

YHBA Novel Resource

All of the Above

Shelley Pearsall

Little, Brown, and Company

2006



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<http://www.shelleypearsall.com/index.htm>

Shelley Pearsall is a native from Ohio, and has been writing since childhood. She graduated from the College of Wooster (B.A.) in 1989 and holds a master's degree in education from John Carroll University. Before becoming a full-time author, she was a public school teacher and also museum historian. Telling stories about the Great Lakes aboard a steamship and taking part in a Revolutionary War archaeological dig are just two of many unique historical experiences Pearsall has enjoyed in her life. Her love and knowledge of history has been very instrumental in her writing, leading her toward historical fiction in her first novels. Current fiction followed, including All of the Above. The following is an explanation from Pearsall regarding the inspiration for All of the Above:

“The idea came on a day when I wasn't really expecting to stumble across a new book idea. (It often happens this way!) My first book, *Trouble Don't Last*, had just been published and I was making one of my first school visits as a new author. The Cleveland school I was visiting was called Alexander Hamilton Middle School. Picture a run-down urban school, a gloomy gray November morning, and a very nervous author who was just hoping she wouldn't screw up her first program.

During my visit, the school's principal kept talking about his school's record-breaking tetrahedron project. To be honest, I didn't have a clue what he meant--what in the world was a "tetrahedron?" But when I had a free moment, he took me to one of the math classrooms to show me. I can still remember the jaw-dropping sight when he opened the door: the entire room was filled with giant rainbow-colored pyramids. They were suspended from the lights and lined up along the windowsills and bookshelves. It was a magical, almost gravity-defying sight.

Later on, I learned that a group of kids at this inner-city school had attempted to set a record by building the world's largest tetrahedron--a giant paper pyramid made of 16,384 smaller ones. In fact, they had spent an entire year on the project, working after school, trying to reach their admittedly unusual goal. From that moment, I was hooked.”

Shelley Pearsall is currently living in Silver Lake, Ohio with her husband, stepson, and pet cat, Marbles.

Books by Shelley Pearsall

Trouble Don't Last (2002)

Crooked River (2005)

All of the Above (2006)

All Shook Up (published Fall, 2009)

Awards

Recipient of an Ohio Arts Council Fellowship in Writing in 1999

Named 2005 Children's Writer-in-Residence for the James Thurber House

Trouble Don't Last

- 2003 Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction
- 2003 Ohioana Library Book Award, Juvenile Fiction
- 2003 Best Children's Book of the Year (age 9-12) with asterisk for Outstanding Merit, Bank Street College of Education
- 2002 Editor's Choice by Booklist
- 2003 Jefferson Cup Honor Book
- New York Public Library selection in "Children's Books 2002: 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing"
- Top Ten First Novels by Booklist
- Lasting Connections book by Book Links
- Top Ten Historical Fiction for Youth by Booklist

Crooked River

- 2008 Sequoyah Young Adult Master List (Oklahoma)
- 2007-2008 Maryland Black-Eyed Susan Book Award nominee
- 2008 Rebecca Caudill Young Readers Book Award nominee
- 2007 Maine Student Master Book List
- 2006 New Hampshire Great Stone Face Children's Book List
- Finalist, Great Lakes Book Award
- 2006 New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age
- 2006 Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People
- Junior Library Guild Selection
- New York Public Library Top 100 Books for Reading and Sharing

All of the Above

- 2007 ALA Notable Book
- 2007 Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers selection
- 2006 VOYA Top 5, Top Shelf Fiction for Middle School Readers
- New York Public Library Top 100 Books for Reading and Sharing
- 2007 Texas Blue Bonnet Master List

- 2007 Association of Library Services for Children (ALSC) "Recommended for Holiday Gift-Giving"
- 2008 Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award Nominee (Vermont)
- 2007-2008 North Carolina Children's Book Award nominee
- 2008-09 Missouri Truman Readers Award List nominee
- 2008-09 William Allen White Award List (Kansas)

All Shook Up (to be published, Fall 2009)

- Boys' Life Magazine Summer Reading choice, August issue
- 2008 Junior Library Guild selection

Annotation

This story of four inner-city Cleveland middle-schoolers and their unassuming math teacher is based on the true experience of students at Alexander Hamilton Middle School who challenged themselves to build the world's largest tetrahedron. Pearsall's account unfolds through the eyes and words of four characters: Rhondell, James, Marcel, and Sharice, as well as Mr. Collins, their math teacher. What is a tetrahedron? What supplies will we need to build one? Who is going to organize this? How will we get along? Why am I doing this? Rhondell, James, Marcel, and Sharice all ask these questions about the project and themselves as they confront this mathematical challenge as well as personal ones. Answers to their questions about math and life begin to become clear to each of them as they develop cooperation, communication and acceptance with each other and other relationships in their lives. Pearsall "constructs" not only a novel about tetrahedrons, but one about building quality life experiences through her engaging tale of these dedicated young people and the adults in their lives that help them. The reader will cheer this group on as they strive to break the tetrahedron world record, but whether they succeed or not, it is apparent that they have succeeded in building confidence, self-worth and hope in themselves.

Literary Guide

Genre – Realistic Fiction

Point-of-View -- First person, told through the perspectives of Rhondell, James, Sharice, and Marcel. Chapters from Mr. Collins are more objective, at times told omnisciently.

Theme – There are many themes occurring in All of the Above. All of the young people in this novel must develop interpersonal skills in order to work with each other on the math project. These interpersonal skills are important in their own individual relationships: Marcel with his father; Sharice with herself and her foster mother; Rhondell with her mother, aunt, and herself; James with his brother; Mr. Collins with his students and his own past. Self-Discovery is another important theme: Marcel and his people/showmanship skills; Sharice and her self-esteem; James and his leadership and art abilities; Rhondell and her intellect and drive for college. The themes of Cooperation and Tolerance are also dominant in their importance so that this project can be successful.

Title Importance: If these themes can be remembered and qualities can be attained, then life's possibilities do not have to be a choice, but young people like Rhondell, James, Marcel, and Sharice can have "all of the above."

Conflict -- There are several external conflicts present in this novel. Most of these young people are facing inner city challenges, including poverty, foster care, broken homes, gangs. They are also struggling with various prejudices which creates conflicts in their interaction with each other.

