



Sneak Thief

by Faith Harkey

Grade 4 – 7

About the Author

Faith Harkey fell in love with writing in the fourth grade, when her language arts class read a poem about a dragon. Her teacher suggested that Faith carry a notebook with her all the time so she could write whenever she felt inspired. Faith filled more than twenty notebooks before she graduated from high school, then went on to study creative writing at Eckerd College. *Sneak Thief* is her second novel. She lives in Tallahassee, Florida.

For more about Faith and her books, including an expanded Sass experience, visit FaithHarkey.com.

Educator's Guide

Teachers • Librarians • Homeschool Parents

About the Book

Hush Cantrell's life is not easy, and she knows she must rely on herself. When she meets new friend Desiree, her life makes a new turn, until her "borrowing" as a sneak thief puts her in a position where she must make a decision about her future. Learning about kindness in a loving home where she spends her time in a garden, Hush begins to change. Yet she still struggles with her "loco" and her negligent mother. As Hush discovers her particular shine, with Desiree's help, she tries to use her shine for good. But her intentions backfire, and she knows she can't continue in the same way. Hush learns that pain has a place — she finds a way to use her magic in a positive manner as she comes to terms with her mother.

Use the following discussion material, which fully supports teaching to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, to foster a deeper understanding of the novel (see last page for complementary standards).

Discussions Questions

What is a sneak thief?

What kind of person was Hush?

Describe Hush's first meeting with Desiree.

Why do you think Desiree wanted Hush to be her friend?

What was the friendship between Hush and Desiree like? Do your friendships have anything in common with theirs?

What is the overall theme of the book?

Explain what Hush meant about her *loco* and how it affected her.

Compare and contrast Desiree's family and life with Hush's family and life.

What pushed Hush to steal the scarf when she was finally caught?

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Discussions Questions *(continued)*

Did Hush make the best decision to live with Mabel for the summer? Explain your answer.

What evidence showed the beginnings of change in Hush's behavior?

When did Hush first see the whist (pain imp) and what did she do?

How did Hush use her shine to help people?

Why was yoga a good way to help people, according to Hush and Desiree?

What was the problem with removing people's pain and what example from the book showed the problem with it?

What did Hush learn about the value of pain?

What misunderstanding did Hush have when Mabel said, "Well, what did you expect?" and how did Hush find out what Mabel really meant?

What was the Big Book and how did Hush use it?

How did Hush make amends and why did she do so?

Do you think Hush loved her mother all along, even with the bad way her mother treated her? Why or why not? Give an example.

Why did Nina want to change her life?

Do you believe people can change and improve their lives?

"Can you ever go back on the bad stuff you've done?"

Library Activities

<http://www.ala.org/alsc/kickstart>

Compare Desiree's interest in horses with a good nonfiction horse book, such as:

How to Think Like A Horse: The Essential Handbook for Understanding Why Horses Do What They Do by Cherry Hill

Cherry Hill's Horse Care for Kids: Grooming, Feeding, Behavior, Stable & Pasture, Health Care, Handling & Safety, Enjoying by Cherry Hill

Everything Horse: What Kids Really Want to Know about Horses by Marty Crisp

Read pages 10-11 from *Sneak Thief*. Describe a horse witch and explain why Desiree wants to be one. Bring in horse equipment and kinds of feed to show, and then do a horse craft. Make horse cookies and horseshoe shaped sandwiches to serve.

<http://www.coolcrafts.com/diy-horse-craft-ideas/>

Classroom Activities

Math

If the yoga participants each gave \$2.00 every week and the average attendance was 9 people, what would Hush and Desiree earn in one year?

If Hush's "borrowing" totaled \$1,762.00, how many weeks would she have to teach yoga to pay it back?

Science

In what way is pain helpful to a body? Investigate how pain is signaled and communicated to the body where the pain occurs. Trace the path the nerves take to feel pain.

Research plants or flowers that grow in your area of the country. Visit a nursery and buy a young flower or buy a packet of seeds. Use potting soil and a container to plant your flower or seeds. Water according to the directions and observe the growth. Make measurements of your plants and record them. Measure your plant every day to see how tall it is and record your information. Count the leaves and record that. Then write observations about what you see relating to the five senses. Compare your data with a friend.

English Language Arts

Make a treasure map of your own. What do you want your life to be? Use pictures from magazines to create your own map.

Read pages 202-203. What other positive qualities did Hush have? Think about your own 'shines,' the things you do best. How they could help other people? Do you use your shine to the best of your ability? How could you use it more? Make a list of your own shines.

Look at the Sass classified ads:

<http://faithharkey.com/novels/sass/>

Discuss what a classified ad is. Visit the website and read the ads. Choose your best shine and then write an ad for your services that use your shine.

Dialects are ways of speaking that are used in a particular region. Hush uses dialect often. Choose the expressions that Hush uses and explain their meaning. Then think about how you might use words that are a dialect from your region and what it means.

These links give information about dialects.

