

Young Hoosier Book Award Novel Resource #3

Into The Firestorm: A Novel of San Francisco, 1906

I. Book Information:

Author: Deborah Hopkinson
Title: Into the Firestorm: A Novel of San Francisco, 1906
Copyright date: 2006
Publisher: Yearling



II. About the Author:

Ms. Hopkinson was born in Lowell, Massachusetts. She lived in Hawaii for nineteen years before making a home in Corvallis, Oregon. Ms. Hopkinson is married to Andy Thomas who is an artist. They have two children: Rebekah and Dimitri.

She has written approximately thirty children's books which have won many awards. She likes to write about history and girls. She loves showcasing in her books what girls are capable of doing. Although she loves to write you might be surprised to know that Ms. Hopkinson has a full time job as Director of Foundation Relations at Oregon State University Foundation.

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Author's connections to the book:

The only personal connection to this book is that Deborah Hopkinson has a big golden dog just like Mr. Patterson's dog Shake.

Awards for Deborah Hopkinson:

Mrs. Hopkinson has won numerous awards for her books. Some of them include: the 1994 International Reading Association Award for Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt, a Boston Globe-Horn Book Honor for Sky Boys, and a Golden Kite Honor Award for best picture book text for Bluebird Summer.

Other books by Deborah Hopkinson:

- Under the Quilt of Night
- Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt
- Who Was Charles Darwin?
- Girl Wonder: A Baseball Story in Nine Innings
- Apples to Oregon

III. Annotation:

Nicholas Bray, an eleven year old, ran from an orphanage in Texas to San Francisco, California with no one to depend upon except himself. Determined to survive he convinces a store owner to give him a job. It becomes more than a job; it becomes a race to keep more than just him alive.

Deborah Hopkinson writes a wonderful historical fiction novel about the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and the fires that followed.

IV. Genre:

Historical fiction is the genre of this novel.

V. Point of View:

This novel is written in the third person point of view.

VI. Theme:

The theme of Into the Firestorm: A Novel of San Francisco, 1906 can be summed up with one word: determination. The determination of Nicholas Bray to be something more than just pick cotton for the rest of his life, his determination not to leave ones in need like his pa did, and his determination *not* to be forgotten.

Nicholas Bray's determination to run from being a cotton picker makes him run Into the Firestorm.

VII. Conflict:

There is both external and internal conflict within this novel. The external conflict is Nicholas Bray's struggle to live. Beginning with his struggle to survive on his own in the streets of San Francisco and ending with his struggle to keep Mrs. Sheridan, Annie, Shake and himself alive and away from the earthquake fires.

The internal conflict comes from inside Nicholas Bray and his determination to be something more than a cotton picker, to be more than a nameless person. This internal conflict leads him into the external conflict of surviving.

VIII. Conflict Resolution:

Nicholas Bray's external conflict is initially resolved with the meeting of Mr. Pat Patterson. This meeting resolves his struggle to survive on his own. Mr. Patterson gives him food, shelter and clothes. Nicholas helps to resolve the external conflict of the fire himself by helping Ed Lind, Pat Patterson, and all of the others by forming the bucket brigade and stopping the fire with sewage.

Nick's internal conflict is resolved when he becomes more than a cotton picker. He becomes a hero according to the newspaper story and a scribe with his name on a business sign. He will not be forgotten.

IX. Characters:

Nicholas Dray

- Main character
- Eleven years old
- Wild hair
- Strong willed

John

- Nick's pa
- Left Nick with his maternal grandmother.

Gran

- Nick's grandmother
- Dies on Mr. Hank's farm

Mr. Hank

- Nick's boss in cotton fields
- Sent him to orphanage when Nick's grandmother died.
- Told Nick he would be nothing more than a cotton picker.

Bushy Brows

- Policeman that chases Nick.

Miss Reedy

- Nick's teacher
- Told Nick that San Francisco was the "Paris of the Pacific".

Elsie Turner

- Woman cotton picker
- Gave Nick a quarter when his grandma died.

