

**CYRM Resource Guide
Intermediate Nominees
(Grades 3-6)
2011-2012**

***Violet Raines
Almost Got Struck by Lightning***

by Danette Haworth

Walker & Co., 200

***Alvin Ho:
Allergic to Girls, School and Other Scary
Things***

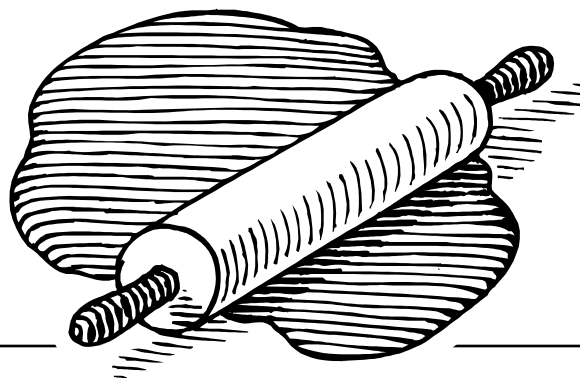
by Lenore Look

Schwartz & Wade Books, 2008

The Small Adventure of Popeye and Elvis

by Barbara O'Conner

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2009



California Young Reader Medal
Intermediate Ballot
2011-2012

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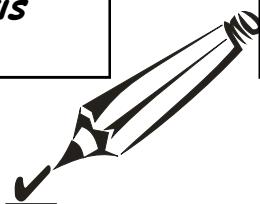
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Violet Raines Almost Got Struck by Lightning

by Danette Haworth



Synopsis

Eleven-year-old Violet Raines is spirited, outspoken, headstrong, and happy. She has lived in the small town of Mitchell Hammock, Florida since birth and even though her Daddy is dead, she lives happily with just her Momma. When feeling lonely Violet simply walks next door to visit the Townsend family whose oldest daughter, Lottie, has been Violet's best friend all of her life. There is also Eddie Brandon who cheerfully puts up with Violet's "colorful personality" and shares her love of the outdoors, exploring tree caves, and spotting alligators. Violet is indeed happy, but things begin to change one bright Sunday morning when Melissa Gold comes walking into her life.

Melissa has just moved into town and soon Lottie seems to spending more time with her and less time with Violet. Lottie also starts to develop new interests like putting on make-up, shopping, talking about boys and other activities that don't interest Violet in the least. To make matters worse, lightning strikes the Townsend house and Lottie moves into Melissa's house while hers is being repaired. Now it seems even more likely that Melissa will replace Violet as Lottie's best friend. And why all of a sudden does Melissa's interest in Eddie seem to make Violet feel so strange? After all Eddie isn't her boyfriend, or so Violet keeps telling everyone. How in the world is Violet going to be able to keep showing her "fake-happy face" while trying to set right so many things that seem to be going so wrong in her once happy life?



Hooks

- Do you have a best friend? Can a person have more than one best friend?
- Have you ever felt left out because a good friend of yours, maybe your best friend, seems to be making a new friend without you? Do you think it could make you feel like... maybe sticking someone's head in a bucket of fish?
- Do you know how to tell how close lightning is? All you do is count, "one thousand one, one thousand two" after the flash until you hear thunder. Every "thousand" you count is a mile. What do you think happens if you see the flash of lightning and hear the boom of thunder at the same time? Violet Raines knows.
- Have you ever heard of the word tomboy? Sometimes a girl who likes to do things that typically only boys like to do is called a tomboy. Maybe some would call Violet Raines a tomboy as she would rather explore tree caves, study dragonflies, or spot alligators than go shopping.

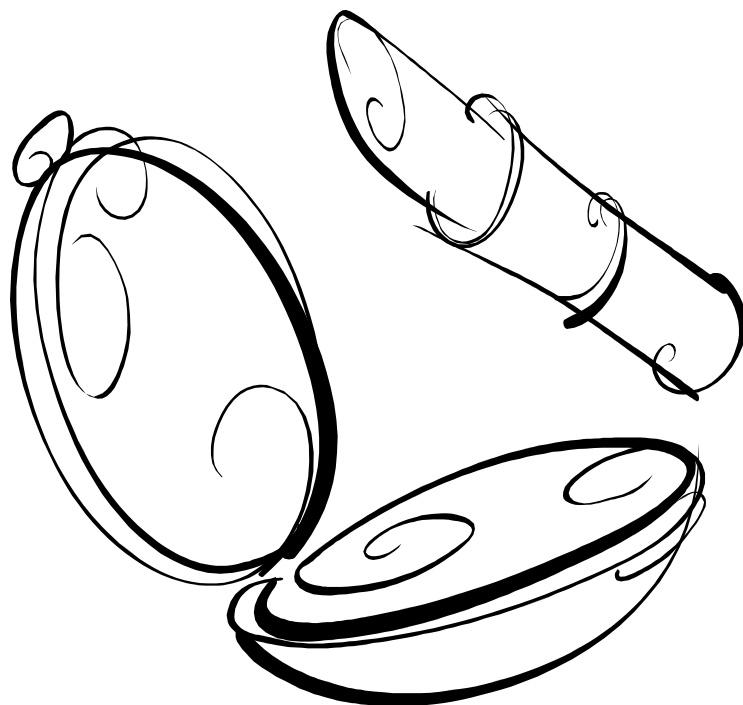
Violet Raines Almost Got Struck by Lightning