There are also internal conflicts: Marcel must reconcile differences with his Father and insecurities in himself; Sharice struggles with her self-esteem and desperately needs to find love and a home; James deals with similar issues of finding guidance for himself amidst a broken home and a brother who is involved with gangs which leads to anger issues; Rhondell needs confidence in her intellect and hope in her aspirations for college; Mr. Collins struggles with career burnout, the loss of his brother in Vietnam, and his ability to reach these young people in the classroom.

Conflict Resolution – Not all of the external conflicts are resolved; the inner city challenges still confront these young people, but support from the community helps them cope with their urban environment. Individually, Marcel develops an improved relationship with his father through communication and tolerance; Sharice finds love and a home with Aunt Asia and Rhondell's family; James finds the tetrahedron project to be an outlet for his artistic talent and his anger as well as a place to discover leadership talents; Rhondell gains confidence in herself and

her ambition as she comes out of her shell and is accepted by her peers; Mr. Collins finds renewed energy and confidence in himself and his career . They all learn self-esteem, cooperation, perseverance, and tolerance in order to successfully finish the tetrahedron after several obstacles block their path throughout the project.

Characters

Mr. Collins – Mr. Collins is the math teacher and presents the tetrahedron challenge to a 7th grade math class almost “accidentally” out of a frustrating day of teaching. He is slight-of-build, light brown hair, with an unassuming demeanor. He initially lacks confidence and hope in himself and this endeavor.

Rhondell – Rhondell is one of the main characters: plain in looks but vivid in her ambition to attend college. She is quiet, socially uncomfortable, but observant to much around her. She tucks away her in her mind her “college vocabulary” words that she likes to think will help her get into college someday.

Sharice – Sharice is another main character: the organizer and more social one who tries to pull the project pull together at the beginning, just as she is trying to pull her life together, living with living with “Foster Nonparent #5”, but not wanting anyone to see the sadness and worry clouding her life underneath her chatty, happy demeanor.

Marcel – Marcel is a main character: son of Willy Q, who owns Willy Q’s Barbecue. Marcel is the slick showman with his barbecue schpeal down pat, but finds he can relax the show with his classmates as they begin to bond during the project.

James Harris III – James is a main character. He is angry at the dissolving relationship he has with his brother and his unstable home situation. He finds a great outlet for his artistic talents in the tetrahedron project, however, as well as undiscovered leadership skills. Suddenly he is not so angry anymore.

Joe – The janitor at Washington Middle School

Willy Q – Marcel’s father, a Vietnam veteran and owner of Willy Q’s Barbecue

Aunt Asia – Rhondell’s aunt, a hair stylist

DJ – James’s brother

Markese – DJ’s friend

Setting

All of the Above takes place in the recent past, recounting an event that occurred in 2002. The story takes place in an inner-city neighborhood of Cleveland, Ohio, and the reader travels through the seasons of the year with the students as they work on their project throughout the whole school year. The majority of the story occurs in Mr. Collin’s classroom when the club is creating the tetrahedron, but other scenes take place in the homes or work places of the characters, such as Willy Q’s Barbecue or the Style R Us hair salon.

Interest Level/Reading Level

Interest Level: 3-6; Reading Level: 5.3

Classroom Guide

Booktalk

“This is a book called All of the Above, by Shelley Pearsall. So.....who likes math? Good...what about geometry....right angles, isosceles triangles, protractors?.....okay...who knows what a tetrahedron is? [pause] ever heard of a tetrahedron?? [take two-four answers....] Well, there were a few students at an inner city middle school in Cleveland, Ohio that had never heard of a tetrahedron either, but when their Math teacher, Mr. Collins, tells them about this figure and also tells them that a school in California set a world’s record for building the largest one, they decide to try and build an even bigger tetrahedron – against great odds. Their middle school does not look like Zionsville West Middle School: their building is not brand new like ours – there were broken windows, peeling paint, and no modern computer equipment. But these four students decide to work with Mr. Collins and each other, in order to see if they can build this record-breaking tetrahedron. This is not an easy challenge in itself – but each student is also dealing with their own personal challenges, which you will learn about as you read the chapters in this book – each chapter is told through a different viewpoint – and what the success of this challenge means to each of them. Oh! Did I mention that this is a true story? Yes – the school that has already set the tetrahedron-building record is in California. Will James, Marcel, Rhondell, and Sharice from Cleveland succeed in building a larger tetrahedron? What will they learn in the process? What will they learn about themselves, and what will they learn about each other as they work toward this goal? This is a wonderful story of perseverance, fun, and hard work.....one that I think you will enjoy. And after you read All of the Above, by Shelley Pearsall, maybe you will want to talk to Mrs. Huffman or Mrs. Weirich about building a tetrahedron here at Zionsville West!”

Discussion Questions

All of the Above

Introduce the novel and the author, Shelley Pearsall. Visit her website in class so the class can have a visual image of the author and hear her own explanation of how she decided to write this novel, based on a true event.

<http://www.shelleypearsall.com/about.htm>

<http://www.shelleypearsall.com/allOfTheAbove.htm>

[This novel's chapters are not numbered, but titled by the name of the character speaking.]

Mr. Collins

Pre-reading: Have you ever gotten yourself into a project that you are not sure about? Or started something that you don't know much about? What feelings did you have?

Pre-reading:

Who knows what a tetrahedron is? How would you describe it?

During:

1. Were there any facts that Mr. Collins tells that surprised you? (pp. 3-4)
2. Why do you think he put them in a list format? (pp. 3-4)
3. Have you already begun to develop a picture of Mr. Collins in your mind? How would you describe him right now? (pp. 3-4)

Post-reading: Draw a picture of a tetrahedron or create a model of a tetrahedron, based on the facts given in this list.

James Harris III

Pre-reading: Describe how you feel when you are sitting in a class that you do not like very well. Can you tell when you have someone in your class that really doesn't want to be there? How can you tell?

