READER'S/TEACHER'S GUIDE

for

***Curiosity with a Capital* S**

by Tonya Trimble

American society, culture, and technology have changed dramatically since the 1940s—the World War II era, in which *Curiosity with a Capital* S is set.

To give readers a better understanding of what life was like for Stan and Tracy—and their parents—the following reader's/teacher's guide is offered. Here you can read historical background material for each chapter focusing on life in the 1940s, as well as specific questions and exercises for each chapter.

The background discussions are intended to be used as brief overviews about life during that time, as jumping-off points for further discussion, research, and learning.

THE DISAPPEARING ACT

CHAPTER 1

Historical Background: Disciplining Children in the 1940s and Today

In most two-parent families in the 1940s, the father was the primary disciplinarian, and it was not unusual for the mother to respond to misbehavior with, "Just wait until your father gets home!" It was often up to the father to determine appropriate consequences and punishments, which were more likely than today to be physical in nature (typically spankings). Children were expected to be "seen and not heard." But other family members, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, were also encouraged to be involved in disciplining children who were disobedient or who misbehaved in other ways.

Even neighbors, teachers, and shopkeepers had some latitude to watch over children and their behavior. The role of the wider community gained strength as more and more fathers (and some mothers) became engaged in the nation's war effort, whether they went overseas to fight the war, worked in hospitals to care for injured soldiers, or worked in offices to handle the many details.

The role of disciplinarian in today's families is often less clear. It usually falls to the parent who is at home the most, but each family is more likely than in the past to determine its own way of rearing children, and disciplining by people other than the parents has become far less welcomed than in the past. The consequences of a child's misbehavior are often less physical. For instance, instead of a spanking, the parent might take away video games, TV, and/or phone privileges for a certain length of time. The old dictum of being "seen but not heard" has faded away, as family life has become far more children-centered.

Comprehension Questions: Locating information (LI), drawing conclusions (DC), context clues (CC), inferring (IN), compare and contrast (COM)

1. What leads you to believe that Stan is ***not*** a bad boy? (DC)
2. Why couldn't Mom stay angry with Stan? (LI)
3. Who helped look for Stan? (LI)
4. Where was he found? (CC)
5. What lesson(s) do you think that Stan learned from this experience? (IN)

Using Context Clues, define the following words or terms.

1. bolted (p. 2)
2. exasperated (p. 4)
3. maintenance (p. 5)
4. maze (p. 5)
5. "can of worms" (p. 6)

CHAPTER 2

THE BOILING POINT

Historical Background: School Life in the Mobile Times of War

School life in the 1940s was greatly affected by the war. Once the United States entered World War II in 1941, many families were on the move, and classrooms contained a mixture of local children and children of mobile military families.

In the 1940s, most teachers maintained strict control over their classrooms. Students were usually polite, well behaved, and respectful of the teacher. For the most part, the school curriculum was flexible to accommodate the movement of military families. Generally, though, children studied the same basic subjects that children do today: reading, spelling, math (arithmetic), science, history, and geography.

Since much of the world was engaged in war, learning about other countries was of great interest to children—especially those whose fathers were fighting overseas. Reading about current events in the daily newspapers often took precedence over what was offered in the textbooks. Homework was assigned daily, and parents and teachers expected the children to complete it on time. There was an increased emphasis on reading instruction, because many potential soldiers were rejected from serving in the military for being illiterate.

Before the war, only about half of the people in the United States had completed at least eight years of school. However, after the war ended in 1945, education became much more important, especially for war veterans who had access to the G.I. Bill, a law that provided them with tuition and other assistance.

Comprehension Questions: Locating Information (LI), Drawing Conclusions (DC), Context Clues (CC), Inferring (IN), Compare and Contrast (COM)

1. What was Mom's warning to Stan as they went to school for their first day? (LI)

2. How did Tracy's morning go on her first day at school? (DC) What made it easier for her? (CC)
3. At lunchtime, what was Stan thinking about doing? (LI) Do you think he was successful in his plan? (IN)
4. How were Stan, Tracy, and the other students found? (LI)
5. How did Stan feel about his punishment? (DC) What punishment did the other children receive? (LI)

Using Context Clues, Define the Following Words or Terms.

1. cautioned (p. 8)
2. sneaking suspicion (p. 9)
3. prediction (p. 10)
4. intense (p. 12)
5. suspended (p. 11)

CHAPTER 3

THE TARZAN LOOK-ALIKE

Historical Background: Rationing During World War II

Families made many sacrifices across the United States during the war. Women were working outside of the home in large numbers for the first time. Basic food and other commodities were scarce, and rationing became a household word. The U.S. government introduced rationing as the only way to ensure that everyone got their fair share—their ration of an item—which meant that no one could just walk into a store and buy as much meat or butter as they wanted, even if they could afford it.