Rebecca

- Elsie's daughter
- She always wanted Nick to put cotton into her sack.

Tommy Liang

- First friend Nick meets in San Francisco.
- Approximately 15 years old
- Mom went back to China with younger siblings.
- Dad died of pneumonia.
- Works for his cousin.

Annie

- Talkative girl
- Eight years old
- Friend of Nick
- Nick calls her "Annie of the North Star".
- Mother calls her "Little Big Eyes".
- Has two different colored eyes.

Shake

- Mr. Patterson's dog
- Short for Shakespeare
- Big golden dog
- Likes everyone
- Nick is responsible for him.

Pat Patterson

- Owner of stationery store
- Nick's employer

Mr. Jim Kelly

- Takes Nick to orphanage.
- Stocky man

Mr. Ed Lind

- Works in whiskey warehouse.
- Friend of Mr. Patterson
- Came up with idea to use sewage to fight fire.

Mrs. Sheridan

- Nick rescues her from her building.
- Pregnant
- Annie's mother

Will Sheridan

- Annie's baby brother
- Named after Shakespeare the dog.

James

- Reporter for Call.
- Writes a story about Nick.

Dennis Sullivan

- Fire chief
- Badly hurt in earthquake.

X. Setting:

This novel takes place April 1906 in San Francisco, California.

XI. Interest Level and Reading Level

Interest Level: 9-12

Reading Level: 4.7

XII. Booktalk:

In 1906 Nicholas Bray only had two quarters to his name when he ran to San Francisco from an orphanage in Texas at the young age of eleven. Little did he know he was running Into The Firestorm.

XIII. Discussion Questions:

Pre-Reading

- What do you predict the book will be about?
- Do you know what happened in San Francisco in 1906?

Chapter 1 - "Road Kid"

- What do you think Nick's situation is? (page 4, paragraph 1)
- Why had he left Lincoln Poor Farm? (page 4)
- Where is his family? (page 4)
- On page 7, paragraph 6, why did Nick's heart sink?

Chapter 2 - "Cotton Picker"

- On page 10 after the fourth paragraph: "And don't fret about me - Elsie Turner promised she'll look in later." Do you think something is going to happen to Gran? If so, what?

Chapter 3 - "Tommy"

- What race do you think Nick is? (page 13)
- How would you feel if you only had fifty cents in your pocket? (page 18)
- On page 19, "You ask very strange questions for a white boy." Were you surprised to read this?

Chapter 4 - "A Bowl of Rice"

- Do you think Nick will see Tommy again? (page 26)
- What do you think Nick will do now? (page 26)

Chapter 5- "Annie of the North Star"

- On page 27, "Sometimes he found himself hitting his stomach, trying to keep it from growling and pinching." What would you do if you were that hungry?
- On page 28, after paragraph 4, do you think Nick will find a job?

Chapter 6 - "Paris of the Pacific"

- Do you think Mr. Pat Patterson is going to give Nick a job? (page 45)

Chapter 7 - "A Hundred Pounds"

- Why do you think Rebecca and Elsie Turner gave him a quarter in addition to Gran's quarter when money is so tight? (page 50)

Chapter 8 - "One Chance"

- On page 58, "And I must warn you this is an important 'but' - our relationship must entirely be on of employer and employee." Is Mr. Patterson saying this to Nick or convincing himself?

Chapter 9 - "Something Unexpected & Unseen"

- Given the chapter's title what do you think is going to happen? (page 62)
- What do you think happened to Gran's things since Nick wasn't able to go through them? (page 67)
- What do you think is happening with sounds like "Crash. Rumble. Crack?"

Chapter 10 - "Aftershocks"

- Do you think Nick should leave and find Shake or stay at the store? (page 82)
- Do you think Nick made a good choice not to get on the ferry? (page 89) What would you have done if it were you?

