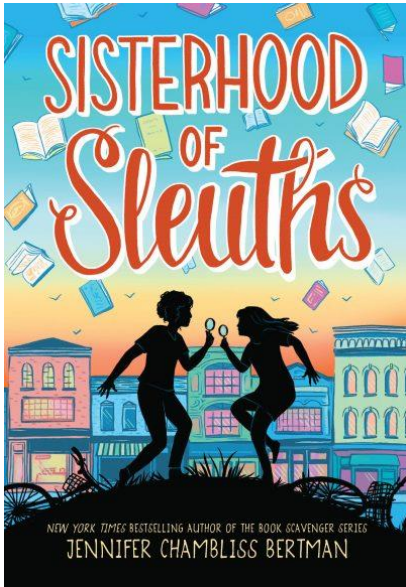


A Curriculum Guide for Educators & Readers



Aligned to the Common Core Grades 4-9

Discussion points, activities, and writing prompts to help educators use *Sisterhood of Sleuths* as a classroom read aloud or as a selection for independent reading. Great for book clubs, too!

About the Author

Jennifer Chambliss Bertman is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the Book Scavenger series and *Sisterhood of Sleuths*. *Book Scavenger* was an Indie Next Top Ten pick, an Amazon Book of the Year, a Bank Street College Book of the Year, an NCTE Notable Book, and has been nominated for over twenty state award and honor lists, among other accolades. The series is being translated into more than a dozen languages. *Sisterhood of Sleuths* was an Amazon Top 20 Children's Books of 2022 and a Common Sense Media selection. Jennifer's debut picture book, *A Good Deed Can Grow*, illustrated by Holly Hatam, published in 2023. She holds an MFA in creative writing and has worked in a variety of roles with children and in publishing. A native of the San Francisco Bay Area, Jennifer now lives in Colorado with her family.



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About the Book

An Indie Next Pick

An Amazon Best Book of the Month

An Amazon Top 20 Children's Book of the Year

A Common Sense Selection for Books

A Barnes and Noble Most Anticipated

"Bertman creates a sympathetic character in Maizy. Confident in her views yet observant and empathetic, she makes a good narrator. Stamper's full-page, double-page, and small line drawings are an attractive addition to the book. A lively, well-paced story with several elements of mystery."—*Booklist*

"A deeply enjoyable read with a well-paced plot, satisfying and believable mystery reveals, and poignant reflections on the changing nature of friendship."—*BCCB*

"A strong theme of evolving friendships pervades this fun and funny mystery narrated in Maizy's lively voice, while the Nancy Drew motif infuses the plot with fascinating, thoroughly researched historical details about the series' creation and survival. An engaging pick for mystery fans and wannabe sleuths."—*Kirkus Reviews*

A clever and thought-provoking mystery that pays homage to classic Nancy Drew stories, perfect for fans of Wendy Mass and Trenton Lee Stewart.

Maizy always assumed she knew everything about her grandmother, Jacuzzi. So when a box full of vintage Nancy Drew books gets left at her mom's thrift store, Maizy is surprised to find an old photo of her grandmother and two other women tucked beneath the collection. Stranger still, when Maizy shows the photo to Jacuzzi she feigns ignorance, insisting the woman is someone else. Determined to learn the truth — and inspired by the legacy of Nancy Drew — Maizy launches her own investigation with the help of new friends, Nell and Cam. What they discover not only points to the origins of the iconic series, but uncovers a truth from the past that will lead to self-discovery in the present, connecting three generations of women.

This intergenerational mystery filled with literary history, friendship, and family secrets delivers a captivating tribute to the world's most famous girl detective.

Common Core Aligned for Grades 4-9

4th grade: ELA. RL.4.1,2,3,4,6,7; W.4.1,2,3; SL.4.1,2,4; L.4.4,5

5th grade: ELA. RL.5.1,2,3,4,6,7; W.5.1,2,3; SL.5.1,2,4,5; L.5.4,5

6th grade: ELA. RL.6.1,2,3,4; W.6.1,2,3,4,7,8,9; SL.6.1,2,3,4,5; L.6.4,5

7th grade: ELA. RL.7.1,2,4; W.7.1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9; SL.7.1,2,3,4,5; L.7.4,5

8th grade: ELA. RL.8.1,2,4; W.8.1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9; SL.8.1,2,3,4,5; L.8.4,5

9th grade: ELA. RL.9–10.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9; W.9–10.3a–e,4; SL.9–10.1,4,5; L.9–10.1,2,4 a,c,d

Before You Read...

