Ida B's happy life changes when her mother begins cancer treatment. Instead of being homeschooled, Ida B must attend public school, and her family must sell part of their apple orchard. Ida B eventually learns to overcome her anger and sadness.

**Award:** Book Sense Book of the Year Award/Honorees; IRA's Teachers' Choice Award; Josette Frank Children's Book Award; SLJ Best Book

**Topics:** Community Life, School; Diseases/Disorders, Cancer; Family Life, Mothers; Places, Gardens; Recommended Reading, Children's Literature Choice; Recommended Reading, Junior Library Guild Selection; U.S. States/Regions, Wisconsin

**Main Characters**

- **Claire DeLuna** - a girl from Ida B's class whose family buys land from the Applewoods
- **Evan Applewood** - Ida B's father
- **Ida Applewood** - Ida B's mother, who is diagnosed with cancer
- **Ida B Applewood** - intelligent, spunky nine-year-old girl who lives on an apple orchard with her parents
- **Ms. Washington** - Ida B's fourth-grade teacher; a patient woman who helps Ida B deal with all the changes in her life
- **Ronnie** - a boy in Ida B's class whom Ida B helps with his math facts

**Synopsis**

Ida B Applewood is an intelligent, spunky nine-year-old girl who lives on an apple orchard with her loving, nurturing parents. She has been homeschooled except for a brief time spent in kindergarten, which was a negative experience for her. Her friends are the trees, the brook, and her pets.

Life suddenly changes for Ida B when her mother is diagnosed with cancer. Despite her protests, her parents send her to public school. The family is also forced to sell some of their land, which makes Ida B very angry. Devastated, she makes up her mind to hate school, harden her heart against future hurt, give her parents a cold shoulder, and drive away the new neighbors.
The attentions of her wise and caring teacher, Ms. Washington, help Ida B adjust to all the changes in her life. After a classmate says Ida B is mean, Ida B realizes that she must change and seeks out the advice of Ms. Washington. Ida B apologizes to those she has hurt and finally allows her heart to soften.

Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

Inferential Comprehension
Why did Ida B choose not to read the second time Ms. Washington invited her to read aloud to the class?

She thought reading aloud made people think good things about the reader. She realized that she had been acting mean and didn't feel worthy to read. She was almost punishing herself for her bad behavior.

Constructing Meaning
Ida B described the feeling she got from reading aloud to the class as a "...warm glow that was in my belly and arms and my legs and my head and wouldn't go away." She really enjoyed it, and it made her feel good about herself. Have you ever done anything that made you feel like that? What was it?

Answers will vary.

Teachable Skills

Understanding Characterization  Understanding Characterization
Recognizing Cause and Effect  Recognizing Cause & Effect
Deriving Word or Phrase Meaning  Deriving Word or Phrase Meaning
Comparing and Contrasting  Compare &

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