

Holiday House EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Island War

Patricia Reilly Giff

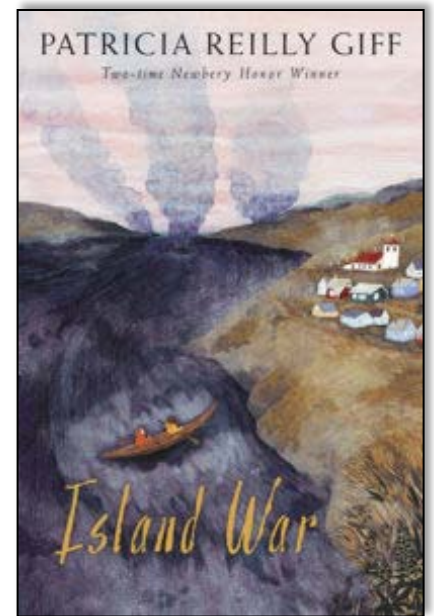
Two-time Newbery Honor–winning author Patricia Reilly Giff spins a tale of children surviving on their own on a remote Japanese-occupied island during World War II.

Language Arts

Questions for Writing and Discussion

CCSS 3-8.SL.1; 3-5.W.1; 3-5.RI.6; 3-6.RL.3

- This story is told in alternating chapters by Izzy and Matt. Compare their points of view. How are they different? What is your opinion of stories that are told in this manner? **CCSS 3-8.RL.6**
- Compare the way in which Izzy and Matt each dealt with their respective parents' decisions to move them to Alaska. How do you deal with parental decisions that you don't particularly like?
- Compare the way that Izzy related to her mom vs. the way that Matt related to his dad. Which type of relationship would you prefer? Explain why.
- Each of the two main characters had a missing parent, one of whom was dead. Do you think you would feel differently about a missing parent vs. one who had died? Explain the difference.
- When Izzy moved to Alaska and met Maria, she began to learn about the culture of the Native Aleutian people. Why do you think this was valuable to her? What is your feeling about learning about the cultures of people who are different from you?
- Do you think Matt made the right decision to take the kayak out alone when he did? Explain why or why not.
- Izzy's teacher had told her, "You could do anything, Izzy." How important do you think a teacher's remarks to a student really are? Have you had anything told to you by a teacher that you still remember—good or bad? How have those remarks had an impact on your own behavior or actions?
- After her mom was taken away, Izzy's relationship with the dog, Willie, deepened. How important do you think this fact was in the story? What relationships have you had with pets that were equally important to you?
- If you had been left alone in a strange place like Izzy and Matt were, would you have done anything differently? Explain what you would have done and why. Have you ever had a similar experience? How did you react?
- At the end of the story, Matt remembers that his dad had said, "Things aren't always the way you think they are." What did he mean? What does this phrase mean to you? Matt also said to Izzy, "You're my best friend." Why do you think it took Matt so long to realize this about Izzy? Describe an experience you've had with someone you didn't like at first who ultimately became a friend?



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Geography

As students read the book, have them keep an ongoing list of places mentioned. Then have them point out these locations on a U.S. map or a large map of Alaska. Some places to search are: Alaska; Aleutian Islands; Attu; Bering Sea/Pacific Ocean; Connecticut; Long Island Sound, NY; Pearl Harbor, HI.

They can also locate Guam, Indonesia, Japan, and Russia on a world map.

Compare the climate of the Aleutian Islands through the year with the climate where you live. How are they the same or different? What effect did the climate have on Izzy and Matt's actions in various parts of the story as the year went on?

Science

Have students use encyclopedias or online sites to find pictures and information on the following birds mentioned in the story: blue herons; cormorants; cuckoos; emperor geese; Eurasian skylarks; gulls; horned puffins; house wrens; killdeer; kittiwakes; Laysan albatrosses; peregrine falcons; plovers; sandhill cranes, teals; terns, and yellow bitterns.

Note: Three of the birds are shown in ink drawings on the pages that introduce each section. **CCSS 3-8.W.7**

History

Using printed or online resources, have students explore further information on the migration across the Bering Strait about 13,000 years ago. Ask them to compare the information found in various sources. **CCSS 3-8.W.7; 3-5.RI.7**

Biography

Students may be interested in exploring the life of Vitus Bering to discover why the Bering Sea was named after him.

Online Sources

Bering Strait Migration

smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/humans-colonized-americas-along-coast-not-through-ice-180960103/

Presents an alternate view of what actually happened 13,000 years ago

Vitus Bering

britannica.com/biography/Vitus-Bering

Presents a short article about this explorer with links to further information about his explorations as well as the reactions of the Native Americans he encountered

Battle of Attu

nps.gov/articles/battle-of-attu.htm

Describes the battle, the casualties, and the establishment of a National Historic Landmark in 1985

Bombing of Pearl Harbor

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/history/pearl-harbor/>

Presents information and photos of this historic 1941 event

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Patricia Reilly Giff is the author of many highly acclaimed books for children, including *Lily's Crossing*, a Newbery Honor Book and *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Honor Book, and *Pictures of Hollis Woods*, a Newbery Honor Book. Her work for younger readers includes the best-selling Kids of the Polk Street School series and the Hunter Moran books. She lives in Connecticut.

