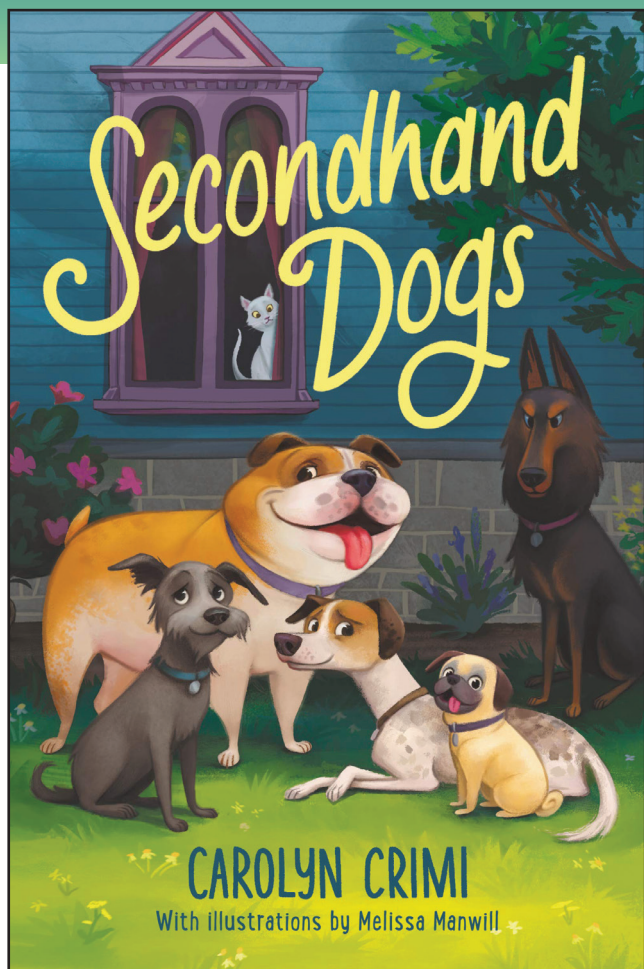


CLASSROOM GUIDE

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Secondhand Dogs

CAROLYN CRIMI

With illustrations by Melissa Manwill

MISS LOTTIE'S HOME IS FOR SECOND CHANCES.

When she adopted Gus, Roo, Tank, and Moon Pie, Miss Lottie rescued each member of the pack—including herself, her helper, Quinn, and her reclusive cat, Ghost—and turned them into a family. But when a new dog, Decker, arrives and tries to hoard Miss Lottie's heart and home for himself, the pack's future is threatened.

At first, Gus, the insecure pack leader, only notices

little things, like tiny Moon Pie being kicked out of Miss Lottie's bed. But things soon go from bad to worse as Decker's presence causes disharmony in the pack.

When Decker convinces Moon Pie to embark on an impossible journey, it's up to Gus to gather his courage, rally his splintered pack, and bring Moon Pie home. And with coyotes and cars on the loose, the pack must push through obstacles and dangers to reunite with Moon Pie before he gets hurt—or nearly as bad, gets his heart broken.

In *Secondhand Dogs*, award-winning author Carolyn Crimi has crafted a heartwarming—and heart-tugging—middle grade novel about love, loyalty, and what it means to be part of a family, featuring an irresistible ensemble of rescue dogs.

"Pervading themes of bullying, leadership, loyalty, and family—among humans and canines alike—raise important issues while the comic-style illustrations feature character cameos and highlight key scenes. A sensitive, satisfying, and intriguing canine tale." —KIRKUS REVIEWS

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The Common Core State Standards addressed by the discussion questions, activities, and worksheets in this guide are noted throughout. For more information on the Common Core, visit corestandards.org.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Unless otherwise noted, discussion questions address the following standards: **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1**

-  What is the significance of the dog park to Miss Lottie and her band of rescued dogs?
-  Gus, the leader of the pack of dogs, senses something is off as the dogs await the arrival of the “new” dog. How does Gus’s feeling foreshadow what is to come when a new dog joins the pack?
**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3**
-  Who is Quinn and what is it about Quinn that makes him well-suited for caring for rescued dogs?
-  Moon Pie is a sweet pup who has a gift for begging. Moon Pie even has the privilege of sleeping in Miss Lottie’s bed. What is Moon Pie’s greatest wish and why do you think that Gus and the rest of the pack do not share the truth about Gertie?
-  Why is “Ghost” a perfect name for the cat who shares the house with Gus and the pack?
-  Not long after being taken in by Miss Lottie, Decker begins to implement his “plan.” What is his first step to get closer to Miss Lottie and to exclude the other dogs?
-  Early in his life, Tank’s mother told him his gift was to be a guardian. How is Tank’s gift evident before he lives with Miss Lottie and now that he’s part of this pack? How do you think that Tank’s role as a guardian colors the way that he reacts to bullies like Decker?
**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3**
-  Decker tells Moon Pie that he is the lowest member of the pack. How does the power relationship between Decker and Moon Pie mirror the relationship between Quinn and his brother Jessie?
-  Decker has a knack for figuring out the weakness of each dog in the pack. What does Decker realize about Roo and how does he use that knowledge to his advantage?
-  Describe Moon Pie’s personality in the beginning of the story and after Decker urges him to escape. What do you think contributed to Moon Pie’s personality changing so dramatically?
**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3**