Chapter 11 - "Forgotten"

- Was it wise for Nick to go back into the building? (page 97)

Chapter 12 - "The Last Wagon"

- By going to Chinatown do you think Nick expects to run into Tommy Liang? (page 104)
- What do you think of Tommy's cousin? (page 107)
- If you were Nick would you have given half of you money to Tommy? (page 111)

Chapter 13 - "Everyone Out"

- Do you think the fires will reach Mr. Patterson's stationery store? (page 123)

Chapter 14 - "Union Square"

- On page 131, "Nick stood alone, unsure what to do next. Suddenly he spotted a face he recognized." Who do you think it is?

Chapter 15 - "March of Flames"

- What do you think is going to happen to Shake? (page 141)
- Will Nick, Mrs. Sheridan and Annie ever be safe? (page 141)

Chapter 16 - "Chased By Fire"

- Are you upset that Annie left the bag in inkwells back on the steps of the mansion in Nob Hill? (page 147)

Chapter 17 - "Across Van Ness"

- What do you think of the way Annie is acting? (page 149)
- How do you think this novel will end? (page 151)
- Is Shake gone for good? (page 151)

Chapter 18 - "Thursday Night"

- Do you think it is foolish for Nick to go looking for Shake? (page 158)

Chapter 19 - "Into the Firestorm"

- Will Nick get shot? (page 167)

Chapter 20 - "A Good Dog"

- On page 168, "He certainly is a good dog." Who do you think said this?

Chapter 21 - "What Matters"

- Do you think Nick will be able to find Tommy? (page 180)

Chapter 22 - "Shakespeare's Namesakes"

- Given the title of the chapter who are Shakespeare's namesakes? (page 184)
- On page 183 Nick promised he would not be forgotten. By the end of this chapter how has Nick fulfilled this promise?

Epilogue

- Who do you think this man is? (page 191)

Post Reading Questions

- Explain how Nick's two quarters really were lucky.
- Did you like this novel? Why or why not?
- Would you read another historical fiction novel?

XIV. Language

- indigents (page 4) - people with absolutely no money
- ruffian (page 8) - a bully
- tepid (page 9) - lukewarm
- scrounge (page 27) - to beg for something
- guffaw (page 43) - a loud laugh
- ravenous (page 52) - very hungry
- bard (page 53) - a poet
- fruition (page 56) - reality; come true
- precariously (page 83) - dangerously
- satchels (page 106) - bags
- inferno (page 115) - a very strong fire
- desolation (page 181) - ruin

XV. Novel Content Standards

Grade 3:

English/Language Arts

Standard 1: 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.6, 3.1.7, 3.1.8

Standard 3: 3.3.3, 3.3.4, 3.3.6, 3.3.8

Grade 4:

English/Language Arts

Standard 1: 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 4.1.6, 4.1.7

Standard 3: 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.6

Grade 5:

English/Language Arts

Standard 1: 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.6

Standard 3: 5.3.2, 5.3.3, 5.3.4, 5.3.8

XVI: Anticipation Statements:

- It is okay to run from police if you are innocent.
- You should not steal.
- It is wrong to charge \$100 for a ride.
- If someone makes you mad it is okay to get even.

XVII: Read Aloud Passages

Passage #1: Page 5, last two paragraphs until page 7, "Nick's heart sank"

Nick is running from a policeman for supposedly stealing an orange until he trips and falls allowing the policeman to catch up with him. The passage ends with Nick clutching the two coins in his pocket.

I chose this passage because it leaves the reader wondering what is going to happen. Will the policeman take his money? Will Nick be arrested? Will Nick get away?

Passage #2: Page 70 last paragraph through page 72.

This passage starts with Nick's nervousness of what would happen with Mr. Patterson. Will he keep Nick upon his return? He is also nervous about keeping all of Mr. Patterson's "treasures" safe. After falling asleep Nick is awoken to loud noises.

I chose this passage because it makes the reader wonder what is happening. At first I thought fire because of the title; however, I was wrong.

