

EDUCATORS GUIDE

MOON OVER MANIFEST

CLARE
VANDERPOOL

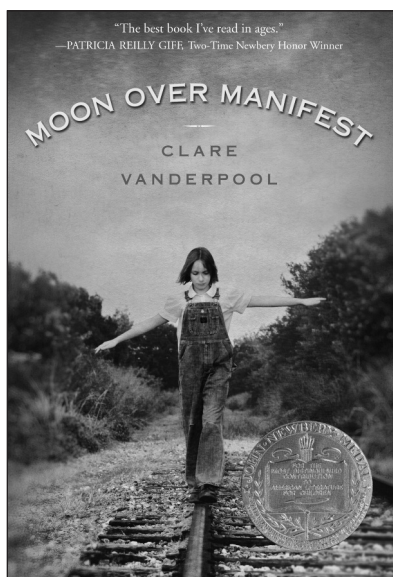
GRADES 4–7

THEMES

Loneliness • Hope/Perseverance • Community
Belonging/Home • Friendship • Prejudice/Bigotry

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Language Arts • Science/Health • Social Studies
Music • Drama • Art




978-0-375-85829-1

ABOUT THE BOOK

Set during the Great Depression, Abilene Tucker is sent to Manifest, Kansas, where she searches to find her father's footprint in the town.

Twelve-year-old Abilene Tucker, the daughter of a drifter, feels abandoned when her father puts her on a train and sends her to live with Shady Howard, part-time preacher and saloon operator, in the small town of Manifest, Kansas. Armed with her most prized possession, a broken compass that belonged to her father, Abilene sets out to discover her father's connection to this worn-out town. What she learns is that Manifest is a town with a history of colorful and eccentric characters, and very deep secrets. As stories are told, and secrets revealed, Abilene starts to understand the meaning of community, the power of friendship, and most importantly, she begins to weave her own story.

Also Available on Audio from 

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Help the class connect to the time period of the novel by having them read about America's Cultural History 1930–1939 on the following website: kclibrary.lonestar.edu/decade30.html. Ask students to write a brief essay that discusses the mood of the country during this period.

World War I is also an important aspect of the novel's setting. Share this SchoolTube video to set the time period: schooltube.com/video/afb90c293f1a40d886fc/World-War-I-Video. Discuss the hardships faced by the soldiers.

VOCABULARY/ USE OF LANGUAGE

There is some challenging vocabulary in the novel. Ask students to jot down unfamiliar words and try to define those using clues from the context. Such words may include: *vigilant* (p. 5), *perdition* (p. 9), *antiquity* (p. 15), *consolation* (p. 26), *corporal* (p. 31), *revelation* (p. 47), *regalia* (p. 54), *wanton* (p. 55), *enamored* (p. 59), *purveyor* (p. 69), *restitution* (p. 72), *dilapidated* (p. 89), *pyrotectic* (p. 96), *pedigree* (p. 117), *libations* (p. 158), *impasse* (p. 193), *subterfuge* (p. 198), *malady* (p. 216), *depravity* (p. 220), *serendipity* (p. 221), *nefarious* (p. 285), *degenerate* (p. 309), and *bevy* (p. 319).

INTERNET RESOURCES

World War I Propaganda Posters
learnnc.org/lp/editions/ww1posters/5041

The Woodrow Wilson
Presidential Library and Museum
woodrowwilson.org/

Great Depression Facts
library.thinkquest.org/07aug/00841/GREAT%20DEPRESSION/facts%20on%20the%20great%20depression.htm

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

LONELINESS—Ask students to discuss how Abilene deals with loneliness. What other characters in the book suffer from loneliness? How do they deal with it? Debate whether Lettie and Ruthanne truly understand Abilene's loneliness. At what point in the novel is it obvious that Abilene and Miss Sadie are a cure for one another's loneliness?

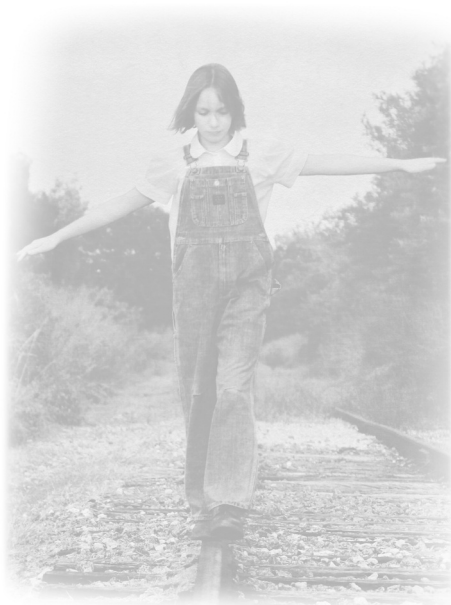
HOPE/PERSEVERANCE—Explain how Gideon's compass is a symbol of hope to Abilene. How does it also become a symbol of perseverance as the story unfolds? Name other symbols of hope in the novel. How does the assignment that Sister Redemta gives to Abilene represent hope and perseverance? In what ways does Miss Sadie represent and offer hope?

