

YHBA Novel Resource - The Bravest of the Brave

Young Hoosier Book Award Book

The Bravest of the Brave by Shutta Crum

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Publisher

Random House Kids

About the Author

Shutta Crum is the author of many children's books, as well as a children's novel, and poems. She is a teacher, librarian, a storyteller, a wife, a mother, a grandmother, and a quilter. She has likened writing stories to her quilt making, saying, "When I make quilts I play with colors and the placement of fabrics. I know the traditional patterns and methods, but I rarely make anything by following someone else's pattern completely. I like adapting patterns or making up my own. I do the same thing when I write. I play with words and the placement of sentences and ideas. The fun part of writing, for me, is taking traditional rhythms and using them my own way to create something totally new. I also like to take a traditional story and tell it my way, or to make a whole story up from scratch." Ms. Crum was born in Paintsville, Kentucky, and lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

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Photo



Connections to the Book

In her time spent as a librarian, Ms. Crum learned the finger play, “Way up high, in an apple tree. Two little apples smiled down at me. I shook that tree as hard as I could, and down fell the apples (pretend to bite into one in each hand) . . . hmm, are they good!” (Author, unknown.)

When starting to brainstorm ideas for a new book, she thought of this finger play. She stated on her website, “I wondered what else could be up in that tree? Animals? And if so, who might be seeing those animals?”

Other Books by the Author

Who Took My Hairy Toe

All on a Sleepy Night

Fox and Fluff

House in the Meadow

Spitting Image

Click!

My Mountain Song

A Family for Old Mill Farm

About the Illustrator

Tim Bowers was born in Ohio, (Troy,) went to school, (Columbus College of Art and Design,) worked, (Dayton illustration studio,) and lived there until he was hired by Hallmark Greeting Card Company to illustrate greeting cards in Kansas City, Missouri. Working with others at Hallmark, Mr. Bowers helped to launch *the Shoebox Greetings* card line. While in Kansas City, Mr. Bowers also illustrated his first three children’s books. Since that time, Mr. Bowers has illustrated many more books and he and his family are living back in Ohio.

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Photo



Other Books by the Illustrator

Custard Surprise by Bernard Lodge

DogKu by Andrew Clements

Puss in Boots by Lisa Findley

Fun Dog, Sun Dog by Deborah Heiligman

Matilda's Humdinger by Lynn Downey

Sherman Crunchley by Laura Numeroff

One Wide Sky by Deborah Wiles

Sometimes I Wonder if Poodles Like Noodles by Laura Numeroff

Sam and Jack by Alex Moran

Little Whistle Series by Cynthia Rylant

Art Medium

Acrylics – students can experiment with watercolors and acrylics to see the difference in the two types of paint. Opacity should be pointed out – “Why would Mr. Bowers choose a paint that is opaque for a story about a dark forest?”

Annotation

Written by children’s librarian Shutta Crum, *The Bravest of the Brave*, tells the story of a young skunk and his lone journey through the woods at night. Although he is alone, his brave thoughts keep him company when woodland creatures cross his path. Based on a finger-play used by librarians Ms. Crum has used inventive wording and creative adverbs to tell the story of our hero. With repetitive text and counting, this rhyming story is a great read-aloud and read-along.

All students will enjoy spending time studying the whimsical illustrations by artist Tim Bowers. With a background in greeting cards, Mr. Bowers’ illustrations are quirky and kind, showcasing the cute forest residents from the story. The illustrations tell a story of their own, showing readers how our hero entered the woods, revealing animals as we

make our way through the book. Living and working in Ohio, Mr. Bowers has had many close encounters with skunks and other animals walking between his studio and home late at night.

Genre

Animals and Nature Fiction

Point of View

First person

Theme

Courage, skunks and forest animals, night

The title The Bravest of the Brave signifies the feelings of the young Skunk on his journey. To make it through the frightening forest, he thinks brave thoughts and makes brave gestures.

Conflict

Internal conflict – Skunk sees “robbers,” “pirates,” “trappers,” etc. in the forest

External conflict – other creatures, night/darkness

The skunk hero must travel through the woods, at night, alone, facing other creatures along the way.

Conflict Resolution

The little skunk’s family comes to his rescue.