Meet the Author—Danette Haworth



Danette Haworth was a technical and travel writer before turning to fiction. She grew up in a military family, living in many countries while growing up. *Violet Raines Almost Got Struck By Lightning* is her first novel.

You can learn more about Danette Hayworth at:
www.danettehaworth.com





Coming of Age – Fiction

Cooper, Ilene. *An Angel in My Pocket*. Feiwel & Friends, 2011.

Holm, Jennifer L. *Penny from Heaven*. Yearling; 3rd printing edition, 2007.

Holm, Jennifer L. *Turtle in Paradise*. Random House Books for Young Readers, 2010.

MacLachlan, Patricia. *The Facts and Fictions of Minna Pratt*. HarperCollins, 1994.

McGhee, Alison. *Julia Gillian (And the Quest For Joy)*. Illustrated by Drazen Kozjan. Scholastic Press, 2010.

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *The Agony of Alice*. Aladdin, 2007.

Rawlings, Marjorie. *The Yearling*. Turtleback, 1983.

Soto, Gary. *Mercy on These Teenage Chimps*. Graphia, 2008.

Stone, Phoebe. *Deep Down Popular*. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2010.

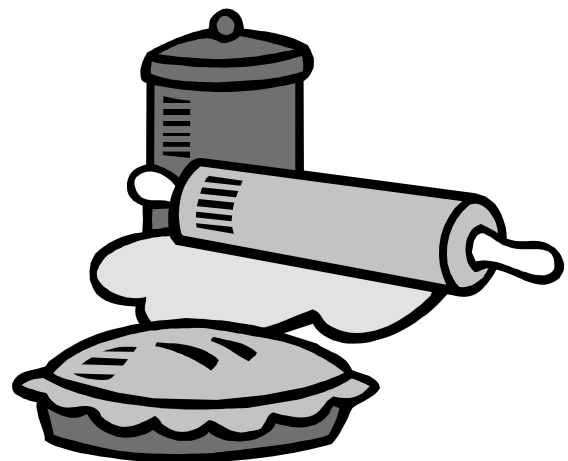
Urban, Linda. *A Crooked Kind of Perfect*. Sandpiper, 2009.



Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *Violet Raines Almost Got Struck by Lightning*



- Violet's life is where she likes it. What happens in her life that changes everything?
- Violet talks about words that she saves in her shoe box. Pick 2-3 and use them to describe a part of the story you liked.
- What does it mean to be a best friend to someone? Is Violet really a best friend to Lottie or Eddie in this book?
- Even though Violet doesn't act like she's scared of anything, you come to find that she is. What are those things?
- How would you summarize this story in 10 words?



Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School and Other Scary Things

by Lenore Look



Synopsis

Alvin Ho lives in Concord, Massachusetts with his parents, older brother Calvin, little sister Anibelly, and their dog Lucy. Alvin, a Chinese-American, is descended from a long line of farmer-warriors who, according to Alvin, “don’t have a scardey bone in their bodies.” Unfortunately Alvin doesn’t seem to take after these farmer-warriors because he is afraid of EVERYTHING. Alvin’s list of scary things includes: elevators, tunnels, bridges, thunder, wasabi, the dark, scary dreams, shots, and school.

In fact Alvin is so afraid of school that he has never spoken in class and has to carry a PDK (Personal Disaster Kit) with him at all times. In his PDK Alvin packs things like: a whistle, a three-leaf clover, band-aids, a bandana, escape routes, a scary mask (for keeping girls away), and emergency plans for surviving fires, meeting teachers (another reason for the scary mask), surviving show and tell, and making friends. With his quirky sense of humor, his PDK, the love and support of family, and the occasional wearing of his “Firecracker Man” superhero outfit, Alvin sets out to conquer his ‘so-so performance anxiety disorder’ and survive the perils of second grade, chicken pox, piano lessons, and girls... especially girls.

