

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Lisa Barringer/Madonna Wheeler	School:	OSMS
Book Title:	Monkey Island	Genre:	Realistic Fiction
Author:	Paula Fox	Pages:	151
Publisher:	Yearling	Copyright:	1991

*In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.*

**Book Summary and summary citation:** (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

Eleven year old Clay Garrity is on his own. His father lost his job and left the family. Now Clay's mother has disappeared from their welfare hotel. Clay is homeless and out on the streets of New York City. In the park he meets two homeless men, Buddy and Calvin. They became Clay's new family during the harsh winter weeks. But the city is filled with danger and despair. If Clay leaves the streets, he may never find his parents again. But if he stays on the streets, he may not survive at all.

**Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s):** (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

1. Construct the meaning of unknown words through context clues and the author's use of definition, restatement, and example. 7AVA
  5. Summarize the information in texts, recognizing important ideas and supporting details as well as noting gaps or contradictions. 7RPB
  6. Critically compare across texts noting author's style as well as literal and implied contents of texts. 7RPB
  7. Predict or hypothesize as appropriate from information in the text, supporting with specific references to a literary work. 7RPB
- Self-monitor
8. Apply self-monitoring strategies to clarify confusion about text and to monitor comprehension. 7RPD
  13. Describe and analyze the elements of character development. 7RALA
  14. Identify the main and minor events of the plot and explain how each gives rise to the next. 7RALC

16. Demonstrate comprehension by inferring themes, patterns and symbols.

7RALE

**Include two professional reviews of this title:** (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be “cut and pasted” (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

From Publishers Weekly

Fox ( *The Village by the Sea* ) has written a quietly terrifying, wholly compelling novel about the urban homeless, filtered through the experience of an 11-year-old boy. Clay's middle-class existence begins to shred when his art-director father loses his job and, eventually, his connection to his wife and child. He leaves without a word one day, and Clay and his pregnant mother end up in a welfare hotel, a place "where people in trouble waited for something better--or worse--to happen to them." And happen it does, for Clay's mother soon disappears as well, and Clay takes to the streets, to be befriended by two homeless men and reunited with his mother only after great tribulation. Once again Fox displays her remarkable ability to render life as seen by a sensitive child who has bumped up against harsh circumstances. Her understanding of Clay is keenly empathic and intuitive, and it seems near-total: she is as finely attuned to the small, surprising eddies of his thoughts as to their larger and more obvious stream. It is precisely this attention to the quiet, easily lost insight that gives her account its veracity and force. For example, one night Clay and a friend break into a church basement, and Clay spies a bulletin board. He is "faintly surprised. I can read, he thought"--a small jolt that shows us just how far from the world of school and homework he has traveled. Fox neither preaches about nor attempts to soften the stark realities of the life that is, temporarily, thrust upon Clay. Clear-eyed and unblinking as ever, she shows us the grit, misery and despair of the homeless, along with occasional qualified, but nonetheless powerful redemptive moments--the sharing of an apple or kind word by those with little to spare; for Clay, the bright smile of his newborn sister. Ages 10-up.

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Review #2

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-7-- Eleven-year-old Clay Garrity's family had been what most people would consider an average family--until the magazine his father worked for went out of business and he couldn't find another job over the next year. Clay then experienced the gradual decline from that normal existence to one of abandonment by his father, the move to a welfare hotel and, at the beginning of the story, the disappearance of his mother who, with the added burden of a difficult pregnancy, is unable to cope with the daily struggle for survival. Clay eventually comes to a small park scornfully called "Monkey Island" for the homeless who live there. Here he is taken in by two men who share the wooden crate that offers them some shelter from the cold November winds. These three become a sort of family, holding on to some sense of humanity in a brutal and brutalizing world. For all of its harshness, Monkey Island is also a romanticized view of the world. Although Clay is not spared the hunger, fear, illness, and squalor of the streets, there is still a distancing from the more immediate types of violence that exist there. He is always on the edge of such danger, but no incidents actually touch him. In the end, it is pneumonia that brings him back into the social services system. After ten days in the hospital, the boy is placed in a foster home and shortly thereafter is reunited with his mother and baby sister in a conclusion that readers desire but that may strain credibility. This is a carefully crafted, thoughtful book, and one in which the flow of language both sustains a mood of apprehension and encourages readers to consider carefully the plight of the homeless, recognizing unique human beings among the nameless, faceless masses most of us have

learned not to see. --Kay E. Vandergrift, School of Communication, Information and Library Studies, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ  
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**What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?**

Title: **Gracie's Girl**

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

**Document any potentially controversial content:**

p. 21 "... against the railings smoking dope. But as he made his way down cautiously to the lobby..."

p. 48 "The word he always wrote was stop. He didn't think people would notice it, because they loved the sex and bathroom words so much..."

p. 49 "... He hurried to the stairway, hoping the first-floor door would be unlocked by this time. There was dope stuff scattered on the stairs..."

p. 78 "...They caught sight of Buddy. "Nigger!" they cried out in one great shout."

p. 149 "... Nigger is the longest word I know."

**Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)**

Gifted/Accelerated  Regular  At Risk

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

**Reading level of this title (if applicable):** 5-6.5

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:** January 7, 2008

**Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:**

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