COMMUNITY—Ask students to discuss the meaning of community. Describe the town of Manifest. Explain what Miss Sadie means when she says, "The mine whistle was the sound that brought us together. And kept us apart at the same time." (p. 88) Discuss actual occasions in 1917 and in 1936 when Manifest becomes a true community. How does Hattie Mae's News Auxiliary help Abilene connect to the community of Manifest? Explain what Shady means when he tells Abilene, "Having you here has given us a second chance." (p. 327)

BELONGING/HOME—Abilene is constantly searching for Gideon's footprint in Manifest. Explain what Hattie Mae means when she tells Abilene, "Maybe what you're looking for is not so much the mark your daddy made on this town, but the mark the town made on your daddy." (p. 171). Discuss the actual moment when Abilene realizes that she has finally found her home.

FRIENDSHIP—Abilene has ridden the rails with Gideon for so long that she doesn't understand the real meaning of friendship. Debate whether this is why she is reluctant to accept Lettie and Ruthanne's gesture of friendship when they call on her at "Fort Treeconderoga." How do the girls finally become friends? What does Abilene learn about true friendship from Miss Sadie's stories about Jinx and Ned? Discuss how making friends, past and present, changes Abilene's life.

PREJUDICE/BIGOTRY—Ask students to discuss the prejudice and bigotry that exists in the town of Manifest. The entire town of Manifest is made up of immigrants, which makes them prime targets of groups like the KKK. Elroy Knabb and Arthur Devlin are both in the KKK. Cite evidence from the novel that these men don't hide their hatred behind their white masks.



Art © 2010 by Richard Tuschman

CONNECTING TO THE CURRICULUM

LANGUAGE ARTS—Write the story that Abilene turns in to Sister Redempta on September 1. Remember that a story must have a beginning, middle, and an end. Think of an appropriate title. Other than Gideon, to whom might Abilene dedicate her story?

At the end of the novel, Hattie Mae turns her News Auxiliary column over to Abilene. Consider the people that Abilene has met in Manifest during the summer, the many events that she has witnessed and read about, and her reunion with Gideon. Then write Abilene's first column. Remember to include all the whos, whats, whys, whens, and wheres.

SCIENCE/HEALTH—Miss Sadie uses hawthorn root to increase circulation. Ask students to refer to the following website and choose at least 10 common plants and herbs and chart their medicinal use: **herbsguide.net**. Have them include a colored sketch of the plant for identification purposes.

Manifest is a mining town. Among the many health hazards that miners face is Black lung disease. Ask students to find out the causes, symptoms, treatments, and long-term effects of the disease. Then have them write about the disease for a pamphlet called "Health Hazards of Miners" to be presented to workers upon employment in Devlin's mine.

SOCIAL STUDIES—The United States entered World War I in 1917. Woodrow Wilson was president, and in 1919 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Ask students to visit the following website and find out why Wilson was chosen for this honor: **nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1919**. Then have them write a front-page news story for the *Manifest Herald* on the day the prize was announced.

Have students read about the KKK at the following website: **encyclopedia.kids.net.au/page/ku/Ku_Klux_Klan**. Ask them

to write an anonymous story for the *Manifest Herald* called the “Men in the White Masks in Manifest.”

MUSIC—Ask students to use sites on the Internet or books and recordings at the public library to locate lyrics of songs from the Great Depression. Such songs may include “Pennies from Heaven,” “Brother Can You Spare a Dime,” “There’s a New Day Comin’,” “Headin’ for Better Times,” and “Dawn of a New Day.” Ask them to point out songs that reveal a nation in despair, and ones that reveal hope.

DRAMA—Write and perform a one-act play based on the chapter “Day of Reckoning: September 28, 1918” when the town disperses the Widow Cane’s property. Audition class members for the cast of characters, choose a director, and plan period costumes.