Hooks

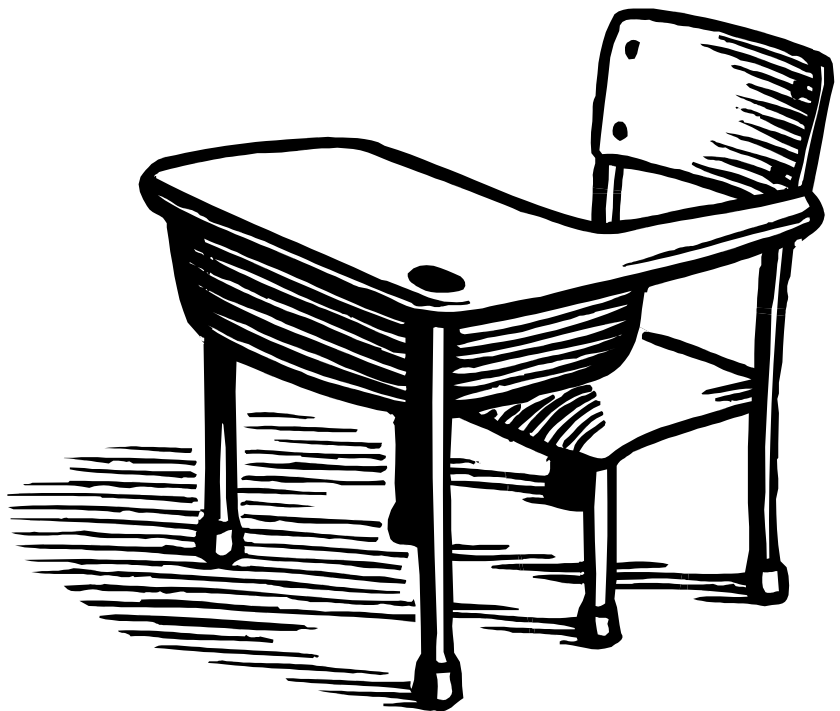
- Have you ever been nervous about starting a new school year?
- Have you ever been “scared speechless?” To be “scared speechless” means that you are so scared you are unable to speak. For example one thing that scares Alvin Ho speechless is school.
- To be prepared for anything maybe everyone should carry his or her very own Personal Disaster Kit. What would you put in yours?
- Have you ever pretended to be sick to get a day off from school? Well, according to Alvin Ho, one of the best ways to avoid school, as everyone knows, is to *get* sick. So wouldn’t it be better to simply visit a classmate with chicken pox to actually get sick enough to stay home from school?
- Have you ever wished you had superhero powers? What kind of superpowers do you think a superhero called “Firecracker Man” would have?

***Alvin Ho:
Allergic to Girls, School and Other Scary Things***



Meet the Author—Lenore Look

Lenore Look pursued a wide variety of careers and interests before coming back to her first love, writing for young children. She tells a great story of writing and illustrating books when she was just a first grader, then making friends and family line up for her autographed copies at 25 cents a book!



Connections for *Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School and Other Scary Things*



Humorous Stories – Fiction

Kinney, Jeff. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. Amulet Books; Third Edition, 2007.

Pennypacker, Sara. *Clementine*. Illustrated by Marla Frazee. Hyperion Books, 2008.

Winkler, Henry and Lin Oliver. *Hank Zipzer : Niagara Falls, or Does It?* Walker Books Ltd, 2008.

Friendship – Fiction

Byng, Georgia. *Molly Moon's Incredible Book of Hypnotism*. HarperCollins, 2004.

Cabot, Meg. *Ally Finkle's Rules for Girls: The New Girl*. Scholastic Press, 2008.

Mass, Wendy. *11 Birthdays*. Scholastic Paperbacks, 2010.

Self-Confidence – Fiction

Haddix, Margaret. *The Girl with 500 Middle Names*. Illustrated by Janet Hamlin. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2001.

Hermes, Patricia. *Millie Cooper, Take a Chance*. Puffin, 1990.

Look, Lenore. *Alvin Ho: Allergic to Camping, Hiking, and Other Natural Disasters*. Illustrated by LeUyen Pham. Yearling, 2010.

Lubar, David. *My Rotten Life (Nathan Abercrombie, Accidental Zombie)*. Starscape, 2009.

Pitchford, Dean. *Captain Nobody*. Puffin, 2010.

Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions For *Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School and Other Scary Things*



- Even though Alvin Ho is afraid of many things, he enjoys many things as well. What are some of those things?
- Does Alvin ever get over any of his fears? How?
- Between Pinky and Flea, who would you be friends with and why?
- Is there one thing you think Alvin is afraid of most? What do you think causes him to have such different fears?
- How would you summarize this story to someone in 10 words?



