**HIDDEN**

By Helen Frost

**LOUISIANA YOUNG READERS’ CHOICE NOMINEE 2014**

**GRADES 6-8**

*Study Guide Submitted by Barbara Benton, Grade 7 Instructor, University Laboratory School, Baton Rouge, LA*

**Title: *Hidden***

**Author:** Helen Frost

**Publisher:** Frances Foster Books/Farrar Straus Giroux, 2011

**Pages:** 147

**SUMMARY**

In a story that combines a scary situation with an unexpected friendship dilemma, two 14 year old girls share a cabin at summer camp; they also share a secret. When the girls were six, Darra’s father carjacked the car that Wren was hiding in; Wren’s story is what sent Darra’s father to prison. Now the girls are face-to-face at camp, and they are trying, not only to avoid each other, but to keep their campmates from finding out their unusual connection. Helen Frost has written *Hidden* in two forms of free verse, with each form representing the words and thoughts of a different girl. She has also added an interesting note at the end of the book that will send the reader back through the pages, scouring them for hidden information.

*Hidden* is an easy read for middle school students; since it is written in verse, the pages do not have a lot of writing on them, the sections are short, and at 147 pages, the book isn’t long. However, the author does not use regular conventions of writing – no paragraphs, no indenting, no quotation marks and an abundance of italics – so readers will have to adjust to this style of writing in order to enjoy the book. A closer look at the story reveals to the reader a subtle pattern of “hiding,” and the reader will enjoy looking back and rereading portions.

**AWARDS**

2012 ALA Notable Book

2012 Bank Street Best Children’s Books, Starred

2012 Lee Bennett Hopkins Children’s Poetry Award Honor Book

**AUTHOR’S BIOGRAPHY**

The fifth of ten children, Helen Frost was born in South Dakota and has also lived and worked in Massachusetts, Scotland, Vermont, Alaska, Oregon, and California; she presently lives in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Her career has been filled with both writing and teaching, and she has published children’s books, poetry, anthologies, a play, and a book about teaching writing. Ms. Frost has also taught writing at all levels, from preschool through college.

Ms. Frost enjoys travel, hiking, beaded gourd-work, and kayaking. She has raised and released monarch butterflies for decades, and her yard is a Certified Monarch Waystation.

<http://www.helenfrost.net>

**OTHER TITLES BY AUTHOR**

Novels-in-Poems for Children and Young Adults

*\*Keesha’s House* (2003)

*Spinning Through the Universe* (2004)

*The Braid* (2006)

*Diamond Willow* (2008)

*Crossing Stones* (2009)

*Salt* (July 2013)

 \*Michael L. Printz Honor Book, 2004

Picture Books

*Monarch and Milkweed* (2008)

*Step Gently Out* (2012)

**RELATED TITLES**

*The Apothecary* by Maile Meloy

*Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai

*Okay For Now* by Gary D. Schmidt

**CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS**

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

Author Helen Frost gives the reader an exact location for the setting of *Hidden*, but she also provides hints by mentioning the Great Lakes and the Upper Peninsula. Have students pick a place in the United States and write 3 clues for identifying the location. Clues can include not only physical landmarks but also facts about people and culture. After exchanging sets of clues, students should use internet resources to determine the place.

**SCIENCE**

In *Hidden* Wren and Darra both take the lifesaving class and water activities are a big part of their camp experience. Incorporate a “Sink or Float?” lesson to develop the water aspect of the story. As a demonstration, prepare 3 clear bowls – one with water, one with oil, and one with isopropyl alcohol. Have students set up a graphic organizer chart and fill it in with predictions of the buoyancy of a variety of objects (i.e., clothespin, apple, toy block, sponge, pencil, bathtub toy, plastic fork, eraser) in the different liquids. Then test each object, and after students record actual results, have them write a conclusion about what happened. The activity can be carried out in small groups rather than whole group if preferred.

**READING**

Introduce the idea of “Two Sides to Every Story” by reading aloud picture book, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Sciescka. Then have students read “The Monster in the Cave,” a play in the September 11, 2012, issue of “Scope” magazine followed by watching the video “Cyclops: My Side of the Story” (available online from the same issue). After a discussion of how a situation can be looked at from different points of view, have students reread pages 119-124 in *Hidden* and discuss the differences in the story from the two girls’ points of view.

<http://www.scholastic.com/scopemagazine/Issues/090312/Reproducibles.html>

**WRITING**

*Hidden* is written in two forms of free verse; one is a true free verse and the other is a form that the author invented for the book. Using the link to a website of “instant poetry forms,” challenge students to rewrite a specific part of the story using a different form. Have students share their writing with each other and discuss differences in the forms used. <http://ettcweb.lr.k12.nj.us/forms/newpoem.htm>

**RESEARCH / WRITING**

Could this story really happen? Research statistics and cases where a carjacking results in a kidnapping and write a summary of your findings.

<http://www.journalgazette.net/article/20110312/LOCAL07/303129930/0/FRONTPAGE>

<http://www.kidsandcars.org>

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why do you think the title of this book is *Hidden*? What is the meaning of the word in the story? What are some features of the story that are “hidden?”

2. Does the book bring out any emotions in you, such as laughter, tears, smiles, or anger? Record some of your reactions and the passages that caused the reactions.

4. In the chapter entitled, “Was It a Good Thing?” Wren asks the question if it would be better to have a mean dad or not to have a dad at all. What is your opinion?

5. Why do you think that Darra kept the photo album that fell out of Wren’s mother’s purse?

3. What do you predict will happen to the relationship between Wren and Darra after they both return home?

6. What are the differences in reading *Hidden* and in reading a book written with regular conventions of writing (i.e., punctuation, indentions, standard font)? Do you think it matters?

**WEBSITES**

**Helen Frost Author Page**

<http://www.helenfrost.net>

This site provides a biography of Helen Frost, along with a listing of her books and plays with summaries. Extra information about *Hidden* includes notes from the author about her initial ideas for the book.

**“Scope” Magazine/ “The Monster in the Cave”**

<http://www.scholastic.com/scopemagazine/Issues/090312/Reproducibles.html>

This issue provides a story and video told from two different points of view.

**Instant Poetry Forms**

<http://ettcweb.lr.k12.nj.us/forms/newpoem.htm>

The writer will find unique formulas for composing poetry to tell stories.

**Discussion Questions**

<http://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/cbec/DCFBookReviews%26Questions12-13.pdf>

This site provides additional curriculum connections and discussion questions.

**Kids Left In Cars, At Risk**

<http://www.journalgazette.net/article/20110312/LOCAL07/303129930/0/FRONTPAGE>

This site gives examples and information about stolen cars and the dangers of leaving children in unattended vehicles.

**Kids and Cars**

<http://www.kidsandcars.org>

This site explores the dangers of children and vehicles.