



Justine McKeen vs. the Queen of Mean

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illustrated by Dave Whamond

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About the Book

Justine McKeen is back, and she's on a deadline. With only days left before Earth Day, Justine enlists the help of her classmates to count flower buds, frogs, spiders and ants in their natural habitat as part of an environmental science project. But there's a species right in her own classroom that she'll have to tackle first—a class bully. Savannah Blue, aka the Queen of Mean, criticizes Justine's secondhand clothes and calls being green a waste of time. Their teacher, Mrs. Howie, gives the girls a new assignment for Earth Day—they must present together to the class on why it's important to care for the environment. In the sixth book in this bestselling series, Justine is up against her biggest challenge yet—can she convince the Queen of Mean to go green?

About the Author

With close to three million books in print, **Sigmund Brouwer** writes for both children and adults. In the last ten years, he has given writing workshops to students in schools from the Arctic Circle to inner city Los Angeles. One of his novels, *The Last Disciple*, earned Sigmund an appearance on ABC's *Good Morning America*. Sigmund and his family live half the year in Nashville, Tennessee, and half the year in Red Deer, Alberta. For more information, please visit www.rockandroll-literacy.com.

About the Writing

I had so much fun writing all the previous stories in the series that it never occurred to me (until recently) that anybody would ever question the need to help the planet. While trying to be green for the sake of being green is good motivation, I thought that being green with purpose—because you understand how amazing the planet is—would be even better. Naturally then, I needed someone to question why Justine did what she did so that both of them could discover the amazing world of nature.

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections***Prereading Ideas***

- Go on a trip to any area outside the school and take a really close look at insects and plants, pretending you are seeing them for the first time. Come up with three things that are truly amazing about something that at first looks ordinary.
- Choose one species—insect, fish, frog, mammal, anything—and do some research to find out some characteristics that are impressive or amazing.
- Spend lunch or recess with some students that you normally don't hang out with and learn how much you have in common with each other.

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of an example of man-made interference that disturbed the environment (e.g. mercury in rivers, cutting down forests)? What was done to help repair the damage?
2. Can you think of a time when a foreign species was introduced into an ecosystem with unexpected consequences? How did it disrupt that ecosystem? What were the results? (E.g. when Shakespeare readers introduced starlings into North America.)

Suggested Activities

- Make a list of different species of birds, mammals, reptiles or insects that you can expect to find in your area. Learn the different ways to safely locate those species. Go on a field trip and make a list of how many you can find and what each species was doing when you found it. (You might have to be very quiet and patient!)
- Look for a crowdsourcing app that you can use locally to help scientists monitor the environment.
- Learn about how special planet Earth is for supporting ecosystems (how many planets in the universe, how many planets might support life, the range of conditions it takes for a planet to support life, etc.)

Other Titles and Websites of Interest***Books***

For the Love of Insects by Thomas Eisner

Hands-On Nature: Information and Activities for Exploring The Environment with Children, edited by Jenepher Lingelbach and Lisa Purcell

Snakes: A Kid's Book Of Cool Pictures And Amazing Facts About Snakes by John Yost

Websites

www.allaboutbirds.org

www.wildlifenorthamerica.com

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Justine McKeen, Queen of Green

Justine McKeen, Walk the Talk

Justine McKeen, Pooper Scooper

Justine McKeen, Eat Your Beets

Justine McKeen and the Bird Nerd

Review

“The plot provides a framework for explaining species interconnectivity, and the back matter includes links to apps and websites for science observers...The abundant humor keeps the tale quick and readable. Short chapters, plentiful black-and-white illustrations, and Justine’s indeterminate age make the book suitable for older, struggling readers.” —*Booklist*