



Author: Valerie Hobbs

Title: Defiance

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Publisher: Frances Foster Books, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York

Valerie Hobbs... [www.valeriehobbs.com](http://www.valeriehobbs.com), [www.valeriehobbs.com/about.html](http://www.valeriehobbs.com/about.html),  
[www.valeriehobbs.com/books.html](http://www.valeriehobbs.com/books.html)

Valerie Hobbs lives in Santa Barbara, California and is a teacher of writing at University of California at Santa Barbara. She is a respected writer for teens. She seems to have an understanding of teens and the struggles of adolescence. She writes about one book per year. Most of her characters are forced to make grown up decisions that affect their lives. How they deal with the challenges that are beyond their control-such as serious disease or death of guardians, is the focus for all of her books.

Other books...Anything But Ordinary, Stefan's Story, Sonny's War, Tender

Annotation: Have you ever tried to keep a big secret from your parents because you knew if they knew they would worry or be upset? Did you ever think that you knew more than your parents? Toby has a big decision to make and an even bigger secret to keep from his parents. To find out how he handles this secret, and what his final decision is, you have to read this book.

Genre: Fiction

Point of View: Third Person

Theme: The title of the book is Defiance. The main character acts defiantly toward his parents to keep a secret about the return of his cancer. He is trying to avoid returning to a hospital for painful treatments. The secondary theme running through the book is at first, Toby's defiance toward life and cancer, and later his defiance toward death.

Conflict:

Internal- Toby struggles with his cancer return and whether to tell his parents.

External- The struggle Toby has with his parents and their understanding of what he wants for himself and with the return of this serious illness. There is also the struggle with a disease that now has control of his body.

Conflict Resolution: Toby decides that life is worth the fight and decides to return to the hospital.

Characters:

Toby – an eleven year old boy with cancer

Mom and Dad- Toby's parents

Pearl- An elderly lady who is a famous poet.

Blossom- the cow

Setting- a rural area during summer vacation

Interest Level- 5-8 and Reading level is 5.8

Book talk: Toby has a lot on his mind. His first day of vacation in the country is threatened with the return of a deadly disease. He has to decide if he wants to keep this secret from mom and dad or if he should tell them. There are several characters in the book to help Toby make up his mind about what he should do. He is only eleven. Is he old enough to have the right to decide what his fate will be or should he let his parents decide for him?

Discussion Questions:

Pre/During/Post

1. **Pre...**What does the word “defiance” mean? How do you think the title of the book and the definition of the word could relate to each other?
2. **During...** How is Toby showing defiance? Who is he being defiant to?
3. Does Toby have the right to be defiant?
4. **Post...**Why do you think Toby made the decision he did in the end of the story? Who or what was he being defiant toward in the end?
5. How did a cow change his mind?
6. What did Pearl do to influence Toby? What did she teach him about life?
7. Did Toby teach Pearl anything?

Chapter questions:

Chpt 1

Pgs 4-6 What does he do the first morning of vacation? What does he see on his first day?

Chpt 2

Pgs.13 What did Toby do on the second day of vacation? What secret was he trying to keep from his mom and dad?

Pgs 17 What sign does he read on Pearl's door and what does it mean?

Chpt 3

Pgs. 23 At first, what does Toby think about the elderly lady who lives in the old house?

Pgs. 25 Then, what does he think about her?

Chpt 4

Pgs 29-30 What was Pearl's misconception of who he was and why he was at her house? Why is Toby's mom so worried about Toby?

Chpt 5

Pgs. 34 Who is Popeye? How do Toby and Popeye know each other?

Chpt 6

Pgs. 39-43 What new skills did Toby learn? What poem did Pearl want Toby to read? What did he learn about reading poems? Why are poems important to Pearl?

Chpt 7

Pgs 49 What was Toby's mom's reaction to Toby helping Pearl?

Pgs 50 Which poem does Pearl want Toby to read and what does Toby learn from reading this poem?

Chpt 8

Pgs. 55-57 What does Toby's mom do for Pearl? Who else is visiting Pearl besides Toby and his mom? What is the purpose for their visit?

Chpt 9

Pgs 60 What happens to Blossom?

Chpt 10

Pgs 69 What does Toby's dad discover? How does this change things?

Chpt 11

Pgs 73. Toby and his dad share a special time together. What did they do and why was it special?

Chpt 12

Pgs 77 Blossom gives them a message. What is the message?

Pgs 81 Toby reveals something to Pearl. What is it that Toby reveals to her and what is her reaction?