ART—The women of Manifest are planning a friendship quilt, and they ask Miss Sadie to make the center square. Consider Miss Sadie’s heritage, her role in the town and its history. Then ask them to design the square that Miss Sadie might make. Students may also design a square submitted by Abilene, Lettie, Ruthanne, Hattie Mae, and other women in the novel.

POST-READING ACTIVITY

Ask students to write an essay that compares Abilene’s search for “home” to Dorothy’s search for home in *The Wizard of Oz*. Who is Abilene’s Aunt Em? Which characters might be compared to the Tin Man, the Lion, and the Scare Crow?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Photo © Annmarie Algya



CLARE VANDERPOOL

loves reading historical fiction, and conducted the research for *Moon Over Manifest* by reading old newspapers, yearbooks, visiting graveyards, and reading numerous archival records about old mining towns, World War I, and the Great Depression. She based the town of Manifest on the real southeastern Kansas town of Frontenac, home of both

of her maternal grandparents. Vanderpool lives in Wichita, Kansas, with her husband and their four children. *Moon Over Manifest* is her first novel, and is the 2011 Newbery Medal winner.

A CONVERSATION WITH **CLARE VANDERPOOL**

Q: You stated in your Newbery Medal acceptance speech, “laughter unites us as people.” Which character in *Moon Over Manifest* brings the greatest smile to your face?

A: Many characters have shining moments that make me smile, but if I had to choose I'd have to say Abilene and Shady. They both have such a nice mix of funny, sweet, and sometimes sad. But then there's also Hattie Mae. She's a fun character to write with all her news auxiliaries and her take on the whos, whats, whys, whens, and wheres of Manifest. I also enjoyed how her character evolved from the teenage Manifest Huckleberry Queen of 1917 to the wife and mother she became.

Q: Which scene gives you the giggles?

A: I laugh when I re-read certain parts like when Ned and Holler told Heck that *Ich habe wiederlich footen* means *Put down your weapon*. (It really means “I have stinky feet.”) And the part where Mr. Matenopolous is telling of his friend Mr. Zoutsaghianopoulous at Ellis Island. He struggles with changing his name and finally agrees, “Take out the H.”

Q: The elements of humor in the novel are so layered. What do your young readers say is the funniest part?

A: I get comments about when Ned and Jinx pull the prank with the poison ivy. That actually happened to a friend of mine when he was young, not that it was a prank but he “used” the wrong leaves. He must not have been a boy scout or he would have been taught, “Leaves of three, leave them be.” I also hear young readers say they like the part where Jinx’s Manchurian Fire Thrower blows up the Manifest water tower, dousing the Victory Quilt. Also, when the girls sneak into the high school and some fireworks go off giving Abilene a chance to escape. I think the consensus is they think Manifest would be an exciting place to live!

Q: Every small town has eccentric characters, gossips, snobs, swindlers, etc. Other than Abilene, which character do your young readers express the most interest? Why?

A: Definitely Shady. I think young readers connect with Shady in much the same way that Abilene does. They trust him, they like him, they see him in his flawed goodness, and I think he provides a sense of security in the way he treats people with kindness and respect. They also seem to think his house would be an interesting place to go to church.

Q: Writing historical fiction requires a lot of research. Which part of the research did you enjoy the most? Reading old newspapers, visiting graveyards, etc.

A: I loved all of the research. For me, poring through old newspapers is the next best thing to time travel. I also read books on the Great Depression, bootlegging, World War I, the

Spanish Influenza, orphan trains. My favorites were anything that had firsthand accounts. I read and listened to many stories of teens on the road during the Great Depression. It was fascinating and very moving to hear people who are now in their later years tell of life on the road when they were young. They spoke with such clarity and there was still a great deal of emotion connected to their experience. There were some heartbreaking stories. The same is true of stories of immigrants and their experiences in coming to America. At Ellis Island, you can pick up phones and listen to actual voices of people who came through Ellis Island tell of their experiences. Very moving.

Q: You believe that story can change us. How did telling Abilene's story change you?

A: I hope Abilene's story has changed me for the better. In accompanying Abilene on her journey to Manifest and her search for home and place, I had a great deal of admiration for the way she pays careful attention to the people around her. She is attentive and open. Everyone has their quirks, their rough edges, their foibles, but everyone has a story to tell. I hope because of Abilene, I am more inclined to listen.

Q: What things were revealed to you along the way?

A: There were some story elements that were revealed to me along the way. I didn't know from the beginning that Ned was an immigrant and an orphan. He seemed like such an all-American kid and in the writing process when I fleshed-out more of his story, I realized that, in fact, he is an all-American kid in the truest sense—someone who came from somewhere else, like most people in this country, with dreams of a good life and a bright future. Of course, not all dreams in Manifest are realized and at one point their world comes crashing down around them. But the people of Manifest are resilient and it is through the town's retelling of their own story that they gain a renewed sense of promise and optimism.