XVIII: If you like this book, you'll love these:

San Francisco Earthquake, 1906 by Kathleen Duey

Gabriel's Journey by Alison Hart

The Attack of the Turtle: A Novel by Drew Carlson

Sailing For Gold by Deborah Hopkinson

Pioneer Summer by Deborah Hopkinson

XIV: Across Curriculum Connections

Connection #1: Timeline

While reading the novel have students in groups of three or four create a timeline of the novel. Give the students class time to meet after a reading assignment to get together and work on their timeline.

When the novel is complete have them create a final copy to present to the class. Let them add drawing or pictures to events they feel necessary. This will give them a great visual of the time frame of the novel in relation to its two hundred pages.

Supplies

- Paper for working copy
- Butcher paper or poster board
- Rulers
- Markers
- Computer for pictures
- Colored pictures

Grade 3:

English/Language Arts

Standard 6: 3.6.3, 3.6.4, 3.6.6, 3.6.7

Standard 7: 3.7.5

Social Studies

Standard 1: 3.1.5

Grade 4:

English/Language Arts

Standard 6: 4.6.1, 4.6.4, 4.6.5, 4.6.6, 4.6.7, 4.6.8

Standard 7: 4.7.12

Social Studies

Standard 1: 4.1.15

Grade 5:

English/Language Arts

Standard 6: 5.6.1, 5.6.3, 5.6.4, 5.6.5, 5.6.6, 5.6.7

Standard 7: 5.7.11

Social Studies

Standard 1: 5.1.17

Connection #2: Research

We recently felt an earthquake here in Indiana; although, it was not of the magnitude of the one in the novel. Let's find out more detailed information about the San Francisco earthquake.

This connection could be as extensive as you want it to be. I would suggest having the students explore this website:

<http://www.factmonster.com/spot/sanfran1906earthquake.html>.

Give them a list of questions to answer.

Questions:

- What magnitude was the 1906 quake?
- How much damage was there, in dollars?
- How much causality was there?
- What time did the quake occur?
- What is the difference between the Richter scale and moment of magnitude scale?
- How has the population in San Francisco grown since 1900?
- What was the largest quake in the U.S.?

You could also widen to scope of the research to earthquakes in general. This site is a very good one.

Grade 3:

English/Language Arts

Standard 2: 3.2.3, 3.2.5

Standard 4: 3.4.5, 3.4.6, 3.4.8, 3.4.9

Standard 5: 3.5.8

Standard 6: 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4, 3.6.5, 3.6.6, 3.6.7, 3.6.8, 3.6.9

Grade 4:

English/Language Arts

Standard 2: 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.9

Standard 4: 4.4.5, 4.4.9, 4.4.10, 4.4.11, 4.4.12

Standard 5: 4.5.5

Standard 6: 4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.6.3, 4.6.4, 4.6.5, 4.6.6, 4.6.7, 4.6.8

Grade 5:

English/Language Arts

Standard 4: 5.4.1, 5.4.3, 5.4.4, 5.4.5, 5.4.6, 5.4.7, 5.4.8, 5.4.9, 5.4.10

Standard 5: 5.5.5, 5.5.6

Standard 6: 5.6.1, 5.6.2, 5.6.3, 5.6.4, 5.6.5, 5.6.6, 5.6.7, 5.6.8

XV: Resources:

"Eyewitnesses to the Earthquake and Fire." The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco. 21 Jun 2008. <<http://www.sfmuseum.org/1906/ew.html>>.

Fishers Fire Department

"The Great 1906 San Francisco Earthquake." Factmonster. 2007. Pearson Education. 21 Jun 2008.

<<http://factmonster.com/spot/sanfran1906earthquake.html>>.

XVI: Book Activities:

Activity #1

Eyewitness Accounts

A book related activity for

Into the Firestorm: A Novel of San Francisco, 1906 by Deborah Hopkinson

Objective:

Students will learn more about the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906 and write up a summary of what they have read.

