

STRAWBERRY HILL

curriculum connections

- ❖ Family
- ❖ Making New Friends
- ❖ New House
- ❖ The Great Depression

Ages 8 – 12

A heartfelt coming-

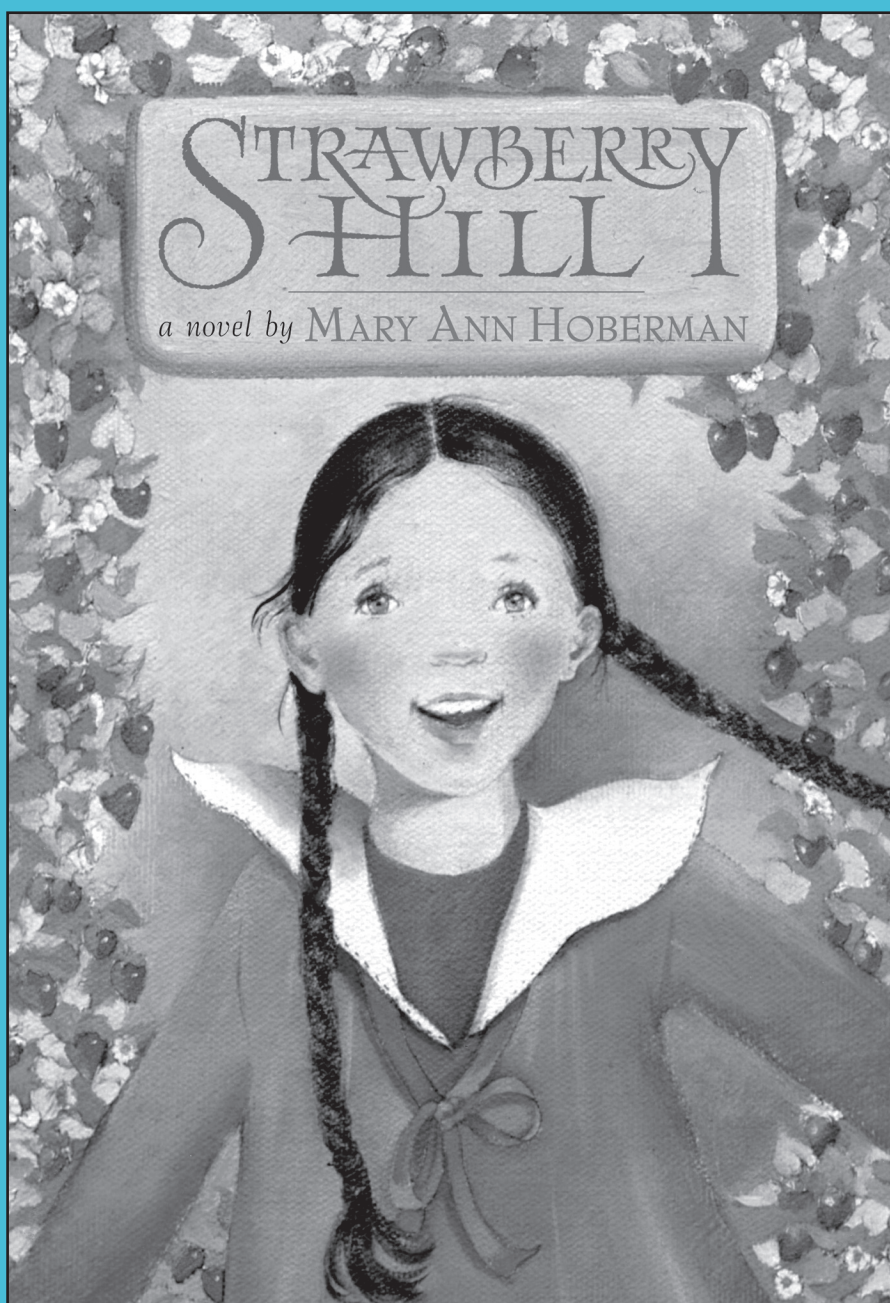
of-age novel by

National Book

Award-winner

Mary Ann Hoberman

by **Mary Ann
Hoberman**



Pre-Reading Activity

News stories documenting the current economic crisis fill our nightly news reports, spouting words like recession, depression, and bank failure. Ask students to investigate the time period of the 1930s, a period of even more pronounced economic hardship. Have students research the web sites below for a greater understanding of the economic times, including the terms recession, depression, and bank failure. Then, as a class, discuss and post what the students have learned from their research.

http://www.amosweb.com/cgi-bin/awb_nav.pl?s=pdg&c=dsp&k=40

On the Lookout for a Recession

<http://www.angelfire.com/retro/lisawebworld/depression.html>

A general overview of the Depression

<http://banking.about.com/od/securityandsafety/a/bankfailures.htm>

Why do banks fail?

Curriculum Connections

English/Language Arts

Much like Allie, every family has a story to uncover and tell. Ask students to interview their parents, grandparents, and/or aunts and uncles about a time they moved from one town to another as children, including their experiences before and after the move, memories of events that occurred or their feelings during the move, and their reasons for moving. Students should take notes during the interview and then ask for photos or other memorabilia to display. After writing their family's story, have students prepare a poster presentation for their class—a guided show and tell.

One of the major themes running through this book is the power of friendship. Ask students to select one of the following trios and to examine it through Allie's eyes. Have students use support from the book to determine what she learns about herself and others. Ask students to consider Allie's judgments, the opinions of classmates, and basic human nature in their evaluation. Students should reflect on:

1. The complex relationship between Martha, Cynthia, and Allie.

or

2. The complex relationship between Mimi, Martha, and Allie.

Have students present their conclusions in the form of thematic statements to the class as a whole or in small groups.