Q: How has winning the Newbery Medal changed you as a writer?

A: There are two answers to that question. The first answer is it has added a little pressure to write another good book. But that is not really a complete change because I wanted to write a good book the first time around as well. The second answer is I hope it hasn't changed me too much as a writer. I have a great deal of respect and appreciation for the award. It is a great honor and one I will always treasure. But when I sit down to write, I have to forget about that incredible gold sticker that is on my book and the medal that sits on my bookshelf. Because those are part of my story and *Moon Over Manifest*. But the characters in my next book have their own story that needs to be told. That is always the great joy and challenge of being a writer.

Q: What is the most insightful question that you have received from a young reader?

A: The most insightful question I've received from a young reader is did I cry when I wrote the chapter called "The Diviner," where we find out that Miss Sadie is Ned's mother and the incredible sacrifice and loss she experienced. I find the question insightful because it tells me that young readers know and have experienced for themselves the incredible connection a reader has with the characters in a book. And the answer to the question is yes. I have four children and it breaks my heart every time I read of Miss Sadie saying goodbye to her little boy, telling him she will find him. It helps a little knowing that she did find him.

Q: What are you writing now?

A: I am writing a story about a Kansas boy who gets uprooted from his home and put in boys' boarding school in Maine. It is historical fiction in that it takes place in 1945, but it is less dependent on historical events. My main characters meets another boy and they go on a quest of sorts. I know that's a little vague, but you know how writers are. They'd rather you read about it than tell you the story up front.

MORE CLASSROOM-FRIENDLY BOOKS IN THE NEWBERY FAMILY



When You Reach Me Rebecca Stead

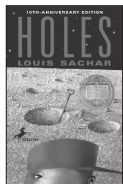
978-0-375-85086-8

THEMATIC CONNECTION

SELF-IDENTITY—Describe Miranda at the beginning of the novel. How does she change as the story unfolds? How does working at Jimmy's and being part of a group give Miranda confidence that she didn't have when she only hung out with Sal? The first note that Miranda receives says, "I am coming to save your friend's life and my own." (p. 60) Explain the literal and figurative meaning of this note, and what it has to do with self-identity. Discuss the role of the mysterious notes in boosting Miranda's self-worth.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

LANGUAGE ARTS—Discuss what the *New York Times* reviewer means when she calls *When You Reach Me* "a hybrid of genres." Ask students to discuss the definition of the following genres: *science fiction*, *adventure*, *mystery*, *historical fiction*, and *realism*. Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to prepare a debate about which genre(s) they think the novel fits. Ask them to cite passages from the novel to support their debate.



Holes Louis Sachar

978-0-440-41480-3

THEMATIC CONNECTION

BELONGING—Stanley is overweight and considered a misfit by the boys in his school and neighborhood. Ask students to discuss why Stanley is an easy target for bullies. At what point in the novel does Stanley begin feeling that he is a part of the group? Who is the leader? How do the guys view Stanley at the end of the novel? How might Stanley be considered a hero? Involve the class in a discussion about how Stanley's heroic status might change the way his classmates view him when he returns to school in the fall.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

MATH—Zero cannot read, but he is excellent in math. Have each student survey at least 20 adults asking them whether their strength in school was reading or math. Collect the data gathered by each student and have the class construct a graph that reveals the results of the survey. Study the graph and engage the class in a discussion about the importance of both subjects.



Bud, Not Buddy **Christopher Paul Curtis**

978-0-440-41328-8

Look for the
companion book,
coming soon!

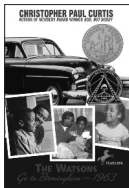


THEMATIC CONNECTION

HOPE—Ask the class to discuss how the flyers in Bud's suitcase give him hope. Bud's mother once told him, "When one door closes, don't worry, because another door opens." (p. 43) How does this statement give Bud the hope he needs to continue his search for his father? Discuss the moments in the story when a door closes for Bud. At what point does the door open? Cite evidence in the novel that Herman Calloway had hope that his daughter might return.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

SCIENCE—Lefty Lewis sends Herman Calloway a telegram telling him about Bud. Have students construct an illustrated time line that shows the development of communication from the invention of the telegraph to today's new technologies.



