



# **Educator Discussion Guide**

## ***Queen of the Diamond: The Lizzie Murphy Story***

by Emily Arnold McCully

**Louisiana Young Reader's Choice Nominee 2018**  
**Grade 3-5**

*Submitted by Jennifer LaBurre, Student*  
*Kent State University*

### **ABOUT THE BOOK**

Lizzie Murphy loves baseball and she's a better player than most of the boys. As she grows older, Lizzie's desire to play baseball does not go away nor does she want to be a stereotypical proper young lady. Instead, Lizzie sets out to be a professional ball player and to be treated equally as one of the boys.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Emily Arnold McCully was born in Galesburg, Illinois and grew up on Long Island near New York City. She worked in an advertising agency in New York before earned a Master's degree in Art History. She has since developed a career as an artist and writer.

Biographical information taken from the author's website at  
<http://www.emilyarnoldmccully.com/emily-arnold-mccully.html>

Accessed 28 July 2017.

### **AWARDS**

Top 10 Books for Youth 2015, Sports

2016 Amelia Bloomer List, Early Readers–Nonfiction

2016 Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People, K–2

2016 CCBC Choices–Historical People, Places, and Events

Children's Book Committee Bank Street College of Education Best Children's Books of 2016,  
Biography and Memoir

### **PRE READING ACTIVITIES**

#### **Suffrage and Women's Rights**

Discuss the history of women's rights at the tune of the 19<sup>th</sup> century including women's suffrage and the historical place of women in society. This will provide a frame for how extraordinary it was for a young woman to play amateur and professional baseball during these decades of American History.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Lizzie's mother discourage her from playing baseball and other sports?
2. Why will the boys let Lizzie's brother play on their team, but won't let Lizzie play on their team?
3. Lizzie gets the boys to let her play on their team when she is the only person to remember to bring a baseball to a game. Was Lizzie right to do this? Why or why not?
4. Lizzie is interested in lots of activities: playing violin, swimming, ice hockey, running. Why do you think she loves baseball the most? Why does she want to play professionally?
5. When Lizzie becomes a professional baseball player, the manager overlooks her when the players are paid. Why didn't he pay her? What do you think about his decision?
6. When the manager refuses to pay Lizzie she in turn refuses to play. Why? Is she right to refuse to play? What do you think about her decision?
7. Why are so many people interested in seeing a woman play baseball?
8. Why does Lizzie's mother encourage her to get married instead of playing baseball?
9. Who do you think is more encouraging of Lizzie's desire to play baseball: her mother or father? Why do you think this is?
10. Why does Lizzie's mother stitch Lizzie's name on her jersey?

## CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

### Art:

Look at the illustrations depicted in *Queen of the Diamond*. How are the characters dressed? How does this compare to how we dress today? What similarities or differences do you notice? What about the baseball uniforms; are these different from how baseball players dress today?

### Language Arts:

There are a great number of baseball-related and historical slang terms in *Queen of the Diamond*. Have your students go through the book and pick out as many slang terms they can and define these terms accordingly.

### Social Studies:

- Lizzie Murphy was the first woman to play professional baseball, but she was not the only one. Use this opportunity to discuss other little known female baseball players in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Research what other women were the first in their athletic fields and assign groups of students presentations on these female athletes.
- *Queen of the Diamond* is an excellent introduction in the history of women's rights and how these rights began to change during the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century into the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Have students present group presentations about some of the major changes in women's rights during these years including women's suffrage.

**STEAM:**

Explore how science affects baseball: gravity, lift, drag, etc. Discuss and define these principles of physics and apply these concepts to playing baseball.

Source: <http://www.chevronstemzone.com/baseball/>  
<http://blog.discoveryeducation.com/blog/2016/05/12/lively-lessons-baseball-travel-stem-challenge/>

**Vocabulary:**

Pastime

Amateur

Sheepish

Mobbed

Semipro

Trotted

Boarded

Uniform

Suffrage

Quahog

**RELATED WEBSITES**

**The First Person to Play for Both Baseball's NL and AL All-Star Teams was a Woman**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPHaEfx5srA>

An 8 minute video from "Today I Found Out" about Lizzie's biography and tidbits about the early history of baseball.

**Emily Arnold McCully Website**

<http://emilyarnoldmccully.com/index.html>

Author and illustrator Emily Arnold McCully's website dedicated to her books and illustrations.

**Slideshow: Influential Women And Moments In Sports History**

<http://www.espn.com/espnw/news-commentary/slideshow/10533618/1/null>

A brief slideshow of important women in sports history.