Characters

Little Skunk – child

Raccoon

Owls

Spiders

Porcupines

Flying Squirrels

Skunk Family – Little Skunk’s family

Fireflies

(We find out at the end that all of the characters are actually Little Skunk’s friends)

Setting

Forest – at night

Interest Level

Pre-K – 2 Perma-Bound Resources

Reading Level

3.4 Perma-Bound Resources

Booktalk

Have you ever been in a situation when you were scared? What did you do? Have you ever had to be brave? In the book The Braves of the Brave by Shutta Crum, the main character is a young skunk who is traveling through the woods, alone, at night. Would that make you scared? This little skunk is scared, so he has to think brave thoughts and do some brave things in order to make his journey. This is a great book to read with a friend because of the rhyming words. Pay close attention to the illustrations in order to find out who else is in the forest with the little skunk!

Discussion Questions

Before Reading

- Have you ever had to do something by yourself?
- Were you scared to be alone?
- What does it mean to be brave?
- Who are some people that you know that display bravery?

During Reading

- What animal is “masked”? page 9
- What are the nets that are dropped on skunk? page 12
- Why would the skunk describe the squirrels as “pirates”? page 17
- What was skunk going to do when he raised his tail? page 20
- Why did he stop? Page 23

After Reading

- What did skunk’s family do to comfort him?
- What does someone in your family do to comfort you?
- Viewing the illustrations, what animal appears at the beginning of the story, and then again at the end of the story?
- Why do you think Tim Bowers included this animal in the illustrations, even though it wasn’t mentioned in the text?

Language

- dim – not bright (page 7)
- surely - certain (page 9)
- spooky – scary (page 11)
- gruff – hoarse (page 11)
- ruffled – shake gently (page 11)
- tramped – to walk firmly, heavily (page 12)
- pricking – a small sharp pain, made by a needle or bee sting (page 15)
- scurried – to go or move quickly (page 15)
- fearsomely – causing fear (page 17)
- scowled – a look of anger or frowning disapproval (page 17)
- groped – to feel around with the hands (page 19)
- stoutly – standing boldly, bravely (page 20)
- gravely - seriously (page 20)
- squinting – to look with eyes partially closed (page 25)
- boldly – not fearful, or waiting, hesitating (page 26)
- cheerily - happily (page 28)

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Rhyming Words - Independent
Rhyming Words

Name: _____

Date: _____

Find pairs of rhyming words from the story The Bravest of the Brave. List each pair only once.

Rhyming Words in the story <u>The Bravest of the Brave</u>	

List some other pairs of rhyming words that you know.

Other Rhyming Words That I Know	

Indiana Academic Standards Met by Book Activities

First Grade Language Arts

1.1.7 Create and state a series of rhyming words.

1.5.3 Write simple rhymes.

Second Grade Language Arts

2.3.4 Identify the use of rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration (using words with repeating consonant sounds) in poetry or fiction.

2.5.4 Write rhymes and simple poems.

Third Grade Language Arts

3.6.5 Identify and correctly use pronouns (it, him, her), adjectives (brown eyes, two younger sisters), compound nouns (summertime, snowflakes), and articles (a, an, the) in writing.

Anticipation Statements

Before		<u>The Bravest of the Brave</u> by Shutta Crum Illustrated by Tim Bowers	After	
Agree	Disagree		Agree	Disagree
		It is okay to be scared.		
		Thinking brave thoughts can help you.		
		Animals have families.		
		Skunks are scary animals.		

Read-Alikes

DogKu by Andrew Clements

Puss in Boots by Lisa Findley

Fun Dog, Sun Dog by Deborah Heiligman

Sometimes I Wonder if Poodles Like Noodles by Laura Numeroff

Who Took My Hairy Toe by Shutta Crum

All on a Sleepy Night by Shutta Crum

Fox and Fluff by Shutta Crum

House in the Meadow by Shutta Crum

Spitting Image by Shutta Crum

Click! by Shutta Crum

My Mountain Song by Shutta Crum

A Family for Old Mill Farm by Shutta Crum

Forest Animals by Laura Evert

Stranger in the Woods: A Photographic Fantasy by Carl R. Sims

Bear's New Friends by Karma Wilson

Across the Curriculum Connections

Forest animals - Science

Using non-fiction texts from the public library or school media center, have students investigate some of the forest animals that are featured in the book The Bravest of the Brave by Shutta Crum. Facts to be gathered should include, but are not limited to; name, habitat, diet, 2 or more characteristics, enemies, babies, and size. Students can then use the facts they have gathered to create a web or graphic organizer on a computer program such as KidSpiration, write a brief report, poem, or story. Students could work individually, partnerships, or small groups to research and report their findings. Animals that can be included in this project should include those featured in the story, but can also include other animals living in the same region.

