

Novel Resource #2

Title: Lunch Money

Author: Andrew Clements

Copyright Date: 2005

Publisher: Simon and Schuster, New York, NY

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About the Author

Interesting Facts, Background, Anecdotes

If someone wants to know anything about any process of writing, this author would be the person to ask. Andrew Clements has held just about every job there is involved with writing. He was an avid reader as a child, a student of writing in high school and college, a teacher of writing for all ages, a publisher, an illustration and picture book writer, and the author of many novels.

Andrew Clements grew up in New Jersey during his younger childhood years. His family then moved to Illinois, where he remained until after getting married and beginning a family. During his time in Illinois, Clements had a career as a teacher, teaching 4th grade and 8th grade and high school English. After teaching no longer seemed like the right career path, Clements and his wife moved to New York where he worked first as a singer-songwriter (the man is talented in so many genres of writing!) and then as a publisher. Years later he and his family moved to Massachusetts, where Clements continues his writing career.

I find the setting in which Clements works to be an interesting story. He works in a tiny, tiny shed behind his home (a photo can be seen on his

website), free of all typical distractions- no e-mail, cell phone, etc.. What's interesting is his return to this setting after spending summers at a cabin in Maine as a child that he believes turned him into the contemplative and imaginative writer he is today.

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Author's Connection to the Book

Many of Andrew Clements' novels center around a school setting, including Lunch Money. Clements says that this is because school is such a big part of every child's life and they are familiar with it. It's also obvious that since Clements was a teacher in his early career, he knows the ins and outs of school for students and their teachers.

Two topics from this novel are familiar to Clements- comic books and earning money. Although Clements says he wasn't as driven as Greg, Lunch Money's main character, he and his siblings were always trying to make some extra money. They performed many tasks similar to Greg- such as helping the family and shoveling snow in the neighborhood. Also like Greg, Clements enjoyed comic books as a child, admiring the illustrations and unique storytelling experience.

Other Books Written by Andrew Clements

Frindle, The Report Card, Jake Drake chapter books, The Landry News, The School Story, The Jacket, A Week in the Woods, Big Adalbert, Big Al

Annotation

Greg Kenton has always understood money- how to make it, how to save it, and how to spend it. One day, after forgetting his lunch money and needing to borrow some from his classmates, Greg realizes that almost every

student has an extra quarter or two each day. Greg comes up with a brilliant plan to begin selling little toys and other items. It's a successful idea, but Mrs. Davenport, the principal, shoots it down. So Greg begins to sell homemade comic books. But tempers flare when his childhood nemesis, Maura Shaw, copies his idea.

Greg and Maura have to decide to either keep fighting or combine their talents to create comic books together. Working together proves successful, but they still have to get past Mrs. Davenport's ban on selling things at school. With the help of their logical math teacher the two are able to win over Mrs. Davenport and the school committee and gain permission to create and sell mini-comic books at school.

From the very beginning of this story, the reader can see that there are going to be some valuable lessons on money and math. Not only do we learn the value of a dollar and the value of hard work and saving money, but this story also contains computation practice, too. The ease at which Greg adds, subtracts, multiplies and divides numbers is encouraging to young readers.

I imagine that every child who reads this book will have a head full of swirling thoughts about how they, too, can put their talents to use in order to earn a few extra dollars. Every reader including myself, young and old, who has ever had a lemonade stand or shoveled snow, will easily be able to relate to Greg Kenton's story.

Booktalk

Lunch Money by Andrew Clements, the same author who wrote Frindle, is a story of a boy about your age who loves making money. I'm sure many of you like to make a few extra dollars from time to time.

Greg Kenton, the main character, knows how to make, save, and spend his money- lots of money. He's sold lemonade, shoveled snow, and now his new plan is to sell comic books. Comic books he's made. At school!

But Greg has to deal with some obstacles in his moneymaking plan, like Maura Shaw, his childhood enemy who is always stealing his ideas, and Mrs. Davenport, his principal who thinks that selling things at school is certainly not allowed.

Will Greg ever get the chance to get his comic book business off the ground and start raking in some much-wanted money?

Characters

Greg Kenton- The main character. He is a 6th grade boy who has a knack for making money. He begins a comic book-selling business. He is very analytical, driven, and an entrepreneur.

Maura Shaw- A 6th grade girl, Greg's neighbor and his nemesis. Greg and Maura have a history of conflict. Maura always seems to be stealing Greg's moneymaking ideas ever since they were young kids.

Mr. Zenotopoulous –A math teacher at Ashworth Intermediate School. His world revolves around math. Mr. Z is Greg and Maura's levelheaded math teacher and is the teacher who first discovers the comic book business conflict between Greg and Maura.

Mrs. Davenport- The principal of Ashworth Intermediate School. She forbids Greg, and later Maura, from selling items at school.

Conflict

Greg Kenton and Maura Shaw have been enemies ever since they were young children and Maura would copy Greg's ideas, from racing Big Wheels to selling lemonade. Now they're in sixth grade, but nothing has changed. Maura has copied Greg's brilliant moneymaking idea of creating mini-comic books and selling them at school. Greg thinks it's infringing on his profit.

Internally, later in the story, Greg struggles with whether or not his comic book club idea is greedy and selfish and whether or not he should go through with the plan in order to make money.

Conflict Resolution

After some blow-ups, the worst of which leaves Greg with a b-l-o-o-d-y nose, he and Maura work together to create an even better written, better drawn, and better inked comic book to sell.

At the end of the story Greg decides to change his idea about selling comic books for his own profit, worrying that it's too greedy of an idea. With the help of Mr. Z's suggestion, Greg and friends create a comic book club, set up a revamped school store, and sell their own products and the products of other students, with much of the profit going back to the school.

Genre: Contemporary Fiction

If You Liked Lunch Money You'll Love....

Frindle by Andrew Clements

The Report Card by Andrew Clements

The Get Rich Quick Club by Dan Gutman

The Landry News by Andrew Clements

The Egypt Game by Zilpha Keatley Snyder

Interest Level

Grades 3-7

Reading Level

Grades 4-6

Read Aloud Passages

1. Chapter 2, Pages 16-17

Greg gets to thinking about all the students in his class who were willing to lend him two quarters for lunch money that day. Now everywhere he looks he sees quarters in the lunchroom, quarters used to buy ice cream,

pencil tops and other items. He begins to form an idea of how *he* can get in on the moneymaking action.

2. Chapter 7, Pages 62-64

Mr. Z gets in the middle of Greg and Maura's argument over the stolen comic book idea. As the two students are yelling at each other, Greg holds up Maura's "garbage" comic book, and Maura tries to swipe it out of her hand. She misses and hits Greg, giving him a bloody nose.

Setting

The story in Lunch Money takes place in modern, American, adolescent times. The main character, Greg, is in the sixth grade. Most of the story takes place in locations around Ashworth Intermediate School, such as math class, the principal's office, and the lunchroom, and in Greg's home.

Point of View

The point of view comes in third person omniscient form.

Theme

The author is trying to convey that understanding money- making money, saving money, spending money- is a valuable lesson, but it's not about being greedy and sacrificing friendships.

The title Lunch Money refers to how the original, moneymaking scheme was created. When the main character notices that students always have an extra quarter or two left over from their lunch, he thinks of a plan that will get those extra quarters into *his* pocket.