-  Quinn is looking at his phone as Gus and Tank escape through the hole in the fence in search of Moon Pie. Quinn feels “useless”—a word his older brother, Jessie, uses to describe Quinn. What incident from the brothers’ past led Jessie to think of Quinn as useless?
-  How did Moon Pie’s near accident with a car, his time with the driver of the car, and his visit to Gertie’s house affect his understanding of what had happened to Gertie and the love she had for him?
-  Roo has a change of heart about Decker and leaves Miss Lottie’s to join Gus and Tank in their search for Moon Pie. Jessie seems to have a change of heart as well when he and his friends see Quinn searching for the dogs. What led to the shifts in Roo and Jessie’s feelings?
-  The menacing presence of the coyote is with the dogs throughout their hunt for Moon Pie. How does the threat of the coyote fade once Gus and his pack see the coyote face to face?
-  Describe your reaction to the events that occurred in Miss Lottie’s home once the pack returns and they are forced to face Decker. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3**
-  Decker sought to divide and conquer Miss Lottie’s pack of dogs, but in the end how did all of Decker’s evil plans end up affecting Gus and the rest of the pack? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3**
-  Early in the story, Quinn thinks about the fact that his mom saw a coyote in the alley. The coyote continues to appear throughout the novel. What do you think that the coyote represents in the story? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.2**
-  As a reader, how did knowledge of Decker’s backstory influence the way you felt about him and his actions towards the other animals in Miss Lottie’s care? As a class, talk about bullying and how Decker and Jessie’s actions make the other characters feel. Why are Decker and Jessie bullies? What strategies for dealing with bullying behavior can you come up with as a class? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3**
-  The epilogue focuses on what life is like for Miss Lottie, Quinn, the pack, and Decker six months after the dramatic events at Miss Lottie’s house when the pack of dogs returned. Each person and animal in the story has been broken through life circumstances in some way. What lessons have been learned by each character as described in the epilogue? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.2**



ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

GIMME SHELTER

Miss Lottie has a heart of gold when it comes to caring for rescue dogs. She adopts animals who are in need of a forever home. Identify a local animal shelter in your community. What are the jobs and responsibilities of the people who help run the shelter? What types of animals does your local shelter keep? How do they reunite pets with owners and help abandoned animals find a new home? Write an informational report about your local animal shelter and how it operates.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2

EMOTIONAL JOURNEY

Pretend that you are one of the characters in the book. Would you choose to be Gus? Moon Pie? Miss Lottie? Think of at least four big events that happen to your selected character. What emotion was your character feeling during each of the big story events? Using an iPad or other camera, take photos of yourself making faces of the emotions your character was experiencing. Put the photos together in a document. Write captions for each photo describing what your character was feeling and the reasons for the emotions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3

OBJECTS TELL A STORY

Artifacts are objects that have some significance or meaning behind them, such as Moon Pie's collar with his old tags. Hunt through the story to identify three artifacts and draw a picture of each one. Beneath your illustrations, write about why this artifact is significant in the telling of *Secondhand Dogs*.

ADOPT ME!

Imagine that one of the dogs in Miss Lottie's pack was up for adoption at an animal shelter. Design a poster for the selected dog that includes an illustration of the dog, a list of the dog's physical attributes, and a description of the dog's positive qualities and behaviors.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1

The discussion questions, activities, and worksheets in this guide were created by Leigh Courtney, Ph.D. She teaches in the Global Education program at a public elementary school in San Diego, California. She holds both masters' and doctoral degrees in education, with an emphasis on curriculum and instruction.



Name: _____

BEFORE THEY WERE A PACK

Each member in Miss Lottie's pack of dogs had a life before being rescued. Use information from the story to add details about the lives each dog before becoming a part of Miss Lottie's pack.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1



Name: _____

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Readers help to make sense of books by noticing how the stories connect to other books they've read, experiences they've had, or similar things happening in the real world. Think carefully about *Secondhand Dogs* and the connections you can make between the book and yourself, other things you've read, and the larger world. Record your connections in the chart.



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.9; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.9; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.9

TEXT TO SELF

Connections you can make between the story and your own life experiences

TEXT TO TEXT

Connections you can make between the story and other things that you have read

TEXT TO WORLD

Broader connections you can make to something you have learned from television, movies, newspapers, or magazines

Name: _____

COMPARING CHARACTERS



Choose one of these sets of characters and complete the Venn diagram to explore how they are alike and different from each other.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3;

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3

Gus and Quinn · Ghost and Tank · Decker and Jessie · Miss Lottie and Moon Pie

