

Funerals & Fly Fishing

By: Mary Bartek

Publisher: Henry Holt

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Genre: Realistic Fiction

Lifeskills: Trustworthiness, effort, truthfulness, caring, flexibility, patience, active listening, no put-downs, courage, pride, personal best, integrity, friendship, sense of humor.

SYNOPSIS: Brad Stanislawski is sent to spend the summer with his grandfather, who he has never met, at the family-owned funeral home. He learns to love his grandfather and be proud of his family and his name.

BOOKTALK: Brad Stanislawski hates his last name—all the guys at school call him “Stan-is-Lousy!” When his mother plans a summer trip to California, Brad looks forward to the vacation—instead he is sent to spend the summer with a grandfather he has never even met! Grandfather Stan-is-Lousy lives in a small town in Pennsylvania over a funeral home. What kind of a vacation is that? Read and find out!

AUTHOR:

Mary Bartek

Mary Bartek has been a teacher for over 25 years. In addition, she is a former school librarian and journalist. Just like Grandfather Stan-is-Lousy, she grew up in a small town in Pennsylvania and lived in a funeral home where her father was the Director. Today she lives in Centennial, Colorado. This is her first novel.

CHALLENGING WORDS:

affixed, droning, Neanderthals, cul-de-sac, commissions, bloodshot, sarcasm, casket, hearse, proprietor, dissection, apprenticeship, flair, gnome, vise, nymph, abdomen, thorax, gurney, embalming, ballistic, stupor, undertaker, badgering, bullheadedness, pivot

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How could Brad handle Anthony and Jason when they make fun of his name?
2. What is fly fishing and how is it different from bait fishing?
3. Why didn't Brad's mom open the letters from his grandfather?

4. Why is Brad's grandfather so angry when he finds Pat and Brad in the funeral home?
5. How did Brad's visit affect him, his mother, and his grandfather?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Art: Draw caricatures.

Language Arts: Write a persuasive letter like Brad's grandfather wrote to his daughter.

Social Studies: Hold a Polish festival to celebrate Polish customs and foods.

Other: Have students explain and demonstrate how to tie fishing flies; role play with a partner how to behave when a bully teases you.

INTERNET SITES:

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Fly-fishing: <http://flyfishing.about.com/>

Polish food/cooking: <http://www.magma.ca/~pfeiffer/sharon/polish.htm>

Indiana Standards met by this Intermediate book:

Language Arts: 4.1.1, 4.1.7, 4.5.6; 5.1.1, 5.1.6, 5.5.4; 6.3.2, 6.3.3, 6.5.7

Social Studies: 6.3.3, 6.3.10