<http://www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/americanvarieties/>

<http://www.goodlingos.com/amerispeak/>

<http://www.gscdn.org/library/cms/84/16384.pdf>

<http://archives.lessoncorner.com/157ead5f9c84ae21b.pdf>

<http://www.hgaschools.org/ourpages/auto/2012/6/28/39119468/6-Week15-Reading.pdf>

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Library Activities *(continued)*

Compare Hush to Cinderella. List the ways you can think of about how Cinderella and Hush are alike and how they are different and make a chart to show them. Then describe the ways Hush and Cinderella overcame their problems.

Read the chapter about the fair and the friendship pins. Make a design of your own about the way you would create a friendship pin for your best friend.

Create a scavenger hunt using the items Hush "borrowed" and collect them to help make her amends. Glue pictures of her borrowed items onto cardboard and laminate them. These are some of her items:

- Sashay perfume
- ointment
- book
- pack of cards
- pink lipstick
- hairbrush
- set of measuring spoons
- dental floss
- watch

Hide the different borrowed images in different sections of the library based on the Dewey decimal system. Then make clue cards using the different categories of numbers where the borrowed items were located. For example, place the set of measuring spoons in the 500s and make the clue read Natural Sciences and Mathematics. The hairbrush could be placed in the 700s and the clue for it would be The Arts. After finding each item, the clue with that item would be for locating the next item. The final clue might lead toward the check-out area or to a set of refreshments. For a large group, make 2 or 3 copies of each object and divide the children into manageable teams.

Invite a yoga instructor to demonstrate yoga for kids. Have the kids bring in a yoga mat or towel and practice a few moves.

<https://www.parents.com/fun/activities/indoor/yoga-for-kids/>
<https://www.gaia.com/style/kids-yoga>

Common Core Connections

Discussion Points

Writing:

Text Types and Purposes

Grade 4 - W.4.1A-D, W.4.2b-e
Grade 5 - W.5.1A-D, W.5.2b-e
Grade 6 - W.6.1a-c, 6.3b-e
Grade 7 - W.7.1c, d, e, 7.3a-ea

Production and

Distribution of Writing

Grade 4 - W.4.4
Grade 5 - W.5.4
Grade 6 - W.6.4
Grade 7 - W.7.4

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Grade 4 - W.4.9a
Grade 5 - W.5.9a
Grade 6 - W.6.9a
Grade 7 - N/A

Range of Writing

Grade 4 - W.4.10
Grade 5 - W.5.10
Grade 6 - W.6.10
Grade 7 - W.7.10z

Reading Literature:

Key Ideas and Details

Grade 4 - RL.4.1-3
Grade 5 - RL.5.1-3
Grade 6 - RL.6.1-3
Grade 7 - RL.7.1-2

Craft and Structure

Grade 3 - RL.3.4, 6
Grade 4 - RL.4.4, 6
Grade 5 - RL.5.4, 6
Grade 6 - RL.6.4, 6
Grade 7 - RL.7.4, 6

Range of Reading Level of Text Complexity

Grade 3 - RL.3.10
Grade 4 - RL.4.10
Grade 5 - RL.5.10
Grade 6 - RL.6.10
Grade 7 - RL.7.10

Speaking and Listening:

Comprehension and Collaboration

Grade 4 - SL.4.1a-d
Grade 5 - SL.5.1a-c
Grade 6 - SL.6a-c
Grade 7 - SL.7.1a-d

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Grade 4 - SL.4.4
Grade 5 - SL.5.4
Grade 6 - SL.6.4
Grade 7 - SL.7.4

Credit:

Guide written by Shirley Duke

Classroom Activities *(continued)*

Writing

In the voice of Hush, write and explain how she feels about her *loco* and describe it in a way she would. Include dialogue of your own to show Hush.

Compare and contrast Hush and Desiree. In what ways are they alike and how are they different?

Write and explain why you think Hush resented Kitty and why Hush behaved in the way she did. Use examples from the book to support your writing.

Recipe

No Bake Horse Cookies

Prep Time: 20 mins, Total Time: 20 mins

Author: Jessica at Savory Experiments



<https://www.savoryexperiments.com/no-bake-horse-cookies/>

Ingredients:

- 12 Milano cookies
- 12 mini Nilla wafers
- 3 strands rope licorice
- 1 small Tootsie Roll
- Black food coloring pen or black frosting with writing tip
- 24 candy eyes
- brown/white frosting with a star tip
- Toothpick

1. Establish a work space and pipe out a tablespoon or two of brown/white frosting the upper corner along with a toothpick to use of application.
2. Draw a smiley face using the food coloring pen onto all 12 mini Nilla Wafers. Using a small dab of frosting, attach mini Nilla wafer to the bottom, following the curve, of your Milano cookie.
3. Cut licorice ropes into 3-4 inch pieces, carefully wrap around your cookie midway, attaching on the back with a dab of frosting and trim the ends.
4. Using kitchen shears, cut your Tootsie Roll into thin pieces and then again until you get a piece small enough to form a triangular ear. Roll between your fingers should do the trick. Attach to the other end of your Milano cookie using a small dab of frosting.
5. In the center, pipe out a tuft of hair using the star tip.
6. Lastly, add candy eyes. Allow frosting to set and serve!