**

***SURROUNDED BY SHARKS***

by Michael Northrup

**Louisiana Young Teen Readers’ Choice Nominee 2017**

**Grade 6-8**

*Submitted by Sarah Redpath, Student*

*School of Library and Information Science, LSU, Baton Rouge*

**Title:** *Surrounded By Sharks*

**Author:** Michel Northrup

**Publisher:** Scholastic Press

**Pages:** 208

**SUMMARY**

12-year-old Davey Tsering just wanted a few minutes on his own, but what he got was a day full of terror. While on vacation with his family, Davey, not wanting to waste any island time and wishing to escape the confines of his hotel room and annoying little brother, heads to the beach in search of a quiet place to read his book. He finds a secluded spot but is soon drawn to the ocean by the enticing blue waves. Ignoring the ‘No Swimming’ sign, he wades out, but before he realizes he has been caught in a rip tide, he has been carried far out to sea. Davey encounters ocean-trash, jellyfish, and several sharks, and it seems like his only hope of survival is that someone will rescue him before the sharks dig in.

Meanwhile, Davey’s parents and younger brother Brando wake up and begin to frantically search the island for Davey. They first encounter a staff member who wants nothing more than to sweep the matter under the rug. After the local deputy gets involved, the Tsering family meets a young British girl, Drew, and her family, who were the last ones to see Davey on the beach that morning. Although Drew and Brando are young, they are observant enough to find clues indicating where Davey disappeared and brave enough to go on the rescue mission to help save him. In the end, Davey learns to appreciate the time spent with his family, and Brando and Drew learn that even young people can play an important part in a crisis.

**AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY**

Michael Northrup grew up in the small town Salisbury, Connecticut. He has dyslexia, causing him to repeat the second grade, and was the field-goal kicker for his high school football team. He attended NYU and, after graduation, worked as the senior editor for *Sports Illustrated Kids* from 2000 to 2008. He has worked as a standup comedian and earned a black belt, and he enjoys running. His works have appeared in publications such as *Sports Illustrated* and *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, and his books have been nominated for the 2013 Iowa Children’s Choice Award; the 2013 South Carolina Children’s, Junior, and Young Adults Book Award; the 2014 Louisiana Teen Reader’s Choice Award; and the 2015 Pennsylvania Young Reader’s Choice Award.

Biographical information taken from the "About Me” page of the author’s website at

<http://michaelnorthrop.net/?page_id=5>

Accessed January 29, 2016

and

Peterson Wong, Kelly. "Award-winning books by Michael Northrop.” FictionDB.

<http://www.fictiondb.com/author/michael-northrop~book-awards~62806.htm>

Accessed January 29, 2016

**AWARDS:**  
E! Online’s Best Summer Reads  
ALA/ YALSA Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Author website: <http://michaelnorthrop.net/>

**OTHER TITLES BY AUTHOR:**

*Gentlemen* (2009)

*Trapped* (2011)  
*Plunked* (2012)  
*Rotten* (2013)  
*Tomb Quest Book 1: Book of the Dead* (2015)  
*Tomb Quest Book 2: Amulet Keepers* (2015)  
*Valley of Kings (Tomb Quest Book 3)* (2015)  
*The Stone Warrior (Tomb Quest Book 4)* (2015)

**RELATED TITLES:**

*Stranded: Shadow Island* by Jeff Probst

*I Survived the Shark Attacks of 1916* byLauren Tarshis

*Secret of the Shark Pit* by LeeRoddy

**CLASSROOM CONNECTION**

**Language Arts:**

* Students will create a podcast or video, interviewing each other in pairs with one student in the role of reporter and the other playing one of the main characters from the story. Students should describe the events from the story and infer how the character might react to events and interview questions. While preparing the activity, they will learn how the format of a script differs from that of a novel or other work, and they will hone their public speaking skills when sharing their scenarios with the rest of the class.
* Students will create a class-wiki about the various species of shark found in different parts of the world. They should work as a team to divide the work and practice team communication skills. This activity can also be used in science classes with a focus on animal classification.
* Students will imagine that they, like Davey, are about to embark on an island vacation with their families. Each should write one blog/diary entry dated the day prior to arriving at the island, recording their expectations and plans, and another dated the day after the events of the book, recording the events and their reactions.

**Social Studies:**

* Students will work in small groups to research the setting of the book, Key West, and to produce a short report including information about the economy, government, geography, history, and culture as well as at least one interesting fact.
* Ask students to research the historical behaviors of sharks and the experiences of people who have unexpectedly encountered them in the wild like Davey. Do students’ findings align with the actions of the sharks in the book? Why might the sharks not have attacked Davey? Why might there have been so many sharks around him?

**Science**

* In the book Davey was caught in a Rip Tide, also called a Rip Current. Show your students this short 2 minute educational video about what Rip Currents are and what you can do if you are ever caught in one, <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/ripcurrent.html>. Divide your students into small groups and ask them to research information about Rip Currents. Have them report to the class their findings and maybe draw a visual example on the board. Here are some example websites:
  + <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/kits/currents/03coastal3.html>
  + <http://www.usla.org/?page=RIPCURRENTS>
  + <http://www.wikihow.com/Survive-a-Riptide>
  + <http://education.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/rip-current/>

**Art:**

Students will create a painting using tints and shades (as in the example at the URL below) to show an underwater view of circling sharks. Use knowledge about the sharks in the books to create appropriate silhouettes, and include a science tie-in by discussing why light might look different underwater than it does in the air around us. <http://thebeeskneescousin.blogspot.com/2012/04/tints-and-sharks.html>

**Vocabulary:**

Advert

Brine

Brute

Conspire

Devourer

Exile

Fore/aft

Hazy

Jockey (v)

Minefield

Oblige

Primitive

Pruned

Revoke

Sandbar

**Discussion Questions**

1. Make a prediction as to what you think will happen to Davey after the book ends. Support your answer with evidence from the text.
2. Outline the events from the time Brandon noticed Davey’s absence until Davey’s rescue. What led the Tserings in the wrong direction? What small changes could have been made during these events to change the timeline or outcome? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
3. How might the story and ending be different if Brandon or Drew were in Davey’s place? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
4. What idea do you think the author was trying to convey through this story? What is its purpose? Provide evidence from the text to support your answer.
5. Why was Marco reluctant to help the Tserings find Davey? Provide evidence from the text to support your answer.

**RELATED WEB SITES**

**Top 5 things I learned while writing *Surrounded by Sharks***  
<http://blog.scholastic.com/ink_splot_26/surrounded-by-sharks.html>  
Michael Northrop writes about the top five most interesting facts he learned while writing his book.

**National Geographic: Sharks**  
<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/sharks/>   
National Geographic’s website for sharks. Includes videos, articles, and photos about sharks.

**Live Science: Sharks**  
<http://www.livescience.com/topics/sharks/>   
Website with photos and videos about sharks. Includes an article with eight facts about sharks as well as a sharks-eye-view video.

**Kid Zone: Sharks**<http://www.kidzone.ws/sharks/>   
Kid friendly website with an index of shark facts. Includes pictures and activity ideas.