



In the Woods

Robin Stevenson

Reading level: 3.2

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AR Quiz # 132848

Book Summary

Acting on a tip from his twin sister, Cameron discovers a newborn baby abandoned in the woods. After rescuing the baby, Cameron begins to suspect the real reason his sister knew where the baby had been abandoned. Cameron confides in a friend who encourages him to confront his sister and, for her health, take her to the hospital.

Prereading Idea

Ask students, "Why is it important for pregnant girls to have quality prenatal care?" After some discussion, ask students to investigate the reality of their opinions and bring back to the discussion any additional information they have learned.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

A sad statement of our society's downward spiral is the increase in the number of abandoned newborn babies. Ask students to form groups of three and to research laws protecting infants from abandonment, statistics surrounding the abandoned babies, punishment for the parents of these babies, and available programs to help eliminate the problem. Each group should make a brochure or a one-page public-service information sheet and, after presenting their findings to the class, distribute copies to teen clubs, Planned Parenthood offices, school guidance counselors and local libraries.

Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel***Conflict***

Katie and Cameron both struggle with internal conflict as they make difficult, potentially life-changing decisions. Ask students to select one of the characters and to write an extended diary of the events, from their chosen character's point of view, making sure to include elements leading to the conflict as well as the resolution of the conflict. Students can then share their diary entries with other students.

Theme

The idiom *Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining* could be used to express one of the main ideas of this story. Ask students to work with a partner and to find other idioms that could express thematic statements of *In the Woods*. Each group should write the idiom, its origin and its application to the novel, using quotes from the book for support. Idioms and their explanations should be posted in the classroom.

Plot

As the story progresses, the author gives the reader background information about Katie and Cameron as the possible reason for their actions. Have students draw a basic plot line, listing the major elements and filling in the pertinent information about the two main characters and their relationships with each other and their mother. Display the finished products in the classroom.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. Even though Katie and Cameron are twins, their personalities are quite distinct. How do those differences affect their reactions to the events in the story? How are their characters the same?
2. Why does Katie hide her pregnancy from her family and friends? What role does Katie's mother play in Katie's deception? Does her mother's high expectations contribute to Katie's choice to hide the pregnancy?
3. As Cameron is rushing the baby to the hospital, he is thinking, "Just for once, please, please, please, let my best be good enough" (p. 20). Why does Cameron have the idea that his best is never good enough?

4. Since Cameron and Audrey hit it off so well when they meet, why doesn't Cameron call Audrey and ask her out? How does Audrey feel about Cameron not calling? What does Audrey mean when she says to Cameron, "I believe in giving people a second chance" (p. 65)?
5. When he is questioned by social workers and the police about the baby he finds in the woods, Cameron does his best to protect Katie. What happens that finally forces Cameron to face the fact that Katie had a baby and left it in the woods?
6. What role does Audrey play in helping Cameron come to the decision to tell the authorities his suspicions regarding Katie? How does it help Cameron that Katie needs to receive medical attention at the hospital? What do Cameron's actions say about his character?
7. Why do both Cameron and his mother feel guilty about Katie's pregnancy? How could they have helped her if they had known? Why doesn't Katie tell any of her friends?
8. Why is Cameron so surprised to learn the truth about how his mother feels about "perfect" Katie and "screw-up" Cameron? Does her attitude change how Cameron feels about himself? How has Katie's daughter affected Cameron?

Writer's Craft

Vocabulary Enrichment

Ask students to look at the list of words below and to find them in the book. Ask them to write definitions of the words based on the context clues in the sentence. Students can then write an original sentence using the words. With a partner, have students compare and discuss the sentences generated and select the one they like the best. Then, write it on a sentence strip to display in the room.

Traumatic	(ch. 5)	Exasperated	(ch. 6)
Fluke	(ch. 8)	Egotistical	(ch. 9)
Muffled	(ch. 10)	Fury	(ch. 10)
Subdued	(ch. 12)	Procrastinating	(ch. 12)
Prickles	(ch. 12)		

Author Biography

Robin Stevenson loves to read and write and has since she was a child. Traveling and sailing also play a major role in her life, as well as being a university instructor, a social worker and a mother to her preschool-age son. Robin is currently working on another novel for young adults, and she always carries pen and paper with her to record new ideas and bits of dialogue that pop into her head. She currently lives in Victoria, British Columbia, with her partner, her son and a variety of animals.