The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963 **Christopher Paul Curtis**

978-0-440-41412-4

THEMATIC CONNECTION

FRIENDSHIP—Kenny becomes a real friend of Rufus, but realizes that he has damaged their relationship the moment he joins in laughing at Rufus on the bus. (pp. 43–46). Have students write about a situation in which they slighted someone without just cause, how they felt afterward, and what they did about it. How does Kenny's acknowledgment of his injustice help to correct it?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

HISTORY (CIVIL RIGHTS)—Life in 1963 was quite different for African Americans than it is today, especially in the South. The '60s were turbulent times in America. After reading the novel, have students find inferences that blacks and whites were treated differently. (pp. 5–6) Check reference books in the school media center for historical details of the Birmingham church bombing and look for the names of the young girls listed on the "In Memory of" page. Probe the question raised by Kenny (p. 199), "Why would they hurt some little kids like that?" Have students create a class book on What America Was Like When the Watsons Went to Birmingham in 1963.



Penny from Heaven **Jennifer L. Holm**

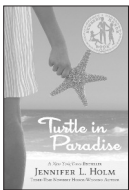
978-0-375-83689-3

THEMATIC CONNECTION

DEATH—The death of Penny's father drastically changes the lives of his family members, in part because of the way he died. How is Uncle Dominic's life changed by his brother's death? How does the truth about her father's death alter its emotional impact on Penny's life? How is Penny directly influenced by her mother's loss? On page 233, Penny wants to tell people, "almost dying is awful easy. It's the living that's hard." How has her life reflected this statement?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

HISTORY—Penny doesn't understand why her father was put in an internment camp, and no one seems to be able to answer her questions. Ask students to research the arrest and internment of non-naturalized Italian Americans during World War II and to write a letter of explanation to Penny. Students should assume the voice of a government official, the arresting officer, the prison warden, one of the family members, or someone else that might have had a role in the arrest.



Turtle in Paradise **Jennifer L. Holm**

978-0-375-83690-9

THEMATIC CONNECTION

BETRAYAL—Turtle, Slow Poke, Nana Philly, Aunt Minnie, and Sadie Belle all experience betrayal in one form or another. What does it mean to betray someone? How do these characters each cope with the betrayal? How do their experiences change their view of life and their relationships?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

SCIENCE—The 1935 hurricane that hit Key West was one of the worst in history. It is a miracle that Turtle and the Diaper Gang escaped death. Ask one group of students to research the weather conditions that cause a hurricane and another group to prepare a hurricane safety brochure. Have two other groups make a time line of hurricanes in the United States: one group should record from the first recorded hurricane to 1950, and the other should record from 1951 to present. The time line groups should also include information such as loss of life, size and strength of the hurricane, location hit, and other details that tell the story. Lastly, have each group can present their findings to the class.



Hattie Big Sky Kirby Larson

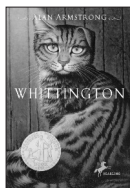
978-0-385-73595-7

THEMATIC CONNECTION

COMING-OF-AGE—Describe how Hattie changes in the year that she spends on the Montana prairie. Debate whether her idea of “home” is different by the end of the novel. Hattie says, “I’d arrived alone, and I wanted to leave that way.” (p. 282) Why is this so important to her? How is she a success even though tragedy prevented her from proving the claim?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

HISTORY—Ask readers to use resources in the library or sites on the Internet to find out about the Homestead Act approved by Congress in the late 1800s. How was the Homestead Act of 1910 different from the original act? Discuss how the rules of the act made it almost impossible for an independent 16-year-old girl to prove up on a claim.



Whittington Alan Armstrong

978-0-375-82865-2

THEMATIC CONNECTION

LONELINESS—Bernie was especially lonely after his daughter died. How can one be independent and lonely? Ask students to discuss the difference between sadness and loneliness. How do the animals in the barn fill a void in Bernie's life? Cite scenes from Dick Whittington's story where he experienced loneliness. How did he take charge of his loneliness?

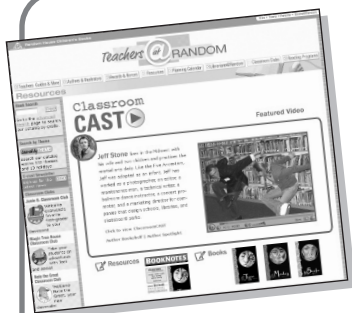
CURRICULUM CONNECTION

THEATER—Allow students to work in small groups to select a favorite chapter of the novel and write it as a one-act play. Use appropriate costumes or masks to distinguish the characters. Design a simple scene backdrop, and choose appropriate music to open and close the scene.

Classroom CAST

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