During:

1. When Mr. Collins loses his temper, what does he do. (p.7-8).
2. What do you think he is thinking about that half hour he looks out the window without saying a word? (p. 8)
3. When James writes the word "tetrahedron" down as "Tetra Heed Ron", what does this tell us about him? (p. 11)

Post-reading: Describe your first impressions of James. Why do you think he has such a bad attitude? Do you think he will come Monday afternoon or choose Detention? Why?

Rhondell

Pre-reading: What do you do when you come across a word you don't know? Who has a huge goal in life? (you don't have to share it, but raise your hand if you do.)

During:

1. Why is Rhondell so quiet? (p. 16)
2. What other words would you use to describe Rhondell after meeting her in this chapter? (pp. 15-16)

Post-reading: While we are reading this book, begin writing down words you don't know when you hear them or read them...words from this book or words you hear in conversation.

Mr. Collins

Pre-reading: Does anyone keep a journal or a diary where you talk about your feelings to yourself or reasons for why you do something? Does it help you to write it down?

During:

1. Why do you think Mr. Collins writes in lists? (p. 17)
2. Do you think one of these "answers" is more true than the others as to why he started the tetrahedron project? Which one? (pp. 17-18)

Post-reading: **Writing Activity:** Write a paragraph about a time in your life when you started something that you didn't really think you would finish or would work out. How did you feel? What happened?

Sharice

Pre-reading: How many of you have ever formed or joined a club? What things do you need to have a club?

During:

1. Why do you think James decided to come to the club meeting? Why do you think he joins in the discussion and wants to hold an office? (pp. 23-24)
2. What kind of a leader is Mr. Collins? (pp. 22-23)
3. What do you learn about Sharice in this chapter? (pp. 23-26)

Post-reading: Create a chart of the Tetrahedron Club, listing the students who attended this first meeting. Write down what is known about those characters, so far. We will use this chart to keep track of who stays in the club and who does not.

Marcel

Pre-reading: Who has ever eaten at a barbeque restaurant? Were there different flavors of barbecue or just one kind? Raise your hand if you know what it means for someone to give you a "sell job?" How can you tell when someone is giving you a sell job? How does it make you feel?

During:

1. Why does Marcel call himself Marcel the Magnificent? (p. 27)
2. Can people have more than one kind of smile? How? (pp. 28-29)
3. What are your first impressions of Marcel's relationship with his father? (pp. 28-29)

Post-reading: Who would like to read Marcel's description of all their different barbecue sauces that he recites to all their customers? Try to say it the way you think Marcel says it.

Mr. Collins

Pre-reading: Who likes to do math problems?

During:

1. Why does Mr. Collins want to know how many pieces they will need for their tetrahedron? (p. 31)

Post-reading: Have the class work in groups or individually to see if they can answer Mr. Collin's question.

James Harris III

Pre-reading: How can you tell if a teacher really cares about you? Raise your hand if any of you have really struggled in a class and you did not receive such a good grade? How did you feel?

During:

1. Why does James dislike school so much? (pp. 33-36)
2. What thoughts do you have about the picture on page 34?
3. How does James think he has "won" in his arrangement about attending the club meetings? (p. 38)

Post-reading: Writing Activity: Write a prediction about what you think is going to happen when James attends the meetings.

Mr. Collins

Pre-reading: Who wants to try another Mr. Collin's math problem?

During:

1. Why does Mr. Collins offer extra credit for this problem? (p. 39)

Post-reading: Have the class work in groups or individually to see if they can answer Mr. Collin's question.

Willy Q

Pre-reading: What do you know about the Vietnam War? Have you ever had a parent doubt you about something you are doing? How did it make you feel?

During:

1. What is Willy Q's position about Marcel participating in the Math Club? (pp.43-44)

2. How does Willy Q's experiences in the Vietnam War affect his opinion about Marcel's activities? (p. 41, 44)

Post-reading: Visit the website The History Place, Vietnam

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/vietnam> to gain more information about this conflict.

Marcel

Pre-reading: How do you feel when you are angry inside?

During:

1. To what does Marcel compare his anger in this chapter? (p. 45)

2. How does Mr. Collins try to help Marcel? (p. 46)

Post-reading: Why isn't Marcel content with working in his father's restaurant? What do you think is going to happen between Marcel, his father, and Marcel's interest in the tetrahedron project?

Sharice

Pre-reading: What keeps you coming to a club? What do you enjoy about clubs? Have you ever been really angry with yourself? What does it feel like? How do you cope with those feelings?

During:

1. What problem is the club facing? (p. 49, 52)

2. How does the club solve this problem? (pp. 52-53)

3. What is Sharice so angry about? (p. 54-55)

Post-reading: Revisit the chart that the class has created. Revise the chart based on the information Sharice provides in this chapter as to who is still attending the meetings and who has stopped attending.

James Harris III

Pre-reading: Think about the picture books you were read as a child. What does artwork do to a book? How do you feel when someone lets you down?

During:

1. What idea does James have that finally involves him in the project? (p. 59)

2. What is happening between James and his brother DJ? (p. 60)

Post-reading: Why do you think the math project is becoming important to James? What reasons does he give? Do you agree?

Rhondell

Pre-reading: Writing Activity: Choose one: Do you have a favorite color? Tell what it is and why you like this color best. **Or** Are you a people person or a quiet person? Why?

During:

1. How does Rhondell describe herself? (p. 63)

2. What are Rhondell's perceptions of Marcel, James, and Sharice? (pp. 64-66)

Post-reading: Can people really be that different from the way they seem? Can you think of someone that was totally different than your first impression of them? Can an activity or event change someone that much? Can you think of other examples of people in literature or history that exemplify such a dramatic change?

Sharice

Pre-reading: What do you do when you are nervous?

During:

1. Why does Sharice not like the quiet? (p. 67)
2. What idea does Sharice have? What is the reaction of the rest of the club? (pp. 68-69)

Post-reading: Why is the idea of a party so important to Sharice? Can anyone describe a party that was very important to you – either one you attended or one you planned? Why do you think this party is important in your memory? What impact will this Christmas Party have on the tetrahedron club?

Marcel

Pre-reading: When you want something from your parents, what strategies do you try?

During:

1. What is Marcel asking for in this chapter? (pp. 70-71)

Post-reading: What do you learn about Willy from this chapter? Are you surprised?

James Harris III

Pre-reading: Will James stay for the Christmas Party or not?