Providing consumer goods at home became secondary to providing for the needs of U.S. troops fighting overseas. Each month, every household was issued a ration book and tokens that

specified how much of an item the household could purchase. Cookies, pies, and cakes became a rarity, because sugar was rationed. Families often planted vegetable "victory gardens" to help supplement their rations. Coffee was a luxury to be savored.

Not only food items were in short supply. Gasoline was rationed, and by the end of 1941, the government halted the production of cars to save steel, glass, and rubber for the country's war efforts. In 1942, the government stopped the manufacture of refrigerators, radios, sewing machines, vacuum cleaners, and phonographs. Stockings were rationed, as the nylon was used instead to make parachutes for pilots.

Children joined in the war efforts in many ways. They helped to recycle old tires and metal junk for making weapons, they rolled bandages for soldiers from strips of cloth, they knitted blankets and sweaters, and they packed food packages to send to the troops. Patriotism and support of the American soldiers was a top priority for the whole country.

Comprehension Questions: Locating Information (LI), Drawing Conclusions (DC), Context Clues (CC), Inferring (IN), Compare and Contrast (COM)

1. What was Stan threatening Tracy with at the dock? (LI) How did Tracy feel about Stan's teasing? (DC)
2. What did Tracy threaten to do? (LI) What would you have done in this situation? (IN)
3. What was Dad's big surprise? (LI)
4. What did Stan and Tracy do when the first arrived at their new home? (LI)
5. Why were the children excited about what they found on the island? (DC) Why did Stan return home soaking wet? (LI)

Using Context Clues, define the following words or terms.

1. tempting (p. 18)

2. scurried (p. 18)

3. sympathetic (p. 22)

4. reflection (p. 23)

5. contentedly (p. 23)

CHAPTER 4

AHOY MATE

Historical Background: Race Relations in the 1940s

American society in the 1940s was deeply strained by widespread racial discrimination (prejudice against) and racial segregation (separation of races). As the nation's largest and most visible minority, it was black people (in those days often referred to as "Negroes or "coloreds"; today, the terms "African Americans" and "blacks" are more common) who most profoundly experienced this racism, in many aspects of their lives.

This was particularly true in the South, including South Carolina, where Stan and Tracy lived. Stifling segregation affected many of black people's daily activities. They were not allowed to eat in "white" restaurants and could not use "white" restrooms or drinking fountains. When riding public buses, blacks were forced to sit in the back or to give up their seats for whites. Schools were either "Negro" or "white"—there was no mingling of the two. Job opportunities for African Americans were often limited to physical labor for men and nanny or housekeeper roles for women.

Other minority groups were also treated like second-class citizens during the 1940s. Japanese Americans experienced similar types of racial segregation and discrimination as did African Americans. The injustice reached critical levels once Japan attacked the American fleet in Hawaii's Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Tens of thousands of Japanese Americans were soon "relocated" and interred in segregated camps for the duration of World War II, and some were kept there for years after that.

When Stan and Tracy lived on the South Carolina island in the 1940s, it was not uncommon for white children to address even their black elders by their first names—which would not be acceptable for them when speaking to white elders. This reality was just one sign of the vast divide between races during that era.

Comprehension Questions: Locating Information (LI), Drawing Conclusions (DC), Context Clues (CC), Inferring (IN), Compare and Contrast (COM)

1. Describe the camp that Stan and Tracy built in the woods. (LI)
2. What kind of shopping did the family do when they went to the mainland to purchase Dad's "surprise"? (LI)
3. What made Stan curious about the bridge? (LI) How was this bridge different from most other bridges? (DC)
4. Name the five most important rules for using the boat? (DC and IN)
5. Stan disappeared again. Where was he first sighted? (LI) What was the danger? (CC)

Using Context Clues, Define the Following Words or Terms.

1. groggy (p. 27)
2. energetic (p. 27)
3. capsize (p. 28)
4. indefinitely (p. 31)
5. grimaced (p. 37)

CHAPTER 5

STOLEN GOODS

Historical Background: Entertainment and Home Life in the 1940s

Home life in the 1940s was simple. Most families worked as a team, especially since it wasn't unusual for Mom to be working outside the home. Older children helped make the dinner, cleared the table, and washed and dried the dishes, and other household chores. Everyone usually made their bed, and took turns taking out the trash or helping with yard work. Then, in the evenings after homework was done, the family usually gathered together around the radio.

