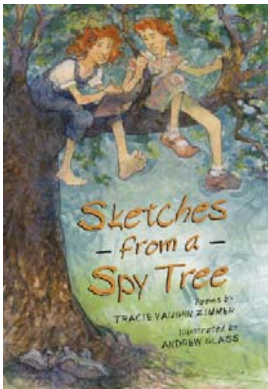


Sketches from a Spy Tree

by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer
illustrated by Andrew Glass
Clarion Books

Teacher Guide



From the Jacket:

Perched in the branches of her favorite tree with her sketchbook, Anne Marie watches the world go by. While recording her observations of neighbors, friends, and family, she thinks about her father, who left two years before; about Mike, who seems to be trying to take his place; about her twin sister, Mary Anne, who looks like her (at least to adults) but sees things very differently. Poems in Anne Marie's voice, sometimes humorous, sometimes poignant, and always honest, take readers through a year of change in the life of a family and in Anne Marie's heart. Illustrations that include paintings, drawings, and collage capture the texts emotional range and Anne Marie's own artistic vision.

Discussion Guide

Twins:

Everyone thinks that Anne Marie and Mary Ann are identical but are they? How are they alike? How are they different?

Do you think twins like being treated as a matched set: "like a pair of shoes/or gloves,/worthless if one/ gets lost." What does Anne Marie mean by this? Did you learn anything from Anne Marie about twins? What?

Reread: "Not to Brag But" and then decide: do you wish you had a twin? What would be great about it? What would get old?

Parents:

Describe Anne Marie's mom, dad, and Mike. How does she get along with them? What would you find most difficult in Anne Marie's story? Do you think it is fair how she feels about Mike? By the end of the book, what is Anne Marie trying to do?

Reread: "Dad's Roses" What did Anne Marie do to her dad's rose bushes? Why? What does she mean when she says, "Only the roses came back?"

Neighbors:

Which of Anne Marie's neighbors did you find most interesting? Who would you like to live near? Is there anyone (or animal) that you're glad doesn't live by you? Why? In poems the author doesn't have much room for description. How can you still "see" the characters? What techniques can a writer use? Which poem is your favorite about the neighborhood? Why? How is Anne Marie's neighborhood like yours? How is it different?

Growing up:

Reread "The Book Lady." What types of things does Anne Marie want to do when she is older? Why do you think she said "build my own fence/ change my own oil?" What on her list would you like to do too? What things would you include on your own list? Why do you think Anne Marie thinks it is important to "buy new books/ with all the rest/ for each kid who/never had one"? Who would you like to help when you get older? What could you do? Is there anything you could do now?

Friendship:

Discuss Anne Marie and Mary Anne's friendship with May Ching. How do things change with a new friend? What other friendships do they have in the neighborhood? How are they similar to the friendships you have outside of school? Are friendships different at home and at school? How?

Art:

Why is Anne Marie's sketchbook so important to her? What does she learn by creating pictures and poems about the people she knows? How does it make her like her dad? What, like Anne Marie's sketchbook, is important to you? What does Anne Marie mean when she says she's "hidden by these green and paper leaves?" Which illustration is your favorite? What technique did Andrew Glass use to create it? What colors did he use? Why do you think he chose that palette?

Comprehension

Pre-Reading Activity: Do you know any twins? Do you think it would be fun to be a twin? What would be great about it? What might be hard?

Check out the cover: What do you think this story might be about? Who do you think is doing the spying? Why?

- Comprehension Check:**
1. Who is the narrator of this story? Describe her.
 2. Why does Anne Marie say that she's the "one with hate/painting my heart black"?
 3. Explain what's going on between Mike and Anne Marie.
 4. Retell the main events in the story.
 5. Predict what happens after the close of the collection.



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Character Chart

Sketches from a Spy Tree

Readers learn about characters in four ways: what they say, what they do, what they look like, and what others think and say about them. Find details about each character that help you understand them from the book.

	Appearance	Actions	Words	Others
Anne Marie				
Mary Anne				
Mom				
Mike				
Anne Marie's Dad				
Miss Emory				
The Kramers				