During:

1. What is James thinking about the Christmas Party? (p. 77)
2. What bothers James about the party and makes him leave? (p.80-81)

Post-reading: Why do you think Sharice's comments about a family bother James? Why would Sharice talk about the club like a family? What is present in this chapter, like in all the chapters from James?

Sharice

Pre-reading: Have you ever really been mad at yourself for saying something or doing something that embarrasses you? How did you feel at that time?

During:

1. What does Mr. Collins share with the group about his family? (pp. 84-85)
2. How does Sharice react to this story? (pp.97-88)
3. Why is Mr. Collins a Math teacher? (p.86)
4. What do we learn about Marcel? (p. 85)

Post-reading: Why is this such an important chapter? Why do you think Mr. Collins and Sharice share such private stories with each other?

Marcel

Pre-reading: Who has ever been in a disagreement with a friend or a parent? What do you try to do if you want to “make up” or make amends?

During:

1. Why is business so slow at Willy Q’s Barbecue? (p. 91)
2. What do Willy Q and Marcel do to pass the time? (p. 93-94)

Post-reading: What is happening between Marcel and his father in this chapter? What has caused this change?

Rhondell

Pre-reading: Has anyone asked you personal questions that you don’t want to answer? How do you handle those questions?

During:

1. What is Rhondell noticing about Sharice? (pp. 94-97)

Post-reading: What are you learning about Rhondell? What do you think is happening with Sharice?

James Harris III

Pre-reading: Have you ever had a bad feeling about someone or something? Describe those feelings.

During:

1. Who is in James’s apartment when he goes home? (p. 101)
2. What do DJ’s friends ask him about? (p.101-102)
3. How does James deal with his worry and frustration? (p. 104)

Post-reading: How do you cope with things that are bothering you? Do you have any predictions about what is going to happen?

Sharice

Pre-reading: Have you ever made excuses for something? How does it feel?

During:

1. Why is Sharice staying late at school? (p. 105)
2. What does she do during this time? (pp. 107-108)
3. What does Mr. Collins tell her to always remember? (p. 106)

Post-reading: What do you think Sharice forgets to do that late January night? What does she compare herself to? What do you think is Sharice’s favorite time of the day?

Mr. Collins

Pre-reading: Another brief entry from Mr. Collins. What will it be?

Post-reading: How does he correlate what happens to the tetrahedron to math? What else can you correlate this randomness to?

Rhondell

Pre-reading: What do you think Rhondell will tell in this chapter?

During:

1. What does Rhondell mean by having no words to explain? (p. 113)
2. How does each student react to the destruction of the tetrahedron? (pp. 113-115)

Post-reading: What does the reaction of each student tell you about that person? Who do you think destroyed the tetrahedron? Who do you think is feeling responsible?

Sharice

Pre-reading: What does guilt do to someone? How do you think someone feels when they are at their breaking point?

During:

1. Where does Sharice go after discovering the destroyed tetrahedron? (p. 117)
2. Why did she save all the pieces of the tetrahedron? (p.118)
3. What does the color purple mean to her? (p. 118)

Post-reading: What is going to happen to Sharice? How do you feel about Sharice now? **Writing Activity**: If you could talk to her, what would you say to her?

Aunt Asia

Pre-reading: When you need help, where do you go? Is it hard for you to ask someone for help?

During:

1. Who does Rhondell call when she needs help? (p. 122)
2. What does Rhondell ask her Aunt Asia? (pp. 123)

Post-reading: Is Aunt Asia good for Rhondell? Why or why not? What are your impressions of Aunt Asia?

Rhondell

Pre-reading: What do you think is going to happen in this chapter?

During:

1. Where do Rhondell and Aunt Asia go? (p. 128)
2. What does Rhondell discover? (p. 130-131)
3. What is the significance of the torn up pieces of paper that were the tetrahedron? What do they symbolize?

Post-reading: Why is this such an important chapter? What does it tell you about Rhondell and Sharice?

Marcel

Pre-reading: When you are sad or upset, is there any “comfort food” that you turn to?

During:

1. How does Willy Q know what happened to the tetrahedron project? (p. 135)
2. What do we find out about how Marcel feels about the destruction of the tetrahedron? (pp. 135-36)

Post-reading: Describe Willy Q and Marcel’s relationship in this chapter. What do you learn about Marcel? What do you learn about Willy Q?

Rhondell

Pre-reading: What word do you think Rhondell would use to describe finding Sharice in the snow?

During:

1. Where do Aunt Asia and Rhondell take Sharice? (p.140)
2. How do Rhondell, Rhondell’s mother, and Aunt Asia each help Sharice? (pp. 141-144)

Post-reading: What do you think about Sharice’s confession? How does Rhondell feel about it? What would you think?

Mr. Collins

Pre-reading: Do you think Mr. Collins is asking another math question or posting a list?

Post-reading: Does Mr. Collins really want answers? Can we answer any of them?

James Harris III

Pre-reading: What do we know will be in this chapter from James?

During:

1. What information does James know? (p.151)
2. What does James try to figure out in this chapter? (p. 153)
3. What does Mr. Collins tell him? (p. 154)

Post-reading: What do the actions of James in this chapter say about him? Why does James care so much about the tetrahedron? Who is more responsible for what has happened: James or Sharice?

Willy Q

Pre-reading: Can you think of someone that you found out something about that surprised you?

During:

1. How does Willy Q feel about the tetrahedron project? (p. 158-159)
2. What does Willy Q tell to Marcel about his past that Marcel did not know? (p. 160)

Post-reading: What is happening to Marcel' relationship with his father through the destruction of the tetrahedron? What do we learn about Willy Q's past? How does this impact Marcel?

Rhondell

Pre-reading: What words do you think Rhondell would use for Sharice's situation?

During:

1. How does Rhondell's mother feel about Sharice staying with them? (p. 162)
2. What does Aunt Asia bring to Sharice? (pp. 162-163)
3. How does Rhondell respond to Sharice when she begins to tell her about her life? (p. 164)

Post-reading: Would you want Rhondell as a friend? Why or why not? Do you think it is a good thing that Sharice is staying with Rhondell and her mother?

