

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

A Stitch in Time

by

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Book Information

Ann Rinaldi, *A Stitch in Time*
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305 Pages
Book Level: 4.1
Interest Level: MG

Shortly after the War of Independence, Hannah sees her family being torn apart by old secrets and new developments, as her sister resolves to marry a sea captain and other siblings prepare to help start a new town in the Northwestern Territory.

Award: Jefferson Cup Award/Honor

Topics: Family Life, Misc./Other; History, Frontier/Pioneer Life; People, Pioneers/Settlers

Main Characters

Abby Hannah's sister who runs away and marries a sea captain

Cabot Hannah's brother who is not Father's real son

Hannah the main character who longs to keep her family together

Lawrence Hannah's brother who is mocked by Father for his paintings

Louis the man who asks Hannah to care for his child

Nate Videau the man who elopes with Abby

Nathaniel Chelmsford Hannah's father who was "not a nice man"

Night Song Louis's child

Richard Lander the man Hannah is in love with

Thankful Hannah's selfish and spoiled sister who is captured by Indians

William Burnaby Cabot's real father

Vocabulary

oilskins coat and trousers treated with oil to make them waterproof

reticule a woman's small handbag

sextant instrument used by navigators for measuring the angular distance between two objects

Synopsis

In this book, Hannah struggles with many problems and tries to keep her family together. Because Father does not allow Abby out of her room while Videau is in port, she needs the help of Hannah and Lawrence to elope with Videau. Thankful learns of their plans and threatens to tell Father if she is not allowed to go on the trip west.

Lawrence and Thankful go on a trip with Father. Thankful thinks of it as an adventure. Lawrence does not want to go until someone suggests he paint pictures of Indians on the trip.

Louis, an ex-beau of Hannah, returns from a trip west with his baby. The baby's mother, an Indian, has been killed by whites. He wants Hannah to care for the baby. She worries that the baby might come between her and Richard. When men in town threaten the baby, Richard acts to assure the safety of the baby.

While on the trip, Thankful writes a letter to Cabot. In the letter she informs him that Father is not his real father. Hannah learns who Cabot's real father is and goes to visit him. During this talk, she learns that Father beat Mama.

Richard leaves on a sea voyage. He does not want to marry Hannah until he returns. He feels that then he will have something to offer her. Mr. Leonard asks Hannah to visit the manufactory. If she agrees to visit regularly, he will convince Father to allow Louis's baby to stay in his house. When Father returns, she learns her agreement was for nothing, since Father made an agreement with Louis. In this agreement, Father promised to keep Louis's baby while he searches for Thankful, who has been taken by Indians.

Richard returns from his voyage. He feels he must leave once again before he marries Hannah. He feels he must pay off Father before they marry.

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Louis is brought into the Shawnee camp. There he sees Thankful. She frees him and tells him she's not coming back with him. Here she is treated well and has found love.

Open-Ended Questions

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

Initial Understanding

After Father returned from his trip, he and Hannah had a talk. Why, at the end of the talk did Father say, "You play as bad a game of chess as your brother"?

He was saying she was bad at verbal sparring. He was saying she could never outwit him.

Literary Analysis

Even before you learned the identity of Cabot's real father, what made you suspect that the officer's coat was important?

Mama had saved it. Father became upset when he saw it in the quilt.

Inferential Comprehension

Why do you think Hannah's quilt was named Trust?

She only accepted fabric for the quilt from people she trusted. She hoped her family would one day be able to trust each other.

Constructing Meaning

Why do you think the author chose to have Father and Thankful have the same eyes?

To warn us of how similar they were to each other. To prove Thankful was really his daughter.

Teachable Skills

Understanding Hist./Cultural Factors When Richard came back from his voyage, the bulk of his cargo was black pepper. Since pepper is

common today, it might be hard for the students to imagine why he would have brought pepper back. Have the students do some research on the history of pepper. Why was pepper marveled at by the crowds around Richard's ship? Was pepper expensive then? For what was pepper used?

Identifying Reasons In the beginning of this book, Richard is suspected of being a slaver. Many people in Salem greatly disliked slavers. This point is brought out when Richard is forced to leave on his voyage quickly. He has learned that a mob who suspects him of being a slaver is going to visit his ship with gunpowder. The students might be curious as to why slavers were hated. Have them research the slave route. Then discuss with them why slavers were disliked. How were slaves obtained? Where were slaves kept on the slave ships?

Recognizing Feelings In this book, Thankful is captured and brought into a Shawnee camp. We learn that she is treated well because the Shawnee feel her one blue eye and her one green eye mean good fortune. It might be interesting for students to pretend they are Thankful. Have them write a short story about how they felt when they first entered the Shawnee camp. Were they afraid, or did they think of it as an adventure? When the Shawnee stared at their eyes, how did it make them feel? What did they think would happen to them?

Responding to Literature In this story, Hannah and her sisters are making a quilt together. They use pieces of material from various people. Their quilt is called "Trust" and they take pieces of fabric only from those people they trust. The students might enjoy thinking about what their own quilt would look like. What kind of fabric would they use? Would they buy the fabric or get it from what they already owned? Have them draw their quilt and name it.