

CODE ORANGE

Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2008 Grades 6-8

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Code Orange by Caroline Cooney. Delacorte Press, 2005. 200 pages.

Summary

Mitty Blake is a junior at St. Raphael's, a Manhattan prep school in New York City. It is a school for the very smart or the very rich. Mitty's family is in the "very rich" category. He could care less about doing his schoolwork. Mitty would rather listen to his iPod and roam the streets. But he must do a paper on small pox for biology class. While staying the weekend at his parent's country home in Connecticut, Mitty discovers some very old medical texts and decides to use these for his research. While thumbing through the old text, he comes across an envelope containing scabs from the 1902 smallpox epidemic in Boston. After handling the scabs, it occurs to him that he could get smallpox from handling them, so he sends anonymous emails to various agencies to try to get some answers. The recipients get suspicious and forward the emails to the FBI. Before the FBI can find Mitty, a terrorist group that plans to use him as a biological weapon kidnaps him. Mitty is trapped and nobody knows where he is. Left alone, with nobody to rely on but himself, Mitty transforms from a laid-back slacker to an ingenious man of action. Although the plot stretches credibility, story is intriguing, suspenseful and enjoyable to read. Mitty is a likeable guy, and the reader is happy to see him take charge of his life.

Read an excerpt:

<http://www.randomhouse.com/teens/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780385732598&view=excerpt>

Awards

Outstanding Science Trade Books K-12, 2006; National Science Teachers Association

Author's Biography

Caroline Cooney, an author of horror and mystery books for teens, was born in Geneva, New York. She grew up in Old Greenwich, Connecticut and now lives in Westbrook, Connecticut. She began writing when she was in college. She has written over 100 books and has received many awards.

http://www.randomhouse.com/author/results.pperl?authorid=5635&view=full_splight

<http://www.nndb.com/people/486/000044354/>

<http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/c/caroline-b-cooney/>

Other Titles by Caroline Cooney

The Face on the Milk Carton

Whatever Happened to Janie?

The Voice on the Radio

What Janie Found

The Terrorist

Emergency Room

Mummy

Burning Up

Related Titles

Suspense & Thrillers

Flush by Carl Hiasson.

Last Shot: A Final Four Mystery by John Feinstein.

Red Kayak by Priscilla Cummings.

The Extraordinary Adventures of Alfred Kropp by Rick Yancey.

Flight of the Raven by Stephanie S. Tolan.

Alex Rider series by Anthony Horowitz.

Small Pox

Last Child by Michael Spooner.

When Plague Strikes: The Black Death, Small Pox, AIDS by James Cross Giblin.

Outbreak: Disease Detectives at Work by Mark P. Friedlander, Jr.

A Student's Guide to Biotechnology. Published by Creative Media Applications.

Classroom Connections

Science

Lesson Plans: "How Viruses Travel" Grades 5-8

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/ScienceHowVirusesTravel58.htm>

Contains an interactive classroom exercise to demonstrate how viruses travel.

Lesson Plans: The Spread of Disease Grades 6-12

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/PEScienceOTheSpreadOfDiseaseLikeAids612.htm>

This exercise demonstrates how quickly diseases, such as AIDS can spread.

Discover School: Allergies v. Viruses Grades 6-8

<http://school.discovery.com/lessonplans/programs/allergiesviruses/>

This lesson explores the differences between allergies and viruses and how they are diagnosed and treated.

Geography

State Geography: The Five Boroughs of New York City Grades 6-9

[http://www.eduref.org/cgi-](http://www.eduref.org/cgi-bin/printlessons.cgi/Virtual/Lessons/Social_Studies/Geography/GGR0054.html)

[bin/printlessons.cgi/Virtual/Lessons/Social_Studies/Geography/GGR0054.html](http://www.eduref.org/cgi-bin/printlessons.cgi/Virtual/Lessons/Social_Studies/Geography/GGR0054.html)

Study The Five Boroughs of NYC with your students. The Five Boroughs of NYC are: Manhattan, The Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island.

Other Activities

- Have students research smallpox and the epidemics of smallpox that have occurred in the world. Make a timeline that shows where and when these epidemics occurred.
- Have students research other infectious diseases.
- Have students research terrorists groups and the meaning of "code orange."
- Have the students will do an in-depth study of Cooney's works. Divide the class into Literature Circles to read one or several of her books, then do a group presentation.
- Compare/contrast other mystery or suspense stories with *Code Orange*.

Web Sites

Book Talks

http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/librarians/booktalks_CodeOrange.htm

A very concise book talk on the book.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

The CDC is mentioned in the book. This site contains information on disease control and prevention, including smallpox information and images.

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/overview/disease-facts.asp>

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/Agent/Smallpox/SmallpoxImages.asp>

Three images of smallpox

Medline Plus

<http://medlineplus.gov/>

Health information from the National Library of Medicine.

Terrorism Research Center

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

This site includes detailed information related to terrorism.

FEMA: Terrorism

<http://www.fema.gov/hazard/terrorism/index.shtm>

This site includes basic information about terrorism.