Sharice

Pre-reading: Who has ever had someone do their nails or hair or has given you a neck massage that felt wonderful? What happens to you when this is happening?

1. What memories does Sharice have while Aunt Asia is working on her hair?

Post-reading: What leads Sharice to asking Aunt Asia about staying with her when she is in the hair salon? Does Sharice appreciate the whole hair salon experience?

Rhondell

Pre-reading: Has anyone ever surprised you by their words or actions? Have you not known if you should trust them?

During:

1. What do Sharice and Rhondell research in the library?
2. What word does Rhondell use to describe what happens in this chapter?

Post-reading: Have you ever had an "epiphany" about something? Do you think Rhondell is doing the right thing?

Aunt Asia

Pre-reading: Have you ever done something that totally surprised you? When have you ever followed your gut feeling about something, when everyone around you disagreed?

During:

1. What has Aunt Asia decided to do? (p. 177)

Post-reading: How has Aunt Asia come to this decision? What does Sharice's hair symbolize? **Writing Activity:** What would your hair say about you?

Mr. Collins

Pre-reading: What do you think we are receiving from Mr. Collins at this point?

Post-reading: What does the extra credit part tell us about Mr. Collins?

Marcel

Pre-reading: Have your parents ever surprised you when they have said or done something to support you?

During:

1. What does Willy Q begin to do with Marcel? (p. 183)

2. What new thing does Marcel learn about his Dad? (p. 185)

Post-reading: What do you think of Willy Q? Of his relationship with Marcel? Has it changed since the beginning of the book?

James Harris III

Pre-reading: Do you know something that is really, really important to you? One special picture, one special jersey, one special ticket? What would you do if someone took it from you?

During:

1. What does James take that is important to DJ?

2. What is important to James?

Post-reading: Is James doing the right thing by bargaining with DJ this way? Would you do this? Does this affect your perception of James? How?

Sharice

Pre-reading: Do colors mean something to you? Do you know anyone who feels strongly about certain colors as being good luck or bad luck?

During:

1. What chance does Sharice decide to take? (p. 191)

2. What important tour does Sharice take in this chapter? (p. 192)

Post-reading: What do you think about Aunt Asia being Sharice's foster mom? Who wants this more: Sharice or Aunt Asia? Is it silly for Sharice to place so much importance on colors? Are colors important in our lives?

Aunt Asia

Pre-reading: What are you really proud of? How do you show that pride?

During:

1. What does Aunt Asia show her clients at the salon? (p. 195)
2. What worries does Aunt Asia have? (p. 197)

Post-reading: Do you think Aunt Asia will be a good foster mom? Why? What does it take to be a good foster mom?

James Harris III

Pre-reading: What does the art in this chapter tell us about what will happen?

During:

1. What time of year is it now? (p. 201)
2. Why does Mr. Collins have James draw a picture of an air-conditioner? (p. 202)
3. What important events at home is James missing because of his concentration on building tetrahedrons? (p. 204)

Post-reading: What is happening in James's personal life? What do you think this means for the project?

Marcel

Pre-reading: Have you ever had a surprise visitor to your house? Or a surprise caller?

During:

1. What does James bring to Marcel at the Barbecue? (p.207)
2. Why is James counting on Marcel? (p. 208)

Post-reading: Describe the relationship between Marcel and James in this chapter in contrast to the beginning of the book. What do you think James's letter says?

Mr. Collins

Pre-reading: Have you received a letter or email from someone that really surprised you?

During:

1. What does James say in his letter?

Post-reading: Are you surprised at James's letter? What emotions do you think James is feeling? What emotions are you feeling for James?

Rhondell

Pre-reading: What do you do when you receive bad or surprising news?

During:

1. What does Rhondell remember about James? (p. 213)
2. How does Marcel respond? (p. 214)

Post-reading: What do you think Mr. Collins is thinking after he reads James's letter? Why do you think Sally Pearsall had us view this chapter from Rhondell's perspective?

Sharice

Pre-reading: Who has ever had daydreams about becoming famous or having something big happen to them?

Post-reading: What dreams have come true for Rhondell and Sharice?

Marcel

Pre-reading: How do you celebrate a huge event?

During:

1. What does Willy Q do special to celebrate the completion of the tetrahedron? (pp. 217-218)

Post-reading: Describe Marcel's relationship with Willy Q now? Out of all the things Willy Q does to celebrate the tetrahedron project, which one do you think means the most to Marcel?

Mr. Collins

Pre-reading: What do you think we are going to hear from Mr. Collins?

Post-reading: Are any of these facts surprising? What facts would you use to summarize this project? **Writing Activity:** What is the missing piece?

Sharice

Pre-reading: How do you feel the day of a big game or an important concert or a big test?

During:

1. Who protected the tetrahedron after it was finished? (p. 225)

2. What are the thoughts of the club members as they look at the finished tetrahedron? (pp. 225-226)

Post-reading: What are your feelings as you read about the club members looking at their completed tetrahedron? How is the tetrahedron like the lives of all those that worked on it?

Rhondell

Pre-reading: Describe the moment when the shot goes in at the buzzer, the candles are glowing on the cake, the perfect note is hit in a musical score.

During:

1. What role does Rhondell play when they present the tetrahedron to the press? (p. 228)

2. What is Marcel's role? (p. 229-230)

Post-reading: What surprising things happen at the press conference? Would you have imagined the conference differently?

James Harris III

Pre-reading: What do you think has happened to James?

During:

1. How is James keeping track of the progress of the tetrahedron?

Post-reading: What are your feelings for James as he reads the article about the tetrahedron? What is not in this chapter about James?

Mr. Collins

Pre-reading: What do you think the final entry from Mr. Collins will be?

Post-reading: Why do you think he mentions that the tetrahedron can be built into infinity?

Vocabulary

Tetrahedron (p.4) – a geometric solid shape with four faces. All four faces are equilateral triangles.

Epiphany (p. 15, p. 175) – a sudden realization about something or a sudden change of mind.

Quiescent (p. 15, p. 64) – to become quiet, still or inactive

Metamorphosis (p. 15, p. 65-66) -- a change of form, shape, structure or substance; a transformation.