In the 1940s, the radio was a universal source of entertainment. Almost 80 percent of American households owned a radio. Besides the news that was provided in both live and recorded reports, the radio played all the popular music of the day, and there were exciting weekly shows that everyone looked forward to . . . just as we do today with television shows. It was through a news flash that interrupted a radio music program when most Americans learned of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Popular entertainment outside the home during the World War II era was at the local movie theater. Many of the movies and even the cartoons had a war theme—stories that captured the emotions of the war. Millions of Americans went weekly to the movies to see song-and-dance films, stories of love, or combat-action films. Wacky comedies and cartoons were also very popular. Newsreels that started each evening's entertainment offered relatively up-to-date details of major news stories, mostly about the war.

Comprehension Questions: Locating Information (LI), Drawing Conclusions (DC), Context Clues (CC), Inferring (IN), Compare and Contrast (COM)

1. Why did Mom and the other mothers on the island share driving responsibilities? (LI)
2. Why would Stan continue to do an extra good job on his chores? (DC)
3. Why did Tracy feel frightened about visiting the cave again? (IN)
4. What kind of treasure did Stan and Tracy find? (LI) Where did it come from? (DC)
5. What do you think Dad would tell Stan and Stacy to do about their cave find? (IN)

Using Context Clues, Define the Following Words or Terms.

1. unmanageable (p. 41)
2. flinched (p. 44)
3. confirmed (p. 43)
4. whoppers (p. 44)
5. quavering (p. 45)

CHAPTER 6

CAUGHT RED-HANDED

Historical Background: Wildlife Conservation

In the 1930s, the National Wildlife Federation was formed to "make effective progress in restoring and conserving the vanishing wildlife resources of a continent." When this idea of wildlife management—which aims to balance the needs of wildlife with the needs of human beings, animals, birds, fish, plants, and other living things, was initially taking hold in the United States—there was not much focus on conservation.

Then, in 1941, the Conservation Information Service was created to keep the American public informed about pending laws to protect the country's wildlife, water quality, and the natural environment in general. People became more aware of the need to protect the environment for future generations.

Following World War II, there was an increase in recreational hunting, and wildlife management efforts surged because of concern for dwindling populations of certain animal species. These efforts continue to blossom in the United States and throughout the world. Today, wildlife is much better protected by conservation laws, though there are always people who will seek to poach endangered animals for their meat, fur, fin, or tusks.

Today on Lady's Island, South Carolina, a modern-day Stan and Tracy could not witness the capture of a massive leatherback turtle, a species of turtle whose sustainable existence has been

declared endangered. The residents of the island would not be allowed to capture, kill, and cook the leatherback turtle. Some turtle species, however, are still allowed to be caught and used for food in the United States.

Comprehension Questions: Locating Information (LI), Drawing Conclusions (DC), Context Clues (CC), Inferring (IN), Compare and Contrast (COM)

1. Why do you think that the four men were jumping around instead of helping to land the turtle? (IN)
2. Why did the children think that they could talk Dad into going to the cookout? (DC)
3. Why didn't Stan and Tracy tell their parents about the treasure in the cave? (LI)
4. What does Stan's statement "What they don't know won't hurt them" imply about him? (IN)
5. How did the children feel when the hotel thief was arrested at the cookout? (DC and IN)

Using Context Clues, Define the Following Words or Terms.

1. commotion (p. 48)
2. dejected (p. 51)
3. evidence (p. 54)
4. mused (p. 55)
5. stole away (p. 54)

CHAPTER 7

IT'S CATCHING

Historical Background: Island Flora, Fauna, and Climate

Lady's Island, where Stan, Tracy, and their parents lived, is a large mass of land directly off the coast from Beaufort, South Carolina. In the 1940s, it was inhabited mostly by African Americans who had remained on the island after their ancestors had been freed from slavery. There was one large resort hotel and a number of cottages used primarily in the summer by mainland people. A single bridge connected Lady's Island to the main shore of Beaufort.

The island's climate is typically temperate, and the flora is somewhat tropical. At sea level, the island has hot and humid summers with mild winters. The different habitats include freshwater pond, maritime forest, coastal marsh, dune, and intertidal zones. The tropical vegetation provides natural protection for much wildlife in the area, including snakes, both poisonous (copperheads and coral) and nonpoisonous (black garden snakes); rabbits; frogs and lizards; mosquitoes and gnats; and deer. The sky is filled with soaring gulls and other seabirds. Egrets and terns can be seen nestled in the rushes lining the shore.

The channel to the Atlantic Ocean, separating Lady's Island from the mainland, is filled with shifting sandbars, some of which are quicksand. Since the channel waters flow into and out of the ocean, the area is teeming with a variety of ocean dwellers, such as stripers, dolphins, rockfish, stingrays, jellyfish, blue crabs, and sharks, to name just a few. Beaufort has been rated as one of the top 20 fishing towns in the United States. There are also huge leatherback turtles, several hundred years old, ranging from 4 to 8 feet long, and weighing several hundred pounds, that can be spotted swimming near the shore.

