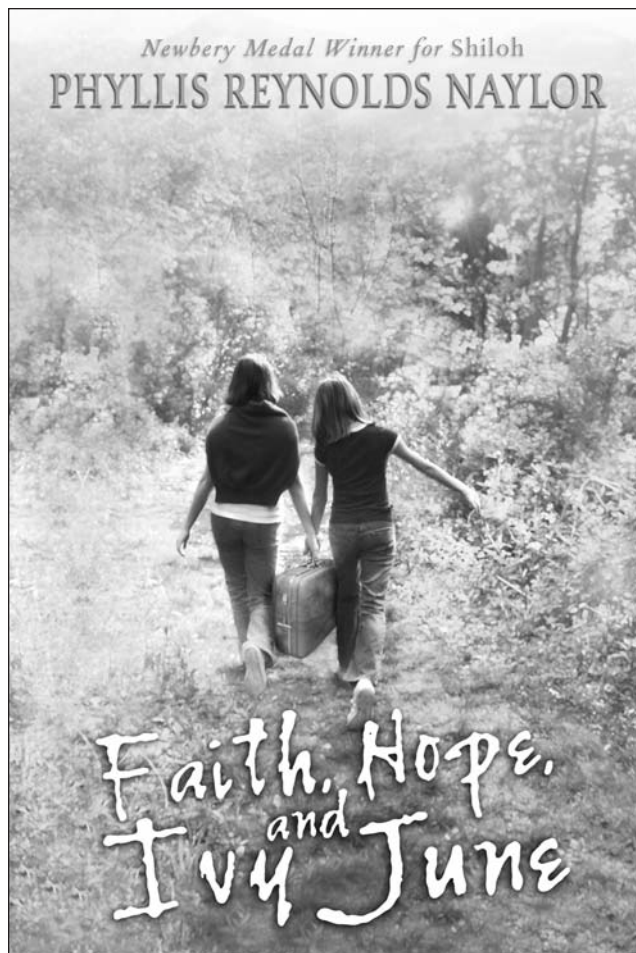


BOOKNOTES

educators guide



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THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Family • Prejudice
Appearances • Friendship
Jealousy • Courage

GRADES 4-7

ABOUT THE BOOK

Two seventh-grade girls from Kentucky, one from Appalachia and the other from Lexington, participate in a student exchange program that promises a journey that neither could have imagined.

Ivy June Mosley and Catherine Combs are selected to represent their schools in a seventh-grade student exchange program. Both girls live in Kentucky, but their lives are worlds apart. Ivy June lives with her grandparents deep in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains, and Catherine lives in Lexington and attends an affluent all-girls private school. Ivy June's Papaw is a coal miner, and Catherine's father owns a successful printing business that has been in the family for generations. The exchange program requires that each girl leave home for two weeks to live and attend classes with the other. Ivy June and Catherine have preconceived ideas about how the other lives, but by the end of the program, they discover that they are similar in ways that reach beyond their cultural and economic differences.

"I would like readers to develop more tolerance for people who are different, for ideas that are different, to come to realize that sometimes there isn't just one right way to do something. People see different possibilities in a situation, and the solutions they come up with may be very different."

—Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Ask students to talk about preconceived notions they have about the people of Appalachia. Instruct them to use library resources or Web sites that offer a broader perspective about this area and the people who live there. Have students write about one thing they learned in their research that changed their view of Appalachia. Encourage students to share their writing in class.

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

FAMILY

Describe Ivy June's family. Mammaw and Papaw chose Ivy June to live with them instead of Jessie, Howard, Ezra, or Danny. Explain why Ivy June was the best choice for them. Compare and contrast Ivy June's relationship with her grandparents to her relationship with her parents. How would her life be different if she lived with her parents? Discuss Catherine's relationship with her grandparents. The exchange program teaches Ivy June and Catherine about cultural differences. What do they learn about their own families through this experience?

PREJUDICE

Have the class define *prejudice*. How do cultural stereotypes lead to prejudice? Which person in the Mosley family displays the most prejudice toward the people of Lexington? What about the Combs family? Papaw Mosley advises Ivy June to not prejudice her heart before she gets to Lexington. How does going to a place with an "open mind" make for a better experience? Discuss the term *culture shock*. Explain the culture shock that each girl experiences.

APPEARANCES

Jessie isn't so worried about Ivy June going to Lexington. Instead, she is worried about Catherine coming to Thunder Creek and what she may tell her friends about the way the Mosleys live. What is the first hint that Ivy June is a little worried about appearances too? Ivy June's teachers give her spending money to use while visiting Lexington. Discuss how Ivy June's mother reacts to this gift. Catherine worries about offending Ivy June, yet at times she is embarrassed by her. What does this say about appearances?