Optional Resources:

Skunks by Laima Dingwall

Beavers and Other Rodents by Meish Goldish

Life in the Forest by Carol K. Lindeen

Forest by Cally Hall

Spiders by Monica Hughes

Spiders and Their Webs by Linda Tagliaferro

Life Cycle of a Raccoon by John Crossingham

Owls by Gail Gibbons

Porcupines by Diane Swanson

List of facts students are to research

Kidspiration or other graphic organizer computer software OR

Printed graphic organizers

Lined paper for reports, poems, stories

Blank paper

Kindergarten Science

K.4.1 Give examples of plants and animals.

First Grade Science

1.2.7 Write brief informational descriptions of a real object, person, place, or event using information from observations.

1.4.1 Identify when stories give attributes to plants and animals, such as the ability to speak, that they really do not have.

1.4.2 Observe and describe that there can be differences, such as size or markings, among the individuals within one kind of plant or animal group.

1.4.3 Observe and explain that animals eat plants or other animals for food.

1.4.4 Explain that most living things need water, food, and air.

Second Grade Science

2.4.1 Observe and identify different external features of plants and animals and describe how these features help them live in different environments.

2.4.2 Observe that and describe how animals may use plants, or even other animals, for shelter and nesting.

Using Pictures to Represent Numbers - Math/Art

After reading The Bravest of the Brave by Shutta Crum, have each student illustrate a picture of one of the animals from the story. For example, one student should create an illustration of a skunk, one student should create an illustration of a raccoon, two students should illustrate owls, three students should illustrate spiders, and so on until all of the animals have been drawn, painted, or collaged for a total of 27 drawings (including fireflies). Copies of The Bravest of the Brave, as well as non-fiction text could be provided for students as reference. If necessary, students may complete more than one illustration. Have students line up according to the order that their animals appear in the story. Then, while reading the story aloud, have students show their illustrations. This could be a fun activity done by two or more classes, and then students could “perform” for an audience after rehearsing.

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Porcupines by Diane Swanson

Blank paper

Kindergarten Math

K.1.1 Match sets of objects one-to-one.

First Grade Math

1.1.10 Represent, compare, and interpret data using pictures and picture graphs.

Kindergarten Language Arts

K.5.1 Draw pictures and write words for a specific reason.

Kindergarten Art

K.7.1 Use objects or animals from real world as subject matter for artwork.

Resources

National Geographic Skunk Profile, June 17, 2008, from
<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/skunk.html>

Project Wildlife - Living with Skunks, June 17, 2008, from
<http://www.projectwildlife.org/living-skunks.htm>

Compassion Action Institute, June 17, 2008, from
<http://www.pleasebekind.com/skunk.html>

These websites provide factual information on skunks, which children may use for the across curriculum activity stated above, or for personal research.

Teaching Courage, June 17, 2008, from
http://www.valuesparenting.com/monthly_value.php?month=august

This parenting website has an article on discussing and teaching courage with young children. This discussion could be done in conjunction with character education lessons as well.

Forest Diorama. June 17, 2008, from
<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/diorama/forest/>

Creating a forest diorama with creatures from the story The Bravest of the Brave could be assigned as an at-home project, done in class during art period, or as a choice for a rainy day recess activity. Creativity is only limited by students' imaginations!

Indiana Academic Standards Met by Novel Content

First Grade Language Arts

1.2.5 Use context (the meaning of the surrounding text) to understand word and sentence meanings.

Second Grade Language Arts

2.3.4 Identify the use of rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration (using words with repeating consonant sounds) in poetry or fiction.

Third Grade Language Arts

3.6.5 Identify and correctly use pronouns (it, him, her), adjectives (brown eyes, two younger sisters), compound nouns (summertime, snowflakes), and articles (a, an, the) in writing.

Kindergarten Science

K.4.1 Give examples of plants and animals.

First Grade Science

1.4.1 Identify when stories give attributes to plants and animals, such as the ability to speak, that they really do not have.

Bibliography

Shutta Crum website

<http://www.shuttacrum.com/>

Tim Bowers website

<http://www.timbowers.com/>

Perma-Bound Books

<http://www.perma-bound.com>

Indiana State Academic Standards

<http://www.doe.in.gov/standards/welcome.html>

Barnes and Noble

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/>

National Geographic Skunk Profile

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/skunk.html>

Project Wildlife - Living with Skunks

<http://www.projectwildlife.org/living-skunks.htm>

Compassion Action Institute

<http://www.pleasebekind.com/skunk.html>

Teaching Courage

http://www.valuesparenting.com/monthly_value.php?month=august

Forest Diorama

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/diorama/forest/>