1. Take a close look at the front cover of *Sisterhood of Sleuths*. Create a list of everything you see.
2. Can you predict what this book might be about?
3. Read the text on the jacket flap. What do you learn about the book from this text?
4. Look closely at the design of the book: the colors, text, illustrations, and word choice. How would you describe the design?
5. Who do you think is the intended audience for this book? If you saw this book on the shelf, would you want to read it? Why or why not?

Write one paragraph describing your thoughts about the book and include one question you have that you hope to learn the answer to when you read. Share your paragraph with the class.

Chapters 1-4

1. Maizy says, "Hanging out with Izzy lately has been like putting on a favorite sweatshirt that doesn't feel quite right." Explain what she means using specific examples from chapters 1-4 to support your answer.
2. Describe, in your own words, the class assignment that Maizy and Izzy are working on.
 - a. What does this assignment mean to Maizy?
3. What is inside the box that mysteriously appears at Alter Ego?
 - a. Who do you think the box belongs to? Why?
4. Name two suggestions Izzy makes about their project.
 - a. How do these suggestions make Maizy feel?

Who is Maizy?

Draw an outline of a human figure, which will represent Maizy, on a large piece of paper.

Using Chapters 1-4 as evidence, write any known details about Maizy inside the outline.

Outside the outline, record any questions you may have about her.

5. Why do you think Izzy wanted to go to Scoops?
6. How does Maizy assume Izzy will react to seeing her wearing the lobster costume to the park?
 - a. How does Izzy ultimately react? Why do you think she reacted this way?
 - b. How does Izzy's reaction make Maizy feel?
7. What happened to Maizy's friendship with her next-door neighbor Nell?
 - a. How is this a similar situation, perhaps, to the disconnect Maizy is feeling with Izzy?
 - b. How is this a different situation, perhaps, to the disconnect Maizy is feeling with Izzy?

Who is Izzy (Isabelle)?

Draw an outline of a human figure, which will represent Izzy, on a large piece of paper.

Using Chapters 1-4 as evidence, write any known details about Izzy inside the outline.

Outside the outline, record any questions you may have about her.

Making Connections:

Explain the following quote in your own words: "Nobody can treat you like a lamp if you act like a spotlight."

Do you think Maizy acted like a lamp at Scoops? How so?

Do you think Izzy treated Maizy like a lamp? How so?

Rewrite the scene at Scoops, but this time, have Maizy act like a spotlight. How does the scene change?

Chapters 5-8

1. Chapter 5 is the first time we see Maizy's whole family together. Imagine you are Maizy and write a description for each of the following members of her family from her point-of-view:

- a. Mom
- b. Dad
- c. Max
- d. Jacuzzi

2. Do you think Jacuzzi is telling the truth about the books and the photo? Support your opinion using evidence from the book.

- a. If Jacuzzi did not deliver the books and the photo, who do you think did?

3. Why do you think Izzy acts “normal” at school on Monday?

4. Izzy doesn’t react the way Maizy wanted her to when she showed her the inscription in the book. Rewrite the scene so Izzy has a reaction that doesn’t feel like a kicked bruise.

- a. How do Nell and Cam react to the inscription?
- b. Do you think Nell and Cam’s reactions feel like a kicked bruise? Why or why not?

5. Do you think the group should have started changing Maizy’s script? Why or why not?

- a. What would be a less hurtful way to suggest changes to the script?

6. Maizy, Nell, and Cam form a new group for their class project. Describe their project in your own words.

Who is Nell?

Draw an outline of a human figure, which will represent Nell, on a large piece of paper.

Using Chapters 1-4 as evidence, write any known details about Nell inside the outline.

Outside the outline, record any questions you may have about her.

Making Connections:

The inscription Maizy finds in the book says, "Friendship is no big thing. It's a million little things."

What are some of the little things that Maizy believes made up her friendship with Izzy?

Using one of your own relationships, list some of the "million little things" that it consists of.

Chapters 9-12

1. How does Jacuzzi react when Maizy shows her the inscription?
 - a. How did Maizy *think* Jacuzzi was going to react?
2. Jacuzzi asks Maizy if she is ready for her new adventure when Max leaves for college. Maizy is a little unsure.
 - a. What are some benefits to Max going to college?
 - b. What are some of the disadvantages of Max going to college?
3. Maizy says, "Sometimes big changes happen in small moments." Explain what is meant by this in your own words using evidence from the book to support your answer.
4. Who was Carolyn Keene?
5. Why does Mr. Noys, the librarian, say he doesn't like Nancy Drew?
6. When leaving the library, Maizy sees Jacuzzi. Jacuzzi doesn't seem like herself. How so?
 - a. What makes the girls follow her?
 - b. Where do they follow her to?
7. What information does Maizy gain from George Winthrop's obituary?

