

Novel•Ties

MILKWEED

Jerry Spinelli



A Study Guide

Written By Carol Alexander
Edited by Joyce Friedland and Rikki Kessler

LEARNING LINKS

P.O. Box 326 • Cranbury • New Jersey 08512

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with the novel *Milkweed* consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its own reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

indigent of the ghetto. The Nazis allowed some businesses to operate in the ghetto, but poverty and starvation, along with illness, soon caused the deaths of thousands of Jews. Food rations for the ghetto were so small as to barely sustain life. Smuggling became a common practice for the people of the Jewish Quarter, who would bribe guards or find secret ways to cross the wall. The smugglers who brought foodstuffs back to their starving families and neighbors were brave people who knew that if they were caught, they would immediately be executed.

A Jewish resistance was gradually formed by youth groups politicized in response to the intensifying rumors of Hitler's Final Solution for the Jews and other unwanted members of society. The labor camps were in fact death camps designed for the purpose of mass killings. Between 1942 and 1943, as many as 300,000 Warsaw Jews were deported to the concentration camps. Underground groups such as the Jewish Fighting Organization and the Revisionist Party mobilized to fight the deportations, temporarily succeeding in stemming the doomed tide. These groups built bunkers that could be used to hide people and fight the SS troops. The ghetto's ultimate armed struggle against the Nazis came in the spring of 1943. Although the freedom fighters were eventually defeated, the revolt, like the Warsaw Uprising, is a testament to human courage in the most hopeless of circumstances.

Because of the impossibility of keeping precise records, we do not know how many people were deported; many died in SS roundups in the ghetto, were murdered, starved to death, or carried off by disease. Survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto have recorded their stories, which are every bit as horrifying as Misha's fictionalized memoir of the war in *Milkweed*.

CHAPTERS 1 – 8

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. cellar | a. small container, such as a box |
| 2. jumble | b. came together |
| 3. canister | c. with wild excitement |
| 4. converged | d. public performance |
| 5. bombardment | e. basement |
| 6. spectacle | f. did not believe |
| 7. doubted | g. confused mass |
| 8. frantically | h. attack with guns or bombs |

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1. The players _____ on the soccer field to listen to the coach's instructions.
2. Everyone enjoyed the _____ of the school marching band at half-time.
3. When lightning split the sky and the heavy rains began, people ran _____ into stores and restaurants.
4. I could not find my library book in the _____ of papers and magazines in my messy room.
5. After the _____ ended, many beautiful buildings had been damaged or completely destroyed.
6. Since I felt sick at the beginning of the race, I _____ that I could win.
7. You will find the dog biscuits in the red _____ on the counter.
8. Fearing that our house was in the path of a tornado, our family huddled together downstairs in the _____ .

Read to find out how Uri and his group of orphaned boys survived in Warsaw.