FRIENDSHIP

Describe Catherine's friends. At first, it seems unlikely that Ivy June and Catherine will become friends. How does Ivy June almost jeopardize any possibility of becoming friends with Catherine? At what point in the novel does their relationship change? What do they learn about the true qualities of friendship? How is Ivy June set free by telling Catherine her secret?

JEALOUSY

Both Ivy June and Catherine have to deal with peer jealousy. Contrast the way Jennifer, Hannah, and Mackenzie show their jealousy to the way Ivy June's friend, Shirl, displays her jealousy. Why is Ivy June so sure that Shirl will overcome her jealousy? At what point in the novel does Ivy June realize that her mother is jealous of her?

COURAGE

It takes courage to participate in the exchange program. Discuss what Papaw Mosley teaches Ivy June about courage. How is his entire life a symbol of courage? Explain how Mr. Combs lacks courage. Discuss how Ivy June and Catherine give one another courage when they need it the most.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

LANGUAGE ARTS

Ivy June writes in her journal, “The lonesomeness I’ve got for Ma and Daddy is more like for what I wish they were, and that’s hard to put down on paper.” (p. 37) Write a journal entry that Ivy June might write about her parents after the student exchange program ends.

Ivy June attends church with the Combs family. The sermon is about giving and receiving. Think about what each family gives, and what the girls receive by taking part in the student exchange program. Craft a letter that each girl writes to their host family at the end of the program. Make sure that the letters refer to specific acts of giving and receiving.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Miss Dixon asks the class to map Ivy June’s journey to Lexington if she went by road, by air, and by water. (p. 5) Have students use an atlas or Google Maps to chart Ivy June’s trip. Then have them plan an alternative route for Catherine to take when she goes to Thunder Creek.

SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES

Grandmommy Mosley receives a letter from the White House upon the celebration of her 100th birthday. The letter mentions a few scientific advancements that occurred during her lifetime. Have students research significant scientific discoveries or accomplishments that have occurred in the past 100 years and chart them on a time line. Discuss the contribution of each discovery to society. How does this show the link between science and social studies?

SCIENCE

Buckner Academy is finishing up a geology unit when Ivy June arrives. Ask students to research the geology of Appalachia, and specifically the areas rich in coal. Prepare a presentation that Ivy June might make to the class about Papaw Mosley’s work in the coal mines. What are the dangers he encounters? Some students may want to learn about “clean coal technology,” something that has garnered political attention in this nation. How might this technology affect our nation’s future?

MUSIC

Ivy June has a beautiful voice, and loves to sing. Divide the class into groups. Ask them to select and perform a song or hymn that Ivy June might sing at the end of the novel when she discovers that Papaw is safe.

ART

Ask students to paint a picture titled “Worlds Apart” that Ivy June might give to her teacher at the end of the exchange program. Have them share their paintings in class, and discuss the art medium used.



Photograph © 2009 by Ericka O'Rourke.

VOCABULARY | USE OF LANGUAGE

Ask students to identify unfamiliar words and write definitions taking clues from the context of the story.

Such words may include:

p. 6	<i>envious</i>	p. 10	<i>desolate</i>	p. 64	<i>subtlety</i>	p. 212	<i>resolution</i>
p. 6	<i>stereotypes</i>	p. 19	<i>sallow</i>	p. 64	<i>tactless</i>	p. 226	<i>inaudible</i>
p. 6	<i>consolation</i>	p. 26	<i>execution</i>	p. 75	<i>indecipherable</i>		
p. 8	<i>ambassador</i>	p. 56	<i>vestments</i>	p. 76	<i>deflect</i>		



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor is the author of 136 books, including the acclaimed Newbery Award-winning *Shiloh*, also set in Appalachia. She became interested in the Appalachian Mountains and its unique culture when she received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts that allowed her to travel and study the region. Her other novels for Random House include the highly popular Boy-Girl Battle series, which begins with *The Boys Start the War* and *The Girls Get Even*. Mrs. Naylor and her husband live in Gaithersburg, Maryland. They are the parents of two grown sons and have four grandchildren.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Appalachian Culture

library.thinkquest.org/TQ0310443/Appalachian%20Culture.htm

Official Site of the Kentucky Coal Mining Museum

www.kingdomcome.org/museum/

Horse Farms in Lexington, Kentucky

www.horsefarmtours.com

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