- a. Do you think Jacuzzi is telling the truth? Why or why not?

Chapters 13-17

1. Cam's research on Nancy Drew leads to many discoveries about the creation of the series. List the facts she discovers.
 - a. What does Cam's research also reveal about the photo found in the box of books?
2. What parallel to Mildred Wirt Benson not getting credit for creating Nancy Drew does Maizy draw to her own experience with the Shellfish Holmes script?
3. What is Maizy's theory on why Nancy Drew is so well-loved even though her "perfection is a bit unrealistic"?
4. What information do the girls learn about the history of Nancy Drew from Professor Vale?
 - a. What does Professor Vale say the guiding factor was in revising the original versions of Nancy Drew?
 - b. Why are the revisions still considered problematic?
5. Professor Vale quotes Maya Angelou: "When we learn better, we do better." Explain this quote in your own words using Nancy Drew's history to support your answer.
 - a. Do you have any experiences in your own life that prove this quote true? Explain using your own experiences to support your answer.
6. Jacuzzi finally tells Maizy all about Annette and the photo from 1993. Imagine you are Annette and recall the story in your own words.
 - a. Do you think Annette left the books at Alter Ego? Why or why not?

Meddling

Nell worries that trying to rekindle Jacuzzi and Annette's friendship is meddling.

Maizy reminds her that Nancy Drew solved other people's problems by meddling.

Do you think it's meddling? Is it wrong to meddle to try and fix someone's problems?

- b. Do you think Maizy will be able to help mend the friendship between Annette and Jacuzzi? Why or why not?

Making Connections:

Professor Vale said that “some things endure because people are committed to retelling the story.” Maizy worries that Izzy and her friendship is not enduring and maybe it’s because Izzy is trying to tell a different story now.

What do you think is meant by “retelling the story?”

Look closely at the following relationships in *Sisterhood of Sleuths*. How are they, or aren’t they, committing to retelling their story?

- Nell and Maizy
- Izzy and Maizy
- Max and Maizy
- Annette and Jacuzzi
- Jacuzzi and Maizy’s mom

Chapters 18-22

1. Why do you think Maizy decided to help Izzy when she fell into the fountain, instead of treating her the same way Izzy treated her when she fell off her bike?
2. Audrey tells Maizy she is the one who left the books at Alter Ego. Imagine that you are Audrey and write a diary entry about the box of books and your decision to drop them off at the store.
3. List the reasons why Maizy believes that Kelsey took her book.
 - a. How would you react if you were Kelsey and you were accused of a crime you didn’t commit?
4. Why do you think Izzy threw Maizy’s book in the trash?
 - a. If you were Maizy, would you forgive Izzy? Why or why not?

- b. Why do you think Maizy says that hugging Izzy feels like saying goodbye?
- 5. Why is Maizy not upset when her project isn't chosen for screening at the Curio?
- 6. Jacuzzi says, "It rattles us when things change that we don't see coming." Maizy can relate to that. How so?
- 7. So many people attend the documentary viewing in Maizy's backyard. Who are some of the new people in Maizy's life?
 - a. Do you think it bothers Maizy that Izzy isn't there? Why or why not?

After You Read...

Below are a few final project ideas for the conclusion of *Sisterhood of Sleuths*.

- 1. Revisit the cover illustration for the book. Explain the details that the artist chose to include, using textual evidence as support.
 - a. Having now read the book, design your own cover illustration.
- 2. Several themes run through *Sisterhood of Sleuths*.

Friendship	Mystery	Girl Power	Growing Up
Family	Forgiveness	Change	

Choose one of these themes on which to base a 500-word essay.

What can readers take away from *Sisterhood of Sleuths* in relation to this theme?

- 3. Choose a character and explore how they have changed from the beginning to the end.
- 4. Would you say *Sisterhood of Sleuths* has a happy ending even though Maizy and Izzy did not re-prioritize their friendship?
 - a. Using evidence from the book, discuss endings and what it meant for the following characters? Did each get a happy ending? If so, how?
 - i. Maizy
 - ii. Izzy
 - iii. Annette

iv. Jacuzzi

v. Nell

5. Create a book trailer for *Sisterhood of Sleuths*. Carefully choose music, visuals, and words to create an overall feel for the book.
6. Write a script based on your favorite scene(s) in the book.
7. Create your own Shellfish Holmes-inspired mystery written as a screenplay or short story.