

Picture a Girl

TEACHER GUIDE

Mama is really good at two things (three, if you count making French toast): Surfing and telling stories. When eleven-year-old Addie wakes up one Monday, Mama has left. Again. Now Addie has to hide Mama's absence, scrape together meals and look after her little brother, Billy. Then Addie spots a poster for a local surfing competition with a big cash prize. It's enough to keep her family afloat. All she has to do is win it.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

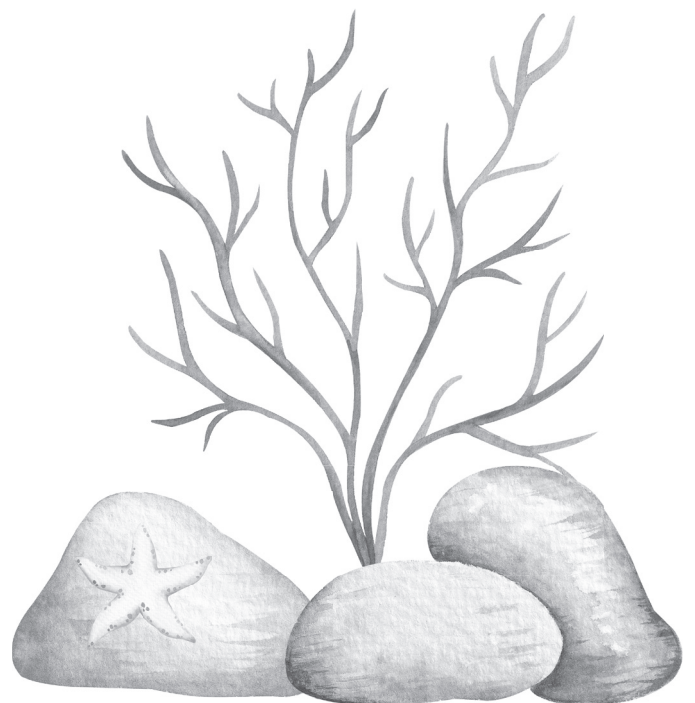
Jenny Manzer is the author of *Save Me*, *Kurt Cobain* and *My Life as a Diamond*, which was shortlisted for numerous awards, including the Diamond Willow Award, Chocolate Lily Award, Victoria Children's Book Prize and the Silver Birch Award. She has a degree in creative writing and was a finalist for the 2013 CBC Creative Nonfiction Prize, one of Canada's most prestigious literary competitions. She lives with her family in Victoria, British Columbia.

THEMES

Friendship / Resilience / Addiction / Self-Expression / Sport / Inter-generational trauma / Loyalty / Sibling love / Surfing

READ-ALoud SUGGESTIONS:

Pages 19–26: Addie discovers Mama is gone again.
Pages 27–29: Addie makes a bold move to enter a surf contest.
Pages 41–47: Addie learns Billy's teacher wants to see Mama. A near accident causes chaos.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The book opens with the quote: “Sometimes a story is all you have left.” What do you think this means to Addie and Billy?
2. In the story, surfing is a big part of Addie’s family life. What activities are important to your family?
3. Have you ever tried surfing in Canada or overseas? Where in Canada do people surf?
4. Had you ever heard of Britain’s home children? What did you learn about them in the book?
5. What would you do if you were left home alone, like Addie? What do you do when you feel afraid?
6. Have you ever competed in a big event? How did it feel?
7. Addie’s mother has a problem with drinking, but it’s kept secret. Do you think it’s important to talk about your feelings?
8. We all need help sometimes. When was a time you had to ask a grown up to help you?
9. Addie has a good, loyal friend in Pokey. What are three things you value in one of your friends?
10. In the story, Addie is very aware of being poor. Is it wrong to judge people by how much money their family has? Why or why not?
11. Do you have a favorite story from your family?
12. In the book, Addie dreams of food and is often hungry. What are three foods you’d rather not live without?
13. Addie trains for her surfing competition. Have you ever trained for something? What did you do?
14. How is Addie different at the end of the story?

ACTIVITIES

1. Try drawing a cartoon that shows someone wiping out while surfing or catching a big wave.
2. Have you ever tried surfing? Write down three sports or activities you would like to try one day and explain why.
3. There are special surf words used in the book, like “shubie.” Look up some more surf terms and see what they mean. Make a list of your favorite five surfing words.
4. Pretend you are a newscaster covering Addie’s surf contest. How would you report the events?
5. Interview someone in your family and ask them about your family stories. Make note of a story that that you had not heard before.