The Small Adventure of Popeye and Elvis

by Barbara O'Conner



Synopsis

It has been Popeye's experience that nothing exciting ever happens when you live with your grandmother in a small town like Fayette, South Carolina. Well, there was the time before Popeye was three years old, and was called by the name Henry, that his Uncle Dooley tried to shoot a small crab apple off a fence post with a Red Ryder BB gun. Instead of the apple the BB hit him square in the eye and ever since his eye has squinted shut and Popeye has been Popeye. Still, Popeye is convinced that living in Fayette will always be boring and every day will always be the same...until Elvis comes to town.

Elvis Jewell, along with his nomad parents and five younger siblings, live in a big silver motor home that has taken a wrong turn and is now stuck in the mud. It is shortly after Popeye discovers the stranded Holiday Rambler and meets the unruly Jewells that things begin to happen—exciting things. On the first day, Elvis makes Popeye the senior vice president of the Spit and Swear Club. The very next day, Elvis grabs Popeye, gives him a little shake and says, "Let's have an adventure." And it isn't long before an adventure comes floating down the creek in the shape of a small boat, made from Yoo-Hoo chocolate drink cartons, carrying a mysterious message. Meeting Elvis and the appearance of that Yoo-Hoo boat is just the beginning of a much-needed adventure for Popeye, who is about to find out that any adventure, even a small one, can change a person forever.



Hooks

- What is an adventure? Adventures are often thought of as being exciting, unusual, daring, and maybe even hazardous. If that is the case, how small can an adventure be and still be considered an adventure?
- Have you ever had an adventure and if you have, would you say it was a big adventure or a small one?
- Do you have to go looking for an adventure or can an adventure sometimes find you?
- How would you feel if nothing exciting ever seemed to happen to you?
- Do only grown-ups have adventures? How long do you think it will be before you can have an adventure?



Meet the Author—Barbara O’Connor

Barbara O’Connor took a children’s writing class at UCLA where she turned her love of writing into a career. In addition to writing many biographies, she also writes middle grade fiction. She has won a variety of awards for her writing including two Parents Choice Gold Awards, an ALA Notable and a School Library Journal Best Books of the Year. Barbara conducts writing workshops for elementary grades.

You can learn more about Barbara O’Connor at:
www.barboconnor.com



Connections for *The Small Adventure of Popeye and Elvis*



Friendship – Fiction

Clements, Andrew. *Room One: A Mystery or Two*. Illustrated by Mark Elliott. Atheneum, 2008.

Dowell, Francis O'Rourke. *Chicken Boy*. Photographs by George Krause. Aladdin, 2007.

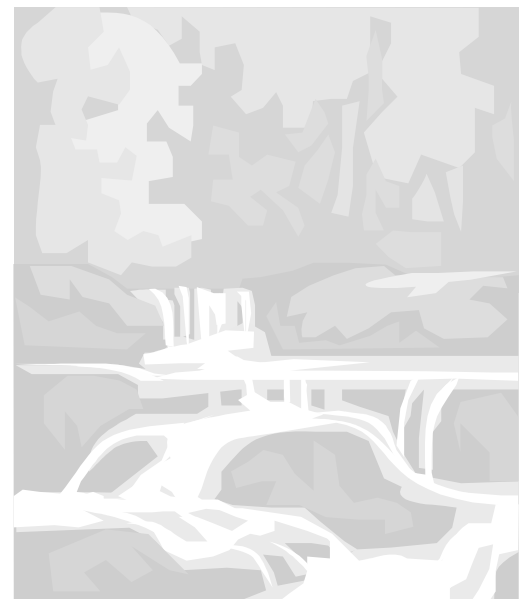
Dowell, Francis O'Rourke. *Phineas L. McGuire...Erupts! The First Experiment (From the Highly Scientific Notebooks of Phineas L. McGuire)*. Atheneum, 2007.

Gantos, Jack. *Heads or Tails : Stories From the Sixth Grade*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995.

McKay, Hilary. *Indigo's Star*. Margaret K. McElderry, c2006.

Paulsen, Gary. *The Cookcamp*. Perfection Learning, c2003.

Thomas, Francis. *Polly's Really Secret Diary*. Illustrated by Sally Gardner. Yearling, 2003.



Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *The Small Adventure of Popeye and Elvis*



- How did Popeye get his name?
- Does this story take place in the past? The future? The present? What elements of the story make you think so?
- There are many words that Popeye explains throughout the story. Pick 5-7 to describe how you feel about the book.
- Where does the “small adventure” start for Popeye? How about Elvis?
- How would you summarize this story to someone in 10 words?

