

The Wild Journey of Juniper Berry

TEACHER'S GUIDE

ABOUT THE BOOK

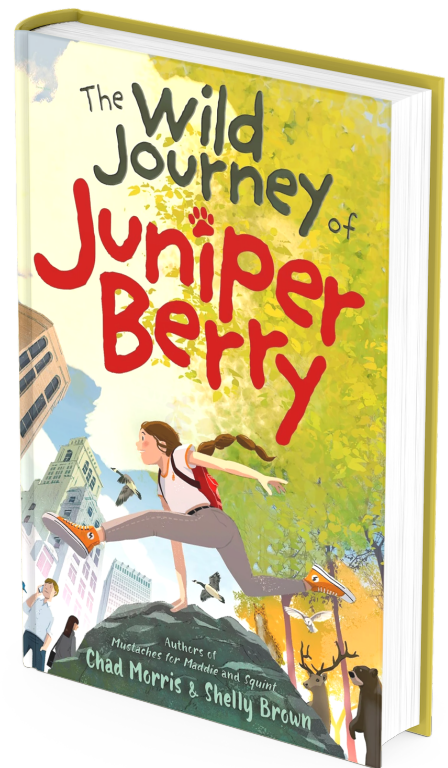
Eleven-year-old Juniper Berry lives in a cabin with her family deep in the wild woods. Living off the grid is usually exciting, like the time she chased off three growling raccoons with a tree branch and some acorns, or when she thought she glimpsed the legendary Bigfoot. But her happy life in the wild ends abruptly when her younger brother gets sick, and the family moves to the city to be closer to the hospital.

Juniper and her older sister are sent to live with cousins they hardly know and attend a public school for the first time, which is harder to navigate than the wild woods ever were. Juniper feels like a wolf cub separated from her pack.

When Juniper notices that her cousin, Alayna, is being bullied by so-called friends, she's ready to fight back like the wild geese do when protecting their goslings, but her cousin tells her to stay out of it; she doesn't want Juniper making things worse.

As the hospital bills for her brother start piling up, Juniper knows they'll need to be paid before the family can go back to the woods, so she decides to make enough money to help out. With Alayna's support, Juniper starts posting videos filled with her wisdom from the woods, hoping to get a following. But what if it doesn't work? What if the bills never get paid? Not going home to the wild is Juniper's worst nightmare. But while she's stuck in the city, she might as well make the most of it, like sticking up for her cousin, for starters.

The Wild Journey of Juniper Berry is a story about perseverance when faced with difficult and unfamiliar challenges, belonging and finding your identity, compassion for others, and learning that our differences can sometimes be our strengths.



★ "A FASCINATING, TOUCHING STORY OF AN OFF-THE-GRID FAMILY FACING CHANGES AND THE INVISIBLE THREADS THAT CONNECT PEOPLE."

— KIRKUS
STARRED REVIEW

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Chad Morris grew up wanting to become a professional basketball player or a rock star. Neither of those plans quite panned out, so he wrote and performed sketch comedy while going to college. Now he's a teacher and a writer.

Shelly Brown loves to write books for children. In her spare time, she enjoys the theater and traveling. In addition to her five children, she has three chickens and sixty-four Pez dispensers.



PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Take a minute or two and examine the cover of the book. Make some predictions about the characters and the story. Share with a partner. Choose which prediction you can support with the most evidence from the cover. Share the best prediction with the class.
2. Do we sometimes judge people by their "cover"? Sometimes we have ideas about a person or kind of person even before knowing them. When we look at someone, what hints do we try to figure out about them from the way they look? Are we always right?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Juniper Berry and her family live off the land. How difficult do you think that would be? If you did that, what would be the thing you miss the most?
2. Juniper has many favorite things about living in the wild, like climbing trees, jumping into the swimming hole, and starwatching. What your favorite thing to do outside?
3. Clara doesn't like "society." What are some good things you can think of about living among lots of people? What are some possible bad things?
4. When Juniper and her family accidentally pluck Zombie's feathers, what do they do about it? Have you ever had a pet? If you have, what do you like about it? If you haven't, what do you think you would like?
5. When Hawk gets sick, Zephyr has to rely on a friendship he's made with Ken, someone from "society." Do you think it's okay or good to make friends with people you might not agree with on everything? Why or why not?

6. Juniper and Skylark find out about they have an uncle and cousins they'd never known about. What do you think you would do if you found out a family secret like that?
7. Kori and Alayna make fun of Juniper for not knowing what a refrigerator and other things they often use are, but they don't know how they work. What is something you use a lot that you wouldn't be able to explain how it works? What's something that you would be able to explain?
8. Skylark and Juniper get in trouble with Uncle Parker when they accidentally clog the toilet with leaves. Have you ever done something and immediately felt bad about doing it? How did you make things right?
9. When Juniper was in PE class, she nearly beat Keenan at running and set a school record. What are some things that you do in school that you enjoy the most?
10. Both Alayna and Clara have panic attacks (Clara's "storms" and Alayna's "attacks"). What do you think usually causes them? How do they deal with them?
11. Ms. Nakamura regretted not helping Clara years ago. What are some reasons we might not reach out to help others when we think they need it? What are some ways you have tried to help others? Have you regretted not helping when you thought you should? Why or why not?

ACTIVE READING THROUGH READING STRATEGIES

1. **Summarizing:** Pretend one of your classmates has been absent, then summarize the last chapter you read for him or her. Pick which parts of the chapter are most important to share to help your classmate catch up quickly. Leave out small details that are not important to the overall story or chapter. Did your summary focus on an important story development, important traits of a certain character, or something else? Explain your decisions on what you included or left out of your summary in a small group or to the whole class.
2. **Visualizing:** Reread one of your favorite scenes in the book. Think about all the things that Juniper can see, hear, smell, taste, or feel in the scene. Then draw a picture. Be sure to include specific details from the text. Find a partner and explain what details you chose to include from the story and why.
3. **Foreshadowing:** Good readers often imagine or think about what will happen next in a story. What do you think will happen to Juniper next? Use details from the story to support what you predict and think.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Creative Writing:

The Wild Journey of Juniper Berry was loosely inspired by the story of the Lycov family who lived in the Siberian woods and didn't run into any other people for 42 years. When a group of scientists found them in 1978 they said that the father, who had once lived in civilization, spoke fairly clearly. But the children who were raised in the woods spoke in a strange version of Russian that was not easily understood. Write a story that starts with you being stuck or lost in the woods and having to survive off of what you find around you. What kind of creativity would you have to use?

2. Geography:

Where are you right now? (Answers will probably include at your desk, in your classroom, your school, your city, etc.) Why is it important for you to know where you are? Does it affect how you behave or what you say or how you see the world?

Juniper Berry understood the woods very well. She knew where she was and how her actions affected others (both people and animals) who lived in those woods. But when she got to school, she realized she didn't understand the wider world as well as she thought. She struggled to come up with the names of countries and hadn't even heard of all of them before. She knew her smaller world but didn't know her place in the bigger world. Do you think she needed to?

What is the wider world that you live in? (Your country, your continent, your culture, such as western/eastern hemisphere, earth, etc.) Why is it important to know where you come from? Why is it important to not only know where you live but to understand where other people come from as well?

3. Service:

Juniper Berry needed to make some money, so she made flyers telling people what services she could offer. It is important to be a helpful part of the world around you in whatever capacity you can. Make a flyer for services you could offer your community. Don't forget to include a picture of yourself and some eye-catching designs to get people's attention.