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Science

Allie is shocked to see strawberries in the spring on Strawberry Hill. Fruits and vegetables grow better in regional areas of the country based on weather and soil conditions. In small groups, ask students to investigate the types of fruits and vegetables grown in the area in which they live and the time of year in which they are grown. Have students make a list of the fruits and vegetables, when they are planted and harvested, how they are cared for when they are not in the growing season, how they contribute to the local economy, and other pertinent facts about their care and growth. Students should make an illustrated information brochure for the Chamber of Commerce.

Social Studies

Prejudice rears its ugly head on page 80 when Cynthia calls Allie a “Dirty Jew.” Discuss with the class what prejudice is and how it hurts others. This web site offers helpful information for the discussion: http://www.adl.org/what_to_tell/whattotell_intro.asp. Ask students to write about an example of prejudice they have witnessed or have been a part of, including the more desirable outcomes if the people involved would not have reacted with prejudice. Have students share their papers in small group discussions and then have groups share their conclusions with the entire class.

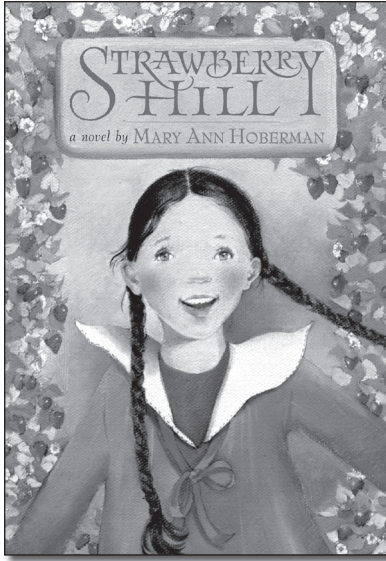
Art

Allie has a very definite picture in her head of what Strawberry Hill is going to look like when she arrives. However, when she does arrive, the picture in her head is not anywhere close to the reality she sees. With a partner, ask students to draw the image Allie imagines on page 6, the house and street she sees on page 20, and the strawberry garden Mimi shows her on page 228. Students may use a variety of mediums for their artwork. Ask students to display their three drawings like a triptych in the school library.

Discussion Questions

- How do Allie and her younger brother, Danny, judge their new neighbors, Mimi and Martha, completely differently?
- Although Ruthie and Allie make promises to keep in touch, why do they rarely write? Do they miss one another as much as they thought? Why or why not?
- Allie makes numerous comparisons between her mother and Martha’s and Mimi’s mother. What does she learn about her mom?
- What is Danny’s role in helping Allie come to terms with moving to Strawberry Hill? How is Danny the “sensible” child?
- When Cynthia calls Allie a “Dirty Jew,” Allie’s parents disagree about the way Allie’s mother handled the situation. What would have been the best way to deal with the problem? Why is Allie embarrassed by her mother?
- Allie faced a close call with her name on the first day of school and a real disaster with the bloomers in tap class, but she survives both situations. How are the outcomes different? What does she learn about people and human nature from these experiences?
- In what ways does Mimi begin to come alive when Allie and Danny become her friends? How does Allie help her in school? What does that promotion mean for Mimi?
- During the winter, Allie, Danny, Martha, and Mimi have great fun building the igloo for play. What do they learn about each other through that experience? How does it help them become closer friends?

about the book

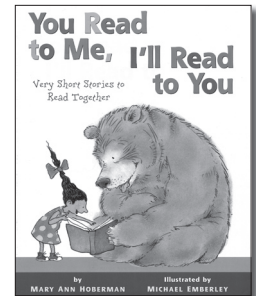


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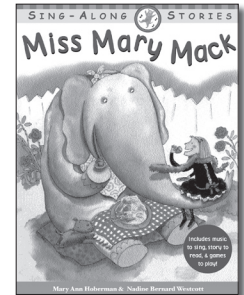
Because of the Depression, Allie's father is forced to find a job in another town, and her family must move. Allie is apprehensive about leaving behind all that she has known her whole life, but when she discovers her family will be living on Strawberry Hill, the inviting sound of her new street lifts her spirits. On moving day, however, Strawberry Hill is not all that Allie imagines it, and soon she must struggle to overcome the bleakness of the street, the little girls who live in her

neighborhood, and the awkwardness of attending a new school. Through the considerable challenges, Allie, with the help of her family, perseveres to finally make Strawberry Hill home.

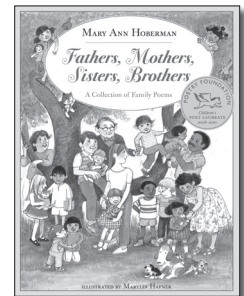
also available: Mary Ann Hoberman



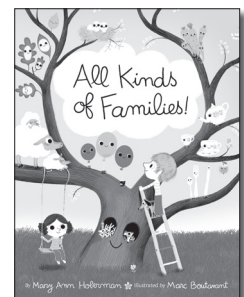
You Read to Me, I'll Read to You
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Miss Mary Mack
978-0-316-93118-2



Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers
978-0-316-36251-1



All Kinds of Families!
978-0-316-14633-3

about the author



Photo © Lois Dreyer

Mary Ann Hoberman is the author of *A House is a House for Me*, which won a National Book Award, as well as the bestselling *You Read to Me, I'll Read to You* series. She lives in Greenwich, CT, and you can visit her online at www.maryannhoberman.com.