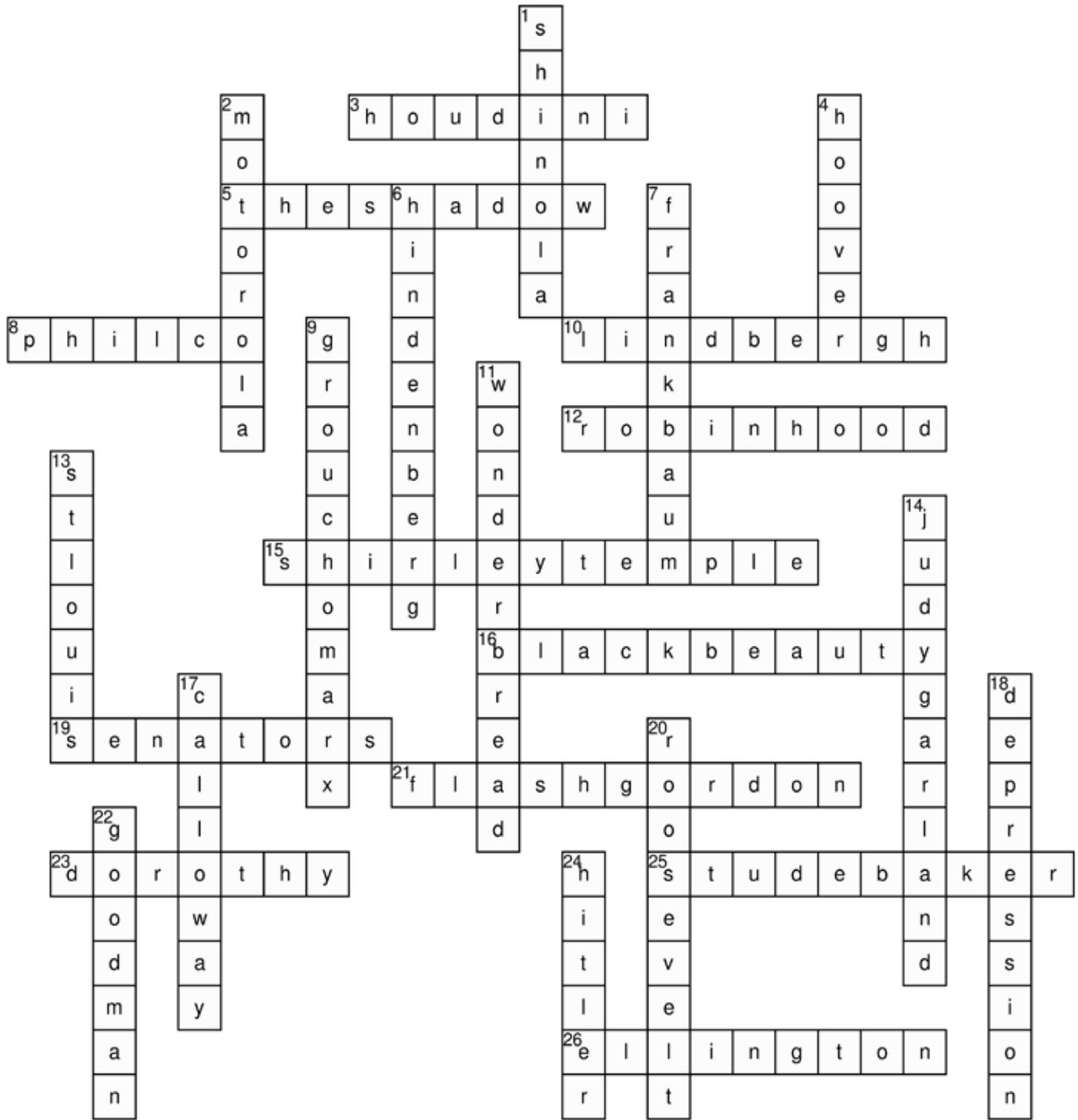
3. Illusionist and stunt performer, known for his sensational escape acts
5. A collection of serialized radio dramas originally produced in the 1930's
8. Wooden-cased home radio
10. Name of famous aviator whose baby was kidnapped, held for ransom, and then found dead
12. *The Adventures of _____*, a film released in 1938
15. Child star famous for her singing, dancing, and ringlet curls
16. A novel about a black horse written by Anna Sewell in 1877
19. Washington-based professional baseball team
21. The hero of an adventure comic strip first published in 1935
23. Main character in the story of *The Wizard of Oz*
25. American-made automobile
26. Duke _____, African American composer, pianist and bandleader of jazz orchestras