Indiana Academic Standards:

Grade 3

English/Language Arts

Standard 2: 3.2.5, 3.2.6

Standard 4: 3.4.3, 3.4.9, 3.4.5, 3.4.6, 3.4.7, 3.4.8

Standard 5: 3.5.7

Standard 6: 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4, 3.6.5, 3.6.6, 3.6.7, 3.6.8

Standard 7: 3.7.5, 3.7.6, 3.7.8

Grade 4

English/Language Arts

Standard 2: 4.2.2, 4.2.9

Standard 4: 4.4.3, 4.4.9, 4.4.10, 4.4.11, 4.4.12

Standard 5: 4.5.5

Standard 6: 4.6.2, 4.6.3, 4.6.4, 4.6.6, 4.6.7, 4.6.8

Standard 7: 4.7.5, 4.7.9, 4.7.17

Grade 5

English/Language Arts

Standard 2: 5.2.3

Standard 4: 5.4.3, 5.4.5, 5.4.7, 5.4.8, 5.4.9, 5.4.10

Standard 5: 5.5.7

Standard 6: 5.6.1, 5.6.2, 5.6.8, 5.6.3, 5.6.4, 5.6.5, 5.6.7

Standard 7: 5.7.4, 5.7.6, 5.7.13

Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Pencil and/or pen
- Computer
- Props/costumes

Procedure:

Assign an eyewitness account of the San Francisco Earthquake from <http://www.sfmuseum.net/1906/ew.html> to each student. Have them read the account and provide a summary for the class so the class can learn more about this historical event.

Have them type up what they are going to say on the computer being careful of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Have them present there summary as the person whose account they read.

Assessment:

Assess writing for grammar, punctuation, ideas and word usage. Assess speech for volume, costume and feeling.

Activity #2

Fire Department Discussion

A book related activity for

Into the Firestorm: A Novel of San Francisco, 1906 by Deborah Hopkinson

Objective:

Students will learn more about fires and a good evacuation plan.

Indiana Academic Standards:

Grade 3

English/Language Arts

Standard 4: 3.4.6, 3.4.7

Standard 5: 3.5.5

Standard 6: 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4, 3.6.5, 3.6.6, 3.6.7, 3.6.8

Standard 7: 3.7.11

Grade 4

English/Language Arts

Standard 4: 4.4.10, 4.4.11

Standard 6: 4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.6.3, 4.6.4, 4.6.5, 4.6.6, 4.6.7, 4.6.8

Standard 7: 4.7.1, 4.7.16

Grade 5

English/Language Arts

Standard 4: 5.4.8, 5.4.9, 5.4.10

Standard 6: 5.6.1, 5.6.2, 5.6.8, 5.6.3, 5.6.4, 5.6.5, 5.6.6, 5.6.7

Standard 7: 5.7.1, 5.7.2

Time:

- One class period total

Materials:

- Paper
- Pens, pencils
- Fire Department speaker

Procedure:

Arrange for a speaker from the nearby fire department to come and talk to the class. Prepare your speaker by giving him a copy or summary of the book so that he can be well informed coming in.

Before your guest speaker arrives ask the students to write out *at least* five questions they may have about the fires in the novel. Have them really think of well thought out questions for your guest.

Questions could range from:

- Why did they use dynamite to try to stop the fires?
- What would happen if a fire from an earthquake happens in our town? What should we do?
- What exactly is a bucket brigade?
- How did the fire move so fast?
- What kind of fire gear did they have then?
- Does our town have a plan in place for a major fire?
- What is anything would the San Francisco Fire Department do today if there was a fire like that in 1906?

As a teacher I would preview all of the questions created by the class and have those students with the best questions ask them of the speaker.

Assessment:

Students will be assessed on the quality of their questions. Are they well thought out? Do they make sense? Are they written correctly?

XVII: Bibliography

[Into the Firestorm: A Novel of San Francisco, 1906](#)

<http://www.deborahhopkinson.com>

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

<http://www.help.lib.in.us>

<http://www.bn.com>

<http://www.sfmuseum.net/1906/ew.html>

<http://factmonster.com/spot/sanfran1906earthquake.html>