Eucalyptus oil (p. 141) – a type of oil that comes from tall, aromatic, chiefly Australian evergreen tree; the oil can be used as an expectorant (clears sinuses) or a therapeutic aid.

Indiana Academic Standards

Math: 7.4.4, 7.7.4

English/Language Arts: 7.3.2, 7.3.3, 7.3.4, 7.3.5, 7.3.7, 7.3.8

Visual Arts: 7.7.1, 7.7.2

Social Studies: 7.1.15, 7.1.16, 7.1.18, 7.1.20, 7.1.21

Anticipation Statements

Read the statements below. If you agree with the statement, make a check next to the statement in the **Agree** column. If you do not agree with the statement, make a check next to the statement in the **Disagree** column. Write any thoughts or comments you have about these statements in the Comments column.

		<u>All of the Above</u> By Shelley Pearsall	Comments
Agree	Disagree	It helps to have a lot of money in order to set a world record.	
		Foster children are usually troublemakers.	
		Math teachers do not have much personality.	
		Academic clubs are usually boring.	
		Quiet people do not make good friends.	
		Students in inner-city schools are not expected to get along very well.	

Read Aloud Passages

Read-Aloud #1: Preface, from All of the Above:

“If you follow Washington Boulevard past the smoky good smells of Willy Q’s Barbecue, past the Style R Us hair salon, where they do nails like nobody’s business, past the eye-popping red doors of the Sanctuary Baptist Church, you’ll finally come to a dead end....just you wait and see.”

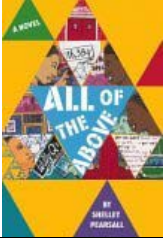






This “peek” into the setting of the story in the opening pages of the novel piques the interest of the reader right away. There is definite foreshadowing with the mention of places that become important in the story, and the tone is set with the acknowledgement by the narrator that not much is expected from the students at this school and it is not a desirable place to be. The last unfinished phrase begs the reader to turn the page to find out what happens next. This preface is equally valuable to read at the end of the story when the places mentioned can be fully appreciated, and discussion can occur regarding who is the narrator of these words? Use along with the Booktalk and Anticipation Statements to introduce this novel.

Read-Aloud #2: All of the Above (pp. 129-130):

“Looking up at the house with no lights and the snow swirling around it, I feel as if the house has a big sign saying GO AWAY. KEEP OUT. CLOSED....The shape is huddled over, curled up, on the steps. I don’t even check to who the somebody is; I just go slipping, running, flying down the driveway to get Aunt Asia.”

The cold of the Cleveland winter seeps right through the reader’s bones as the house looms dark and unfriendly. There is a strong sense of foreboding as Rhondell sees the scattered paper and the reader almost wants to call out to her to “watch out” too. This is another excerpt which will leave the reader wanting to turn the page to find out what Rhondell does next and what happens to the cold, sad figure on the stoop. This passage is one of the climaxes of the novel in terms of action and character development, without giving too much information away.

Read-Alikes

	<p>If you enjoyed <u>All of the Above</u> by Shelley Pearsall, try.....</p>
	<p><u>Jazmin's Notebook</u>, by Nikki Grimes. Jazmin, an Afro-American teenager who lives with her older sister in a small Harlem apartment in the 1960s, finds strength in writing poetry and keeping a record of the events in her sometimes difficult life.</p>
	<p><u>If a Tree Falls at Lunch Period</u>, by Gennifer Choldenko. Kristen and Walk are very different in terms of skin color, backgrounds, interests, and personalities but they suddenly find themselves sharing many things in common as they both try to find their way in a middle school that is very different but equally challenging as the one in <u>All of the Above</u>.</p>
	<p><u>A Friendship for Today</u>, by Patricia McKissack. Twelve-year-old Rosemary Patterson learns that she will be attending an all-white school in the fall; but when her best friend is diagnosed with polio, she must face the first day of school alone. Includes themes of friendship and discrimination.</p>
	<p><u>Sahara Special</u>, by Esme Raji Codell. Struggling with school and her feelings since her father left, Sahara gets a fresh start with a new and unique teacher who supports her writing talents and the individuality of each of her classmates. Another beautiful story of a very diverse, inner city school class that unites with a strong, inspiring teacher.</p>
	<p><u>Stargirl</u>, a teen who animates quiet Mica High with her colorful personality, suddenly finds herself shunned for her refusal to conform. Themes of diversity and self-esteem are present in this novel.</p>
	<p><u>Crooked River</u>, by Shelley Pearsall. Told in the alternating voices of Indian John and Rebecca Carver, <u>Crooked River</u> offers a probing look at prejudice, early American justice, and the true meaning of courage. An author's note and bibliography provide additional historical details for readers.</p>

Across Curriculum Connections

Social Studies: Study of the history, civics and government, geography, economics, individuals, society, and culture of Asia, including Vietnam and the Vietnam War.

Visit the website: **Digital History**, and follow the link below to their learning module for the Vietnam War.

<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/modules/vietnam/index.cfm>

Students will form small groups and follow additional links from this website to look at the Vietnam War from several different aspects. One group will study the timeline of the Vietnam war

<http://www.pbs.org/battlefieldvietnam/timeline/> ; another group will look at consequences of the war; another will analyze maps of the area and battles

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/refer/maps.html>. Each group will share with the class what they learned regarding these aspects of the war. Under the teacher's direction, all students will visit the following website, the Battle of Hamburger Hill <http://www.historyinfilm.com/hamhill/real.htm> to focus on the battle where Mr. Collin's brother dies in battle.

Social Studies Standards 7.1.15 (timelines), 7.1.16 (interconnections with people), 7.1.18 (causes/effects of events and movements), 7.1.20 (Perform historical Research of this geographic location), 7.1.21 (Evaluate solutions/courses of action of people to resolve problems)

Art: Identify and discriminate artist's use of using geometric shapes in art.

Students visit the website of artist M.C. Escher to view how triangles can be used to create artistic work. Following this lesson, students will create a chosen scene from the book, drawing the scene in triangles. The triangles will then be combined on a classroom bulletin board to form tetrahedron shapes

<http://mcescher.com/>

Visual Art 7.7.2

Book Activities

Book Activity 1: Building Tetrahedrons

Grade Level: 7th grade

Student Involvement: Small Group work. Students will work in random groups to build their own mini-tetrahedrons, similar to the ones Rhondell, Marcel, James, and Sharice built in this novel.

