

## Novel Resource #2

### Angus and Sadie by Cynthia Voight

Published by Harper Collins, New York, NY 2005

*"I write...because I want to write. I don't consider myself a good storyteller, and I have no burning stories to tell. I have no solutions to the problems of the world. I think there are solutions for individual people and individual circumstances. My writing is my way of saying, 'Have you looked at this way?' I do it. I enjoy it."*

Cynthia Voight

Cynthia vowed she would never be a teacher, but when she walked into the classroom, everything changed. She taught English to second, fifth, and seventh graders at the Key School in Annapolis. She decided to teach part time and work on her writing also. Her writing process often begins with a question. She writes down ideas and lets them stew for about a year. Then, when she sits down to write, she makes a list of characters and tries to see how they fit.

"I enjoy almost everything I do, perhaps because when I don't enjoy something, I don't do it. I enjoy writing; I enjoy teaching; I enjoy having a family to live among." Cynthia seems very opinionated and very honest when she speaks. She doesn't do anything she doesn't want to and let's you know that.

She has no personal webpage address, nor an email. She wants to keep to herself and enjoy life.

Cynthia has written over 20 books including Angus and Sadie, Dacey's Song, The Runner, and Homecoming.



## Annotation:

Angus and Sadie is the story of two dogs and the adventures they have while living on a farm in Maine. They are both border collies from the same litter, but look and act very different. Angus is the strong, clever brother to Sadie, the small, timid sister. Angus believes she is afraid of everything and it is his job to protect her. Sadie isn't so sure she is afraid of EVERYTHING, but she is glad Angus is around, just the same.

Sadie tries to be brave, but to no avail. She yelps or runs away from anything she is unsure of, and Angus keeps telling her to not do that and be brave. The author makes Sadie very "childish" and you begin to pity Sadie due to the fact that she really is scared of everything. The author has Sadie repeat every compliment she gets and question everything such as "*I sat good*" or "*I am not weird, am I?*". Angus is always there to answer her but he doesn't always build her up. He sometimes agrees that she is weird but tells her that is OK.

Anyone that has ever enjoyed the companionship you get from a dog, would love this book. I have always been a "dog person" and I could not imagine not having a dog around to share adventures. My current dog, Pepsi, is definitely one of the family and if she ever became lost, it would be like losing a family member. The author brings that feeling out when Sadie is gone. Mister and Missus, and even Angus, are depressed and solemn until Sadie returns. Even though the author makes sure that the dogs have very different personalities, they love each other and could not stand to be apart.

## Booktalk:

Ever had a best friend? I mean one you can not live without? That would be Angus and Sadie. They are brother and sister border collies, but they are also best friends. Angus is the smart, strong-willed brother, while Sadie is the meek shy sister. Angus is always around to help Sadie when needed.

Angus and Sadie are adopted by a very nice couple who own a farm. Angus and Sadie are trained to help with the other animals on the farm. Angus, of course, is better at getting the sheep back to the pen and a much faster learner of commands. Sadie is constantly afraid and does not get the commands the first time they are given, like Angus does.

What will happen when Sadie decides to go off on her own during a blizzard? How will she ever find her way back without Angus? Mister and Missus, and Angus, start to believe the worst and head back to the farm. Will Sadie make it back? Will she be able to bring home the lost sheep? To find the answers to these questions, you need to read Angus and Sadie by Cynthia Voight.

**Characters:** The main characters in this book are Angus and Sadie. They are brother and sister border collies and are adopted by two wonderful people that own a farm. Mister and Missus, as the dogs call them, are very important in the book as the dog's owners and caregivers. Other minor characters would be the other farm animals – 2 barn cats, 1 house cat, cows and of course, the sheep.

Angus is the very dominant dog that is never afraid. He is always watching out for Sadie, who is afraid of everything!

**Conflict:** The ongoing conflict is the ever scared Sadie and trying to get her out of her shell. Sadie is having constant external struggles with Angus and all the other animals. She is very scared and timid of almost everything. Angus gets discouraged at times, but never gives up on Sadie. The main internal conflict is the fact that Sadie really does want to be brave and is always trying to but is not successful. During a very heavy blizzard, Sadie spots a sheep that is not with the rest of the herd, and runs off to get it back, since that is one of her and Angus' jobs on the farm. She becomes very scared, but has to do something. She thinks to herself about what Angus would do, and she bravely get the sheep and herself back to the farm.

**Conflict Resolution:** The family has come in for the evening and has given up hope that Sadie could have survived the blizzard. All at once, they hear her barking and look outside and see the sheep returning. Sadie is now the HERO!! And now she has been successful on her own and has much more confidence from that point on.

**Genre:** An adventure book to say the least! This was a great realistic fiction book that many children can associate with, whether they actually live on a farm, or have cats and dogs for pets.

If you enjoyed Angus and Sadie, you will also enjoy these other adventure realistic fiction books:

**The Giant Rat of Sumatra: or Pirates Galore** by Sid Fleischman

**Whittington** by Alan Armstrong

**Each Little Bird That Sings** by Deborah Wiles

Also, you might enjoy these books also written by Cynthia Voigt:

**Homecoming**

**A Solitary Blue**

**The Runner**

**Dacey's Song**

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Interest Level - 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade

Reading Level – 4.3

### **Read-Aloud Passages:**

Chapter 2, pages 40-42 This is a conversation between Angus and Sadie after Angus has gone out and saved a sheep that was caught in a ditch and in barbed wire.

Conversation is started by Sadie.

*Am I smart?*

*Not as smart as me.*

*Maybe when I get my cast off?*

*Probably not. But do not worry. I'm here to take care of you.*

This is the whole premise of the book – that Angus will always be around to take care of Sadie.

Chapter 9, pages 159-160 This is at a point in the story when Sadie becomes the hero for once for helping a sheep and Angus is not really happy about Sadie making it on her own. The dogs argue back and forth about who is the better dog, and at the conclusion, both dogs decide to get along and help each other as necessary.

**Setting:** This story takes place on the Old Davis Farm in Maine. It is a large farm, over 137 acres of woods, pastures, and fields. Sheep and chickens were raised on the farm. Cows were also used for milk, butter and sometimes cheese. This could happen during the present day on one of many farms in our country. The way that Cynthia Voight describes the farm, you can actually picture it with the mountains behind it. She also vividly describes all the trouble that Angus and Sadie get into with great detail, so you feel like you are there.

**Point of View:** This story was told in third person omniscient.

**Theme:** As the title states, Angus and Sadie is about the brother/ sister relationship between these two dogs that are adopted by a wonderful couple. Throughout the story, you are led to believe that Angus will always be the strong, smart dog that watches out for the smaller, timid Sadie. Like the fable, the mouse and the lion teaches, never forget about what the small, timid one might be able to accomplish. Near the end, Sadie does become the hero and Angus has trouble dealing with it for awhile. In the end, they stay the best of friends and are always there for each other.