Pg 83 A new poem by Dylan Thomas is read and Toby learns something. What is the phrase that changes Toby?

Chtp 13

Pgs 93-94 What important thing does Toby's mom learn about Pearl? Then what did Toby discover?

14

Pgs 95-97 Pearl shares a personal story with Toby. What is it and what is Toby's reaction to this story?

Chtp 15

Pgs 100 How did Blossom come to live with Pearl?

Chpt 16

Pgs. 103-108 What does Toby and Pearl do to help Blossom through this night?

Chpt 17

Pgs 110 What happens to Blossom? How does Pearl and Toby react to Blossom?

Chpt 18

Pgs 112 What kind of orchestra are Toby and Pearl listening to this night?

Chpt 19

Pgs 116 What does Toby decide about his own illness? How does Pearl change in the end of the story?

Language:

The language used is age appropriate for Fifth grade. I would instruct the class to keep a word journal to write any words they did not understand and then research the word meaning on their own.

Pg 1-Defiance- go against something

Pg 1 udder- cow parts

Pg 24 numeral- number

Pg 29 eavesdropping- listening to someone else's conversation when they don't know you are there

Pg 58 occupation- your job

Pg 84 magnetic resonance imaging. Xray also know as MRI

Pg 107 constellations- group of stars

Indiana Standards:

Science- discussions of constellations and stars and cells under a microscope ...3.3.1,3.3.2; 4.4.1 4.4.10 ; 5.1.5 5.4.1,5.4.2,5.4.3 5.3.1; 5.3.2; 5.3.3

English/Language... writing responses and poetry...3.2.1, 3.2.4, 3.3.4, 3.4.8, 3.3.1 5.5.1; 5.5.2; 5.3.1 -5.3.7 and 5.1.1

Anticipation statements:

Looking at the cover and reading the title of the book, would you agree or disagree that this could be a kid in trouble?

Do you agree or disagree you have the right to make important decisions that could change your life without the help of you parents?

Do you agree or disagree that animals have an understanding of what is going on in their world?

Do you agree or disagree people should give up when faced with bad struggles in their lives?

Read-Aloud

Pg 12.. "It would be the biggest lie he'd ever told, and he would tell it over and over again whenever she asked him how he was, no matter how bad it made him

feel.” He was being defiant to his mom because he did not want her to know that the cancer had returned.

Pg 84 “As he was riding home, Dylans’s words kept singing in his head, even though he didn’t much want them to.” He is trying to understand what “Rage, rage against the dying of the light”, means to the poet and to him.

Read Alikes:

Going to see Grassy Ella, by Kathryn Lance

The golden bird, by Hans Stolp

Sonny’s War, by Valerie Hobbs

Across Curriculum Connections:

Science: Study of planets and cells and body systems

Language: Journal writing

Resources:

American Cancer Society- 1-800-227-2345 or [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) Ask if there is a person who could come to your school to speak on the subjects you are interested in learning about.

Cancel Cells Photos..

[www.alternative-cancer.net/cell\\_photo.htm](http://www.alternative-cancer.net/cell_photo.htm)

[www.rkm.com.au/imagelibrary/index.html](http://www.rkm.com.au/imagelibrary/index.html)

[www.cancer-info.com/cancerdeath.htm](http://www.cancer-info.com/cancerdeath.htm)

Lesson Plan for study of constellations

[www.education-world.com/a\\_tsl/archives/00-1/lesson0069.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_tsl/archives/00-1/lesson0069.shtml)

Book Activities:

Science Lesson: Ind. Std 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 4.4.1.4.4.10 5.1.4 5.4.1, 5.4.2 5.4.3 5.4.3 and 5.4.9

1. Activity is to provide the students with pre-made slides and pictures from your Science book that show the structure of ordinary cells. Copy pictures from internet that show what cancel cells look like and to do drawing comparison.

With a partner, study cells under a microscope. Compare healthy ones to unhealthy ones. Draw what you see.

2. Activity is found at [www.education-world.com/a\\_tsl/archives/00-1/lesson0069.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_tsl/archives/00-1/lesson0069.shtml). Written by Sandy Wiedmeyer (BBETeacher@aol.com)

Bibliography:

Hobbs, Valerie. [www.valeriehobbs.com/about.html](http://www.valeriehobbs.com/about.html)

<http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/standards/welcome.html>

iLibrary- Marion County Library

[www.education-world.com/a\\_tsl/archives/00-1/lesson0069.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_tsl/archives/00-1/lesson0069.shtml)