DOWN:

1. Black shoe polish
2. Car radio
4. The first Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the United States
6. In 1937, the German passenger airship caught fire and was destroyed during its attempt to dock
7. Wrote *The Wizard of Oz*
9. American comedian, film and television star
11. A type of bread that began being produced in 1921
13. German ocean liner most notable for a single voyage in 1939, in which her captain, Gustav Schröder, tried to find homes for 908 Jewish refugees from Germany
14. American singer, actress and vaudevillian that starred in the role of Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*
17. Cab _____, African American jazz singer and bandleader
18. The Great _____ was the deepest and longest lasting economic downturn in the history of the Western industrialized world
20. Known as FDR, served as the 32nd president of the United States
22. Benny _____, jazz and swing musician, clarinetist and bandleader, known as the "King of Swing"
24. The leader of the Nazi Party, Chancellor of Germany from 1933 to 1945



Arts and History Crossword Puzzle Answers



Discussion Questions - Chapters 48 to Author's Note

Though the crowd, he saw Mr. Stannum heading toward him. A friend, he thought, finally. He lumbered toward him, but just as Mr. Price got to the part in his speech about "the evil that has already reached our shores," Hermann heard nothing else and fell to the ground (p. 246).

- Discuss the irony of this scene, of how Hermann Baum considered Mr. Stannum to be his friend.
- The word *poignant* means heartbreaking, moving, and emotional. Tell why the act of Hermann's collapse after Mr. Price's declaration is poignant.
- Define the word betrayal. Examine betrayal as a theme in this scene. Cite examples from the text.

"I am German," he said. "An American German. And I am proud of that. And you should be yourself. This is your heritage. But that does not mean I am proud of what is happening right now in Germany and other countries in Europe under Hitler's rule. No, sir. For that I am ashamed. But that is not me, and I can't help where my mother and father were born or where I am from any more than I can help the color of my skin or eyes." Then one side of his mouth turned up in a smile. "Well, eye, anyway" (p. 266).

- Define what it means to be an American German.
- If Mr. Baum is proud of his ancestry, explain why he resisted to identify himself as a German when Mr. Price first inquired about his heritage.
- Discuss why Mr. Baum stated that he felt ashamed.
- Explain how Mr. Price used fear to control others.
- Describe Mr. Baum's feelings for his daughter. Tell why he is able to open up to her in this way.

Tommy had their mother's eyes and carefree smile, their father's generous heart. He was all that was good in the world, and he died much too young, and at the hands of the Germans (p. 276).

- Discuss how Mr. Stannum's grief controlled his better judgment.
- Do you think that Mr. Stannum truly believed that Hermann Baum was a spy? Explain your answer.
- Predict why Mr. Stannum was heading toward Hermann at the crowded town square.
- Explore the symbolism of the act of placing Frankie's note beside the photograph of his deceased brother.

When the newsreel ended and the picture finally began, the words The Wizard of Oz appeared on the screen. Everyone in the theater cheered. Frankie looked for Judy Garland's name and for L. Frank Baum's, too . . . (p. 295).

Photo Credit: www.wikipedia.org



L. Frank Baum

- Explore the connection between Frankie's name and author L. Frank Baum's. Discuss reasons why the author chose to name her protagonist "Frankie."
- Examine how the story of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and *A Tiny Piece of Sky* share similar themes such as dreams, sky, belonging, betrayal, and family. Identify and discuss any other parallel themes that come to mind.
- A famous quote from Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is, "Hearts will never be practical until they can be made unbreakable." Make a connection between this quote and both stories.