Comprehension Questions: Locating Information (LI), Drawing Conclusions (DC), Context Clues (CC), Inferring (IN), Compare and Contrast (COM)

1. Why do you think Stan felt cooped up in a classroom? (IN)
2. Why would Mr. Hadley think that Lady's Island would be a good place for their Science field trip? (DC)
3. What event happened in Stan's group on the day of the field trip? (LI)
4. How did Mr. Hadley feel about the way Stan handled his group? (CC)
5. In what ways was the fieldtrip a success? (DC)

Using Context Clues, Define the Following Words or Terms.

1. capers (p. 58)
2. motivation (p. 59)
3. dense interior (p. 63)
4. hominess (p. 65)
5. reprimanded (p. 68)

CHAPTER 8

…AND THE BRIDGE CAME TUMBLING DOWN

Historical Background: Weather Reporting in the 1940s

In the early 1940s, only newspapers, the radio, and the newsreels at the movies provided information on current events, often recounting events that had taken place days or weeks earlier. Weather prediction at that time was quite unscientific: On Lady's Island, people would look to the sky to see if a storm was coming. When the wind rose and white caps appeared on the channel, one could be quite certain that a storm was on the way. But the intensity of the storm could not be determined until it arrived.

The military had some primitive weather equipment that aided their pilots, but generally that information was not shared with the public. Finally, in the spring of 1943, the U.S. Weather Bureau started reporting tornadoes, thunderstorms, hailstorms, lightning, and high winds at a few experimental locations across the United States. Forecasters started issuing warnings for severe thunderstorms, but still could not tell the time nor place. A breakthrough came in the late 1940s when two Air Force officers identified conditions that were favorable for tornado formation in the

southern Plains. The first tornado forecast was issued March 20, 1948. Until then, the public could only consult the *Farmer's Almanac* to help "predict" the weather.

Today, weather balloons, satellites, Doppler radar, and daily TV reports detail the weather for the United States and the rest of the world. With meteorology—the science of predicting weather—scientists are able to predict weather patterns far in advance, enabling the public to make informed decisions about their safety.

Comprehension Questions: Locating Information (LI), Drawing Conclusions (DC), Context Clues (CC), Inferring (IN), Compare and Contrast (COM)

1. How did Stan feel when he got permission to go up in the tower with Mr. Cavanaugh, the controller? (IN)
2. What were Mr. Cavanaugh's duties? (LI)
3. If the tug lines on the freighter had come loose, what could have happened? (DC)
4. As soon as the family left the tower, what terrible thing occurred? (CC)
5. After the accident, Stan was not the same. How had he changed? (LI)

Using Context Clues, Define the Following Words or Terms.

1. gratitude (p. 75)
2. barriers (p. 76)
3. reconstruction (p. 77)
4. spectators (p. 81)
5. visibility (p. 86)

CHAPTER 9

BULL'S-EYE

Historical Background: Changing Gender Roles in the World War II Era

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed U.S. ships at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii. This led to the United States' entry into World War II, and life changed drastically for all Americans from that moment.

Prior to World War II, American society was much different. Women were raised to be homemakers and mothers: they learned to cook, sew, clean, care for children, and make a comfortable home life for the family. If women did work outside the home, it was likely in professions such as secretary, nurse, housekeeper, or teacher—but the expectation was that they ultimately would become homemakers after marriage. Men, on the other hand, were expected to financially support their wife and children and, as the head of the household, to make most of the big decisions that affected the family.

When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, life was turned upside down. Young men rushed to enlist or were drafted into the military, and once trained, they were sent overseas to fight . . . many never to return.

Soon women, formerly homemakers, were working in factories as mechanics on war planes (the Rosie the Riveter phenomenon), and as bank tellers, saleswomen, and in many other roles that had traditionally been held by men. Women were helping the war effort by preparing supplies for the war, and they "kept the home fires burning" by maintaining U.S. businesses.

After the war, women were expected to return to homemaking once the men came home. Many, however, remained in the paid workforce.

Comprehension Questions: Locating Information (LI), Drawing Conclusions (DC), Context Clues (CC), Inferring (IN), Compare and Contrast (COM)

1. In what way was the fall season in South Carolina different than that of Oklahoma? (COM)
2. Do you think that it was a good idea for Dad to teach Stan archery? Why or why not? (DC)
3. How did Tracy feel about Stan bringing home ducks from their hunting trips? (CC)

4. The new construction of the nearby hotel wing caused one workman a close call. How was Stan responsible for this happening? (LI)

5. Do you think that Stan will be able to build a motorized plane? (Yes or no) What makes you think this? (IN)