Indiana Academic Standards:

Math Geometry Standard 7.4.4. Construct two-dimensional patterns (nets) for three dimensional objects, such as right prisms, pyramids, cylinders, and cones.

Math Problem Solving Standard 7.7.4. Apply strategies and results from simpler problems to solve more complex problems.

Description of Activity:

Students will be placed in random groups of four and provided the included How to Build a Tetrahedron Instruction sheet. The students will also be provided paper, crayons, and tape to build and color their tetrahedrons. Students will be given a few minutes to review the Instruction sheet and will be given an opportunity to ask questions. Then the students will be given the majority of the class period to cut out, color, and assemble as many tetrahedrons as they can. Teacher will supervise and observe the dynamics of each group as they work together on this activity. With ten minutes left in the period, the teacher will ask the groups to stop working. Each student will receive a copy of the Reflection Page and will answer the questions individually. After these sheets have been completed, the teacher will lead the class in a discussion about the tetrahedron-building activity and group work. This activity could also be spread out over a two-day period with continued tetrahedron building occurring the second day followed by an extended Reflection and discussion period.

This activity will provide poignant simulation of the plot of All of the Above, helping the students identify with the work and the challenges assumed by the characters in the book as they attempted to build the world's largest tetrahedron. The book's themes of tolerance and perseverance should prevail through this activity. The shared perspective writing style of the book will be mirrored in the discussion component when each student will have an opportunity to express the feelings they experienced as they worked on this building activity.

Student Resources: See the How to Build a Tetrahedron Instruction sheet, attached, which students will follow in order to complete this group activity. Also included is the Reflection Page which students will answer after their

tetrahedron-building activity is completed. This Reflection Page will allow the students to assess their own work on creating a tetrahedron and the success and/or challenges they encountered as they worked on this project as a group. They will also have an opportunity to comment on any changes in their perceptions of the characters in the book after having an opportunity to build their own tetrahedron in a group situation.

Assessment: Self-assessment will occur from the student Reflection sheet. The teacher may also use this form to assess participation and knowledge gained by students on this mathematical and interpersonal activity.

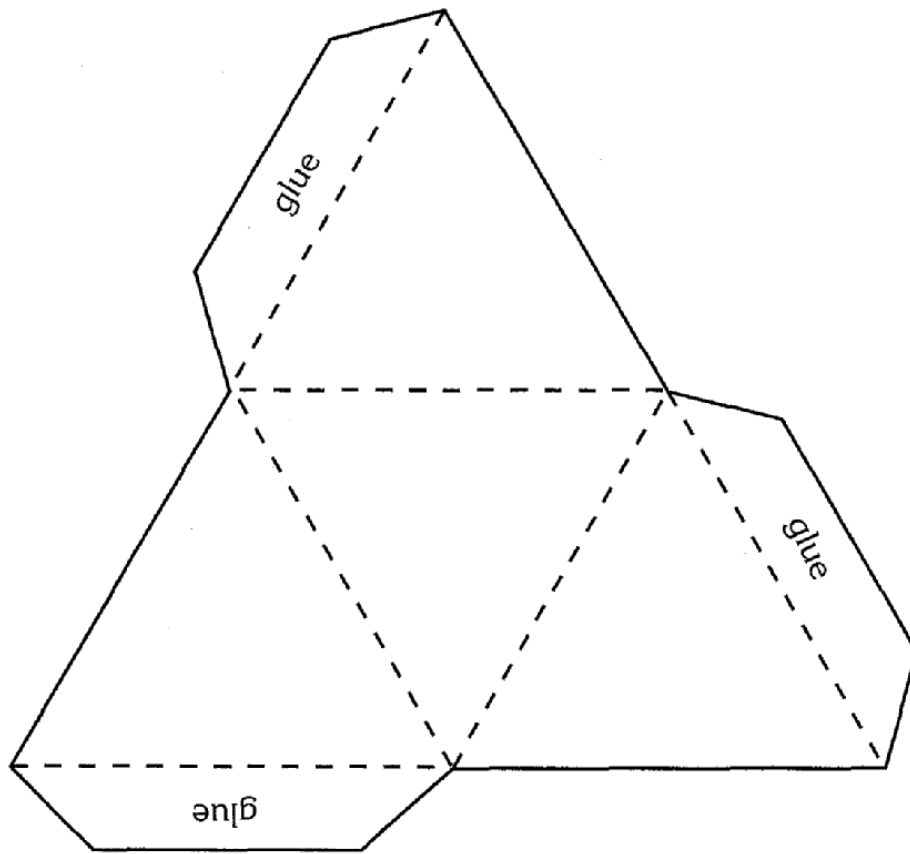
Reflection Sheet

Name _____

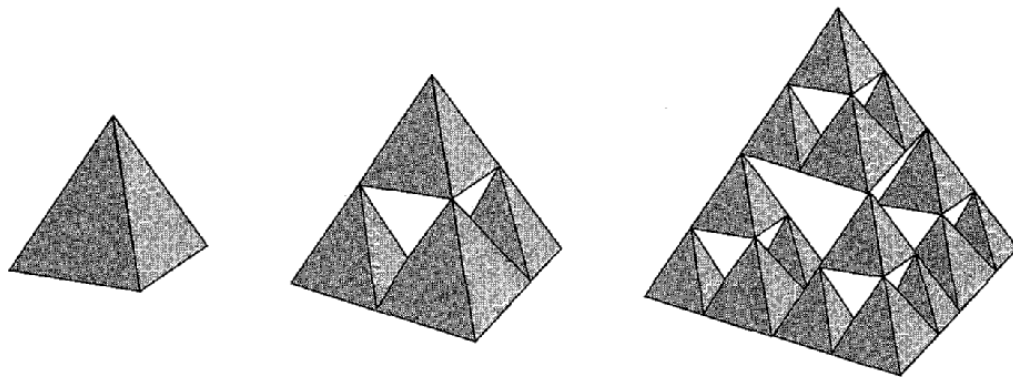
1. Describe the steps your group followed in order to build a mini-tetrahedron. (5 points)
2. What role did you play in your group? Were you one of the organizers or a follower? Were you comfortable in this role? (5 points)
3. What strategies did you use as you planned your construction of the tetrahedron? Did your strategies work smoothly? Were there times you needed to revise your strategies? How did your group handle these revisions as you worked toward your goal? (5 points)
4. When you completed this project, how did you feel? What was the mood of your group? (5 points)
5. After completing this activity, has your perceptions about Rhondell, James, Sharice, or Marcel changed in any way? If so, how? (5 points)
6. Describe any new knowledge or understandings you have reached regarding group work as a result of this project. What would you have done differently? What worked well that you would do the same if you worked on another group project? (5 points)

HOW TO BUILD A TETRAHEDRON

A tetrahedron is a type of pyramid, made up of four triangles of equal size. Make a copy of this tetrahedron model. Color it, cut it out, and glue or tape it together to make your own tetrahedron.