Mother took a step toward Mr. Price so that her face was only inches away. She coughed at his smelly cigar and then pulled the thing from his mouth. After that, she did something that Frankie could hardly believe: she tossed it onto the street behind him (p. 312).

- Discuss Mother's transformation. Explain how she changed from being frail and prone to having fainting spells to owning the tenacity to confront Mr. Price.
- Explore how Mr. Price's cigar serves as a symbol for Mother's change in character. Notice how, in Chapter 8 (pp. 44-50), Mr. Price puff, puff, puffed on his cigar as if he were the Big Bad Wolf. Examine her subversive way of dealing with Mr. Price at that point in the story, as compared to her confrontational manner depicted in the scene above.
- Discuss how and why Mother's insistence that "... the Baum girls should always act like ladies (p. 26)" changed. Show how her behavior demonstrates the change.

Frankie shook her head. Then she pulled out the newspaper and handed it to Joan. And there, at the bottom of the box under all that paper, was a small velvet bag. Frankie lifted it out, feeling something hard inside. She pulled open the drawstring and emptied the bag into her hand.

She held in her palm a small silver-filigree brooch, in she shape of a girl's shoe (p. 316).

- Discuss how the brooch represents a connection between Frankie's ancestry.
- Explore how the brooch serves as symbol for Hermann's belief in Frankie's character.
- Interestingly, in L. Frank Baum's original story of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* Dorothy's shoes were made of silver! Considering how important the film was to Frankie, examine the symbolism the silver shoe brooch brings to the story.
- Determine how receiving the brooch resolves Frankie's desire for acceptance and belonging.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

A TINY PIECE OF SKY is a work of fiction, but the Baum's story is inspired by the real-life experiences of Albert A. Beck, in Hagerstown, Maryland, prior to the second World War.

Albert and Mildred were my grandparents (p. 321).

- Explore the emotional connection the author has for this story, her family's story.
- Consider the location of the restaurant. Explain how establishing an enterprise on Jonathan Street reflects the billing of being "An Eating Place of Wide Renown."
- Discuss the boldness of character the Beck family must've had to manage the restaurant during such a troubled time in history.
- Describe how the themes of family, integrity, misrepresented ancestry, and prejudice explored in *A Tiny Piece of Sky* are relevant today.



Theme Search

Objective: To determine a theme of a story from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges and to write a summary of observations.

Detailed example of the Theme Search Graphic Organizer

Materials:

- Theme Search Graphic Organizer (Guide, p. 20)
- *A Tiny Piece of Sky*, the book
- Pencil

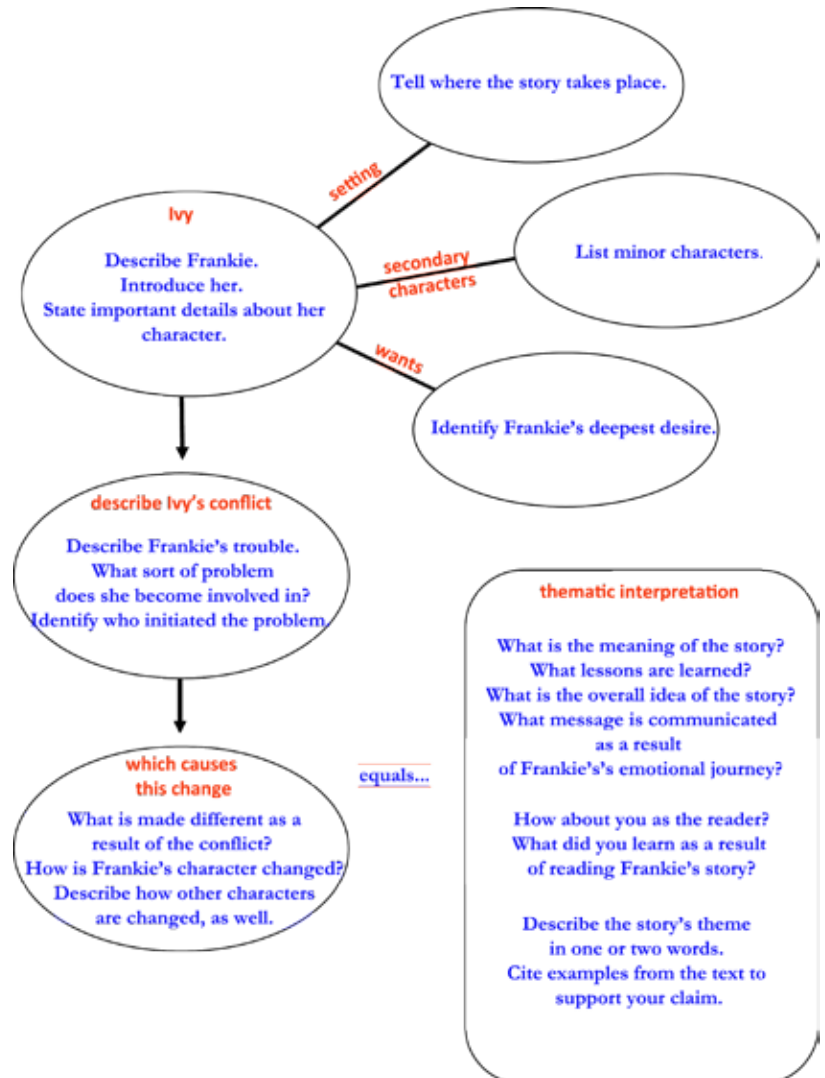
Procedure:

