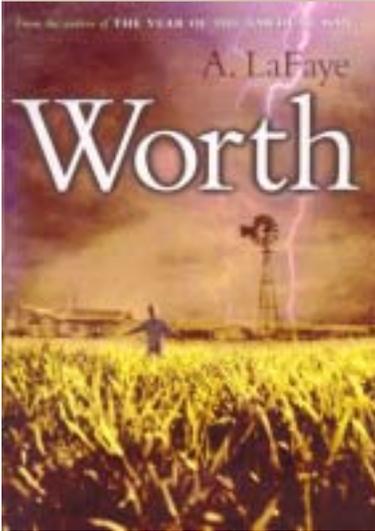


Worth. A Teacher's Guide



Worth by A. LaFaye
to order the book,
[click here](#)

Pre-Reading Discussion

"I just took my seat between Ma and Pa and smiled at that empty spot between Pa and John Worth. He might live at our place and work with my pa, but like Ma said, he's a farmhand, not a son. Not my brother. Just a boy who did my work. Thinking such made me feel small. It didn't do me no good to remind myself he wasn't part of my family." --- Nate Peale from *Worth*

After reading this quotation from the back of the book, what do you think will be the major conflict in the story? How do you think it will turn out?

Prediction Guide

Great Readers keep themselves involved in the story while they're reading by

- Predicting what will might happen next
- Looking for clues to help them make these guesses
- Watching for clues the author uses to surprise the reader
- Testing details to see if they're important or not.

As you read *Worth* answer the prediction questions on the next page AS YOU GO. Don't worry if your answers are right or not. Practice your prediction skills at the end of each chapter using one of these phrases,

- I wonder if . . .
- I think that [the character] will probably . . .
- The next obstacle may be . . .

For Example:

Chapter 1

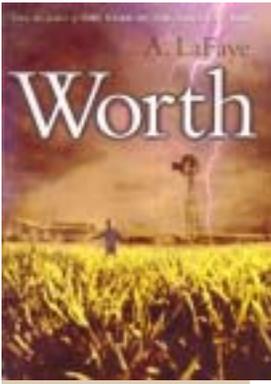
Q: Will the Peales lose the hay?

A: I think they'll lose some hay because their wagon wasn't full when they stopped. That will make the conflict stronger.

Prediction: I wonder if they'll lose other crops in the storm?

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Ready to Start Predicting? . . .



Prediction Questions

Chapter 1
Will Nate's leg heal properly?

Chapter 2
Will Nate become good at tinkering?

Chapter 3
Will John Worth always sleep in the lean-to?

Chapter 4
Will Nate's reading improve?

Chapter 5
Who is John Worth talking to each evening?

Chapter 6
Will Nate ever feel less angry at God?

Chapter 7
Will Pa be able to calm things down between the Gantrys and the Danvers?

Chapter 8
Will Pa continue to blame himself for the accident?

Chapter 9
Will John and Nate become friends?

Chapter 10
Will Anemone and Nate be friends? More than friends?

Ch. 11
Will things get better or worse for Nate?

Ch. 12
What other kinds of books will Nate like to read?

Ch. 13
Is reading to John, "the start of something good?"

Ch. 14
Why is Ma so mad at Pa?

Ch. 15
Will Ma begin to accept John too?

Ch. 16
What will happen between John and Nate?

Ch. 17
Will John ever be allowed to live like a family member?

Ch. 18
Will John be good at what Nate teaches him?

Ch. 19
After the fence cutting incident will Pa finally see the boys as equals?

Ch. 20
Do you think Nate will always have trouble with his leg?

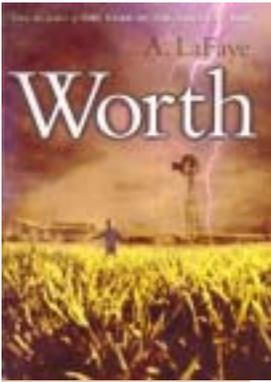
Ch. 21
Will the boys be considered heroes in town?

Comprehension Guide

1. List the eight most important characters in the story
2. Give a brief description of their relationship to the main character.
3. What do you think are the five key events in the story?
4. Predict what you think the boys lives are like a year after the close of the book.
5. Write three interview questions you would ask the author about the book if you could.
6. Discuss which character you think changed the most during the story. Defend your answer.
7. How would this story have been different if written through the eyes of John Worth?
8. How would you feel if you were Nate and your father brought home a replacement?
9. What would have happened had Nate's leg healed completely and well within a couple of weeks?
10. Which scene in the book was your favorite? Why?

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Ready for Some Cool Projects? . . .



Projects Across the Curriculum

Language Arts:

Write four letters to folks who live in other parts of the country. Write each letter through the eyes of a different character and choose different parts of the book to describe what is happening in your letter.

-or-

Write a newspaper which features articles about the major and minor events in the story- even personal ones. For example, “Peale family takes in Orphan after Son’s Tragic Accident”

Math

Research the average price of goods during this time period. Also, find out how much land was, and the tools and seed needed to cultivate it. Make a monthly budget for an average farming family of that time. Try to figure out ways that you can “trade” rather than use precious cash money with skills you may have honed (like tinkering or trading eggs). Turn in your research and your budget with a short journal entry about what you learned.

-or-

John Worth wants to grow up to be a banker or a trader. He only needs to pass a test and receive a diploma. Research the educational and skill requirements to build a career as a banker or stock broker today.

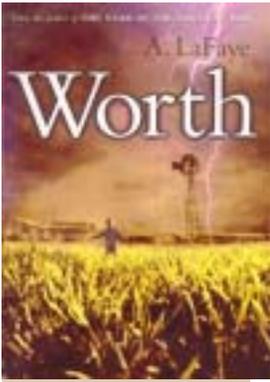
History

In small groups research one of the following topics and write a pamphlet about what you learned:

- Homesteading
- Range and Farming conflicts
- Orphan trains
- Pioneer life: schools, food, clothing and homes

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Ready for Some More Cool Projects? . . .



Projects Across the Curriculum

Art:

Nate loves to read the Greek Mythology book that Anemone let him borrow. He says, “That book had fancy pictures like the ones that came with the calendars I seen hanging up in the druggist in Chicago....” and “... that book had fancy swallow-you-up pretty pictures”

The type of art that Nathan is describing is probably lithography that was a popular and new technique for printing illustrations in the 1800’s. To read more about this art go to:

<http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/exhibits/color/lithogr.htm>

University of Delaware library

Project:

Create a poster for the movie version of *Worth* inspired by the lithographic prints that you viewed. Study the figures and colors and perhaps wash it with a tea solution to age it.

Science:

Research medical practices used in the late 1800’s for common ailments. Then, write a pamphlet (directed to the doctors themselves) on how to care for their patients. Please include at least three illustrations. On the back provide reference for your research. Ailments could include: broken bones, fevers, cuts and abrasions, sore throat, or childhood diseases like chicken pox, diphtheria, or scarlet fever (caused by strep throat).

-or-

Research the treatment of people with handicaps. Nate is lucky that his parents are devoted and that he is treated by a competent physician. Many people of that time would have been lucky to walk again, or even survive.

Visit this site and then write a brief reaction journal about what you learned.

<http://www.people-inc.org/museum/activities.asp>

Museum of Disability History

To Speak to the Author

Alexandria **LaFaye** started writing novels at the age of twelve, so she loves to hear from young writers and readers. You can visit her website at www.alafaye.com or email her at ALaFayeBooks@aol.com. She'd love to see examples of projects you do in class based on *Worth*. She's also available for school visits and would love to come and visit your school!

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