Next, tape your tetrahedrons together in sets of four to form larger tetrahedrons. These can be combined to form even larger tetrahedrons, if desired.



Book Activity 2: Character Recipe Cookbook

Grade Level: 7th grade

Student Involvement: Individual work. Students create their own Character Recipe Cookbook in order to creatively describe the main characters in All of the Above, particularly what skills each character brought to the tetrahedron-building project, and what role they played in the success of this effort.

Indiana Academic Standards:

English/Language Arts 7.3.3. Analyze characterization as shown through a character's thoughts, words, speech patterns, and actions; the narrator's description; and the thoughts, words, and actions of other characters.

English/Language Arts 7.3.4. Identify and analyze themes – such as bravery, loyalty, friendship, and loneliness – which appear in many different works.

English/Language Arts 7.3.5. Contrast points of view – such as first person, third person, limited and omniscient, and subjective and objective – in narrative text and explain how they affect the overall theme of the work.

English/Language Arts 7.5.2. Write responses to literature that: develop, organize, and justify interpretations from the literary work

English/Language Arts 7.6.1-7.6.9. Writing: English Language Conventions

Description of Activity: All of the Above contains several recipes of menu items from Willy Q's Barbecue. Using this motif, students will create their own Character Recipe Book. They will create a recipe for five characters of their choice from the book. Through character analysis, the students will create these recipes – looking at the character's words, thoughts, key themes, and points of view to describe them. Students will receive a Character Recipe Cookbook Idea Sheet to guide them in this activity, but specific instructions will be vague in order to encourage creativity and originality.

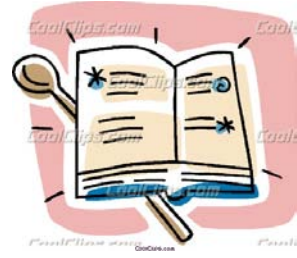
This activity uses the book's included recipes from Willy Q's Barbecue as a springboard for creative character analysis. The different personalities and personal issues of each character in All of the Above had much to do with the success or failure of the tetrahedron-building project, and this recipe format allows the students to present the individual personalities of the characters in a creative way – just as the students were creating something in this novel. Students should also be able to portray the book's themes of tolerance, uniqueness and originality through this project. The importance to detail that was evident through the tetrahedron-building project will be reflected in the expectation of proper writing conventions as well as the creative effort.

Student Resources: Students will receive the included Character Recipe Book Idea Sheet as a guide for this assignment. They will also receive a copy of the

included Character Recipe Cookbook rubric to understand how their project will be assessed.

Assessment: Teacher will follow the attached Character Recipe Cookbook rubric to assess student final products.

Character Recipe Book Idea Sheet



In All of the Above, author Shelley Pearsall includes several recipes from Willy Q’s Barbecue, such as *Willy Q’s Cannonball Cornbread* and *Marcel’s Slow Burn Sauce*. Most cooking recipes include a variety of ingredients, just as most people are made up of several personality traits and physical traits.

Guidelines

You will create a Character Recipe Cookbook of five characters from All of the Above. Your character recipe should be written in recipe style, listing the “ingredients” or character traits that you think describe that character. Include the amounts of each “ingredient” that you feel exists in that character, just as you see ingredient proportions in a recipe. Finally, describe how these “ingredients” or personality traits come together to create the character, and how this character impacted the successes or challenges of this tetrahedron project.

For example, some of the traits or “ingredients” of a character you are describing might be:

2 cups of courage
1 cup of humor
1 teaspoon of patience

Mix this character’s courage, humor, and patience together until well blended. The combination of these three ingredients helped this character stay involved in the project when personal life challenges almost got in the way.

Character Choices:

Here are a few of the characters that you can include, **but this list is not complete** – you may choose any character from All of the Above:

Sharice Rhondell Mr. Collins James
 Aunt Asia Marcel Joe

Remember that your recipe for each character needs to reflect your careful analysis of that person. The “ingredients” or traits that you use in your recipe should be based on your interpretation of their thoughts, personality, words, and actions. Think about the character’s participation in the tetrahedron project – were they leaders, followers, organizers? Were they supportive of the project? What skills did they bring? What role did they play?

Use your imagination and have fun with this project. You may include illustrations with your character recipes, just as cookbooks often do. You may choose to also draw the characters you have chosen in order to help display your understanding of them. Each character brought certain personalities and skills to the tetrahedron project in the book. Create recipes of five of these characters so that we can gather the distinct “flavor” of each character. Bon appétit!!

Character Recipe Book Rubric

Content: _____ / 10

- Includes five character recipes
- Uses recipe format: provides ingredients and amounts
- Includes instructions for creating each character recipe

Literary Response and Analysis: _____ / 10

- Shows analysis of characters through their words, thoughts, and actions
- Implements a variety of personality traits to describe characters
- Implements descriptive verbs to describe creation of the character recipes
- Shows understanding of book's themes through character analysis
- Demonstrates ability to create written responses to literature that show original interpretation of the work

Conventions: _____ / 10

- Displays attention to sentence structure
- Displays proper use of grammar
- Displays proper use of punctuation
- Displays correct capitalization
- Displays correct use of spelling.

Creativity: _____ / 10

- Shows originality through recipes and/or accompanying illustrations
- Captures the flavor of each chosen character in their character recipe

Comments:

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