- Print and review **Theme Search Graphic Organizer** with students. Instruct students to consider each aspect of the **Theme Search Graphic Organizer** with the intent of narrowing a thematic focus.

Some ideas to explore:

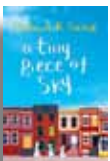
- How does the setting contribute to the overall theme of the story?
- Consider the minor characters that serve to develop the theme.
- Analyze how Frankie's desire reflects the thematic focus of the story.
- Identify how theme is developed through the conflict and resolution of the story.

- Upon completion of the **Theme Search Graphic Organizer**, discuss students' thematic interpretations of *A Tiny Piece of Sky*.
- Instruct students to write an informative essay expressing their interpretation of story and theme using the **Theme Search Graphic Organizer** as a guide.

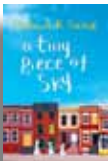
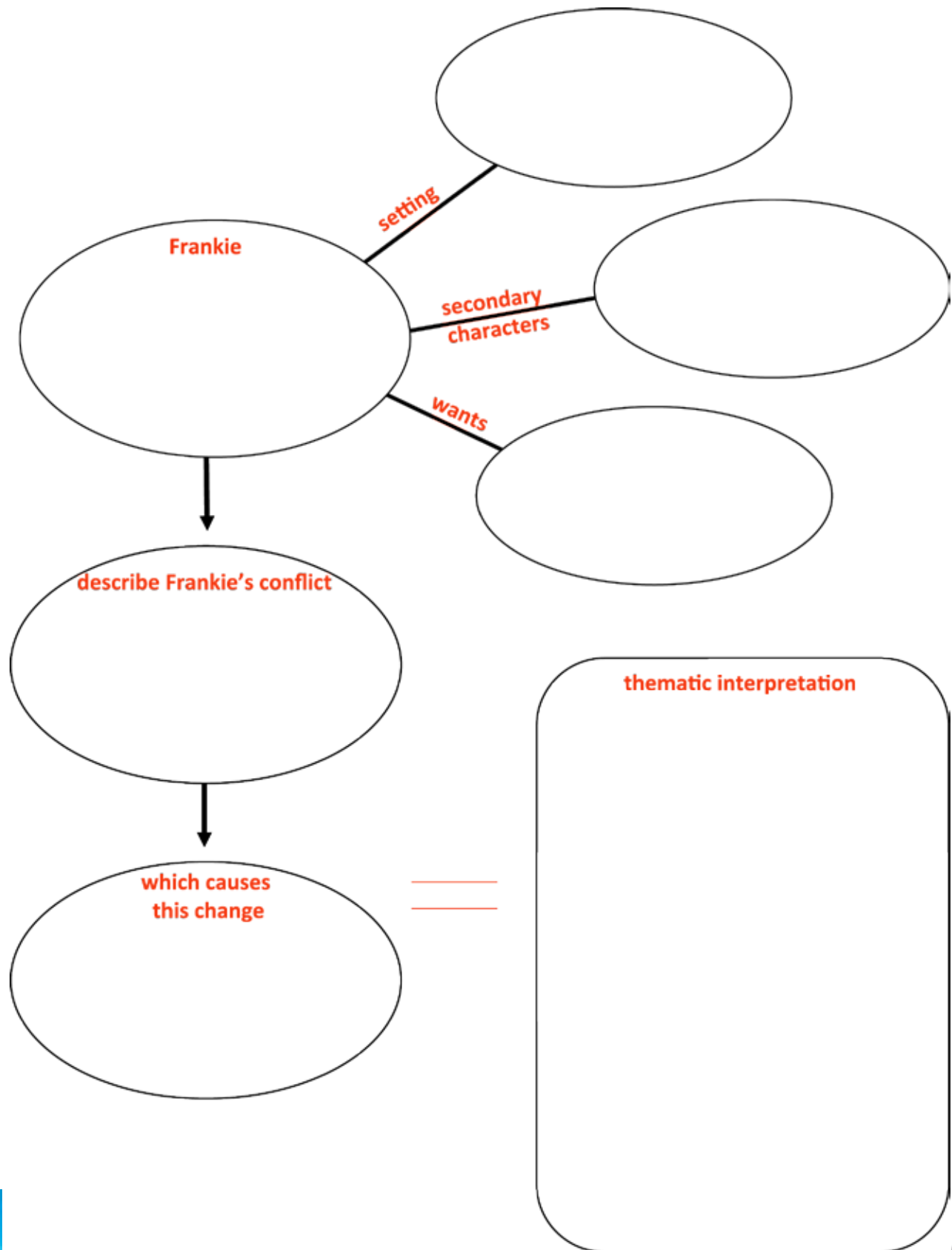


SUGGESTED THEMES TO EXPLORE:

dreams ancestry family betrayal heart
loyalty belonging prejudice fear hope
forgiveness acceptance integrity trust



Theme Search Graphic Organizer



Meet the Author - Shawn K. Stout

Shawn K. Stout (www.shawnkstout.com) grew up in Hagerstown, Maryland, the same town where *A Tiny Piece of Sky* takes place, but she did her growing up more than forty years after the events in this story occur. She is the author of the *Not-So-Ordinary Girl* series and the *Penelope Crumb* series and has an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. Shawn K. Stout lives with her family in Maryland.

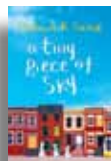


It is incredible to know that *A Tiny Piece of Sky* was inspired by a restaurant owned and operated by your grandparents – Albert and Mildred Beck! Describe what the experience of writing a fictional portrayal of a time and place as personal as this must have been. Was it difficult to put your characters in harm's way? Explain how you were able to separate yourself with your family's actual story enough to be true the Frankie Baum's adventures.

Writing a story inspired by my grandparents' life in the 1930s has been something I've wanted to do for many years, but it took me quite a while to know how to tell the story—what to fictionalize and yet how to stay true to their experiences. And then there was the whole writing-about-family thing. In the back of my mind, there was always the worry that I would upset or disappoint my mother and her two sisters by the way I portrayed them as young girls, and their parents, in the book. Such a worry. At the same time though, I didn't want that worry to influence or hinder my writing, so there were a few things I had to work out before I could begin. In the end, I decided to try to be as historically accurate as I could about the restaurant and the period—the racial divides, the anti-German sentiment, and the hyper-patriotism—while fictionalizing the characters and situations, and drawing on my family's actual experiences and personalities as inspiration and flavor.

