

## THE NEXT-DOOR DOGS

### Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2008 Grades 3-5

Submitted by Vita M. Fontenot, Graduate Student, LSU School of Library & Information Science (Professor: Dr. Margie Thomas); and Wendy LeBleu, Student, University of Louisiana at Lafayette (Instructor: Dorothy Grimsley)

**The Next-Door Dogs** by Colby Rodowsky. Illustrated by Amy June Bates. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005. 103 pages.

#### Summary

Nine-year-old, Sara Baker is terrified of dogs. Her family has tried to help her overcome her fear, but nothing seems to work. Sara is hoping that a nice family with children to play with will move in next door. She is disappointed when a single woman moves in. What is worse is that the new neighbor, Ms. Harrington has her two big dogs, Max, a yellow Lab, and Jake, a Dalmatian. Nevertheless, Ms. Harrington is so nice that she and Sara become good friends. When Ms. Harrington falls and breaks her leg, Sara is the only one around. She must go into the yard with the dogs to help her neighbor. Sara must finally face her fear of dogs. This early chapter book, illustrated with simple black sketches, will be enjoyed by young readers. Children who have a fear of dogs will especially appreciate Sara's dilemma.

#### Awards

Best Children's Books of the Year, 2005; Bank Street College of Education Parent's Choice Awards Silver Honor 2005 Story Books

#### Author's Biography

Colby Rodowsky was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1932. She attended the College of Notre Dame of Maryland and majored in English. After college, she taught third grade and Special Education. She married a lawyer in 1954, and she is the mother of five daughters and one son. When her youngest child was in second grade, she began writing books for children and young adults. Her first book *What About Me?* was published in 1976. She lives in Baltimore, Maryland with her husband and a dog named Pongo.

<http://www.childrensbookguild.org/rodowsky.html>

[http://www.childrenslit.com/f\\_rodowsky.html](http://www.childrenslit.com/f_rodowsky.html)

<http://www.fsgkidsbooks.com/authordetails.asp?ID=Rodowsky>

#### Other Titles by Colby Rodowsky

*Jason Rat-a-tat*

*Not My Dog*

*Dog Days*

*Keeping Time*

*Remembering Mog*

*Hanna In Between*

*Julie's Daughter*

#### Illustrator's Biography

Amy June Bates is a freelance illustrator who has illustrated dozens of children's books. She grew up in Utah and graduated from Brigham Young University in illustration. She has illustrated dozens of children's books. She lives in Ann Arbor Michigan with her husband and son. <http://www.amybates.com/>

### **Other Titles Illustrated by Amy June Bates**

*Pumpkin Cat* by Ann Turner.

*Speak To Me* by Karen English.

*Beryl & Bean* by Ricki Stern.

### **Related Titles**

*That New Animal* by Emily Jenkins. Illustrated by Pierre Pratt.

*Creepy Things That Are Scaring Me* by Jarette and Jerome Pumphrey. Illustrated by Roseanne Litzinger.

*There's a Dragon Downstairs* by Hilary McKay. Illustrated by Amanda Harvey.

*The Bear Upstairs* by Shirley Mozelle. Illustrated by Doug Cushman.

*Wiley and Jasper* by Miriam Moss. Illustrated by Jutta Bucker.

*The Fear Place* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor.

*Fears, Doubts, Blues, and Pouts: Stories about Fear, Worry, Sadness, and Anger* by Norman Wright and Gary J. Oliver.

*Bug Muldoon: The Gardner of Fear* by Paul Shipton.

*No Fear (Scrappers)* by Dean Hughes.

### **Classroom Connections**

- Invite a vet to the classroom to speak to the students.
- Give a synopsis of the story and have students write their story endings before they read the story. Ask a question, such as “Will Sarah help her neighbor?”
- Discuss the importance of helping others. Read aloud *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox and discuss how Wilfred helped Miss Nancy Alison Delacourt Cooper. Then use a Venn Diagram to compare/contrast Ms. Harrington and Miss Cooper.

### **Dogs**

- **Making Your Dog Your Best Friend** <http://www.iit.edu/~smile/bi9403.html> This is a class activity with a live dog. It teaches the proper handling of a dog and what is needed to train it.
- **Dog Coloring Sheet**  
[http://www.teachnology.com/worksheets/early\\_childhood/color/dogs/](http://www.teachnology.com/worksheets/early_childhood/color/dogs/)
- Have students learn the different breeds of dogs and play games like “Guess the Breed.”
- <http://www.akc.org/breeds/index.cfm>
- Discuss various breeds of dogs and make collages using pictures of dogs from old magazines.
- Students who have dogs could share stories about their dogs.

### **Web Sites**

#### **American Kennel Club**

<http://www.akc.org/>

Official American Kennel Club Website

#### **ASPCA: The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**

<http://www.aspca.org/>

Includes information on dog care and behavior

**ASPCA: Animaland**

<http://www.animaland.org/>

This website is geared toward a younger audience. It includes information on pet care and information on animals, including dogs.

**Nancy Keane's Booktalks—Quick and Simple**

[http://nancykeane.com/booktalks/rodowsky\\_next.htm](http://nancykeane.com/booktalks/rodowsky_next.htm)

A very concise book talk for *The Next-Door Dogs*.

**Puzzle Games/Dogs**

<http://www.fbi.gov/kids/games/slidepuzzle.htm>

This site has games for the student to play online.