***A Tiny Piece of Sky* is solidly founded on historical facts and events. You must've spent a great deal of time learning about the culture and crises of the day. Talk about your research process. Tell how you were able keep the novel historically sound and yet manage to tell the story in such a lively, entertaining manner.**

My research involved reading a lot of books about pre-WWII era in the United States, listening to old radio shows, and digging up newsreels. I also interviewed family members, including my mother and her sisters, and others who worked at my grandparents' restaurant in the 1930s and 1940s. I found photographs of the restaurant and staff, as well as an original menu, advertising postcards, and some other items that helped me get a general feeling of the time and place. And of course, we have the letters that were written to my grandfather from civic organizations, after he was accused of espionage, which I included in the book. Once I felt I had my roots firmly in 1939, I stopped the research and started writing, hoping that all that I soaked up would somehow make its way onto the page. My aim was to get readers to have a sense of time and place and be aware of the differences between then and now, but not let the historical details overshadow the narrative, or the characters, for that matter.



Discuss the narrator's friendly, conversational tone. Oftentimes throughout the story, the narrator speaks directly to the reader using phrases such as "Are you frightened? You should be" (p. 2), and "Remember the, boys and girls: it only takes a few seconds to lose something" (p. 24). Talk about your intent in using this clever narrative style.

Around the time I started writing this book, I was reading Peter Pan, Alice's Adventure in Wonderland, and The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, to my daughter before bedtime each night. I love the narrator's tone in all of these books, and it has a way of saying to the reader (or saying to me, at least), "Come. Sit down. I'm going to tell you a story. There will be parts that will make you laugh, and parts that will cause you to tremble. But do not fear, hold tightly to my hand, and we will get through it together." That's the sort of tone I was aiming for in this book.

Describe how you hope young readers will be affected by *A Tiny Piece of Sky*. Is there some sort of message you'd like for them to glean from Frankie's story.

That's a good question, and I'm not sure I have a very good answer. I don't believe so much in intentionally putting messages in books. Readers will take away from this book what they take away, and I like to leave it up to them and their brilliant minds how they relate (or don't relate) to Frankie or Seaweed or Mr. Baum, or any of the other characters.

How about you? How did writing this story affect you? Were you changed in anyway as result of publishing this fascinating novel?

Aside from learning a lot more about American history, as well as local history, I learned a bit more about myself as a writer. There were several times that I got stuck, really stuck, doubting everything I'd written and certain that I should give up entirely. At times, I was unsure of what the book was about and hadn't a clue where it was going—the voice in my head telling me to scrap the whole idea. But, I kept on. I trusted the writing process, in spite of what the voice in my head had to say about it, and finally found my way. Patience and persistence. That's what this book has taught me. With patience and persistence, I have to believe the story will reveal itself in time.



Common Core State Standards Alignment

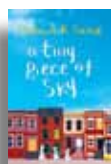
English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Literature

		Discussion Questions	Who Am I - Character Analysis	Restaurant & Menu	Crossword Puzzle	Theme Search	Meet the Author
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1	Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	•	•	•		•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.2	Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.	•				•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3	Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).	•	•			•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology				•		
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the grades 4-5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	•	•	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1	Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	•	•			•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.2	Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.	•				•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3	Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).	•	•				
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.	•	•	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1	Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text	•	•	•		•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.	•				•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.6	Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.						•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	•	•	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	•	•	•		•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.	•				•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	•	•	•	•	•	•



English Language Arts Standards » Writing

		Discussion Questions	Who Am I? - Character Analysis	Restaurant & Menu	Crossword Puzzle	Theme Search	Meet the Author
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.					•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.		•				
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.		•			•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.7	Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.			•			
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.					•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.		•				
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.		•			•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.7	Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.			•			
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.					•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.		•				
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.		•			•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.			•			
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.					•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.		•				
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.		•			•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.			•			



English Language Arts Standards » Speaking & Listening

		Discussion Questions	Who Am I ? - Character Analysis	Restaurant & Menu	Crossword Puzzle	Theme Search	Meet the Author
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 4 topics and texts</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	•	•	•		•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.2	Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	•	•	•		•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 5 topics and texts</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	•	•	•		•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.2	Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	•	•	•		•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 6 topics, texts, and issues</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	•	•	•		•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.2	Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study	•	•	•		•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 7 topics, texts, and issues</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	•	•	•		•	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.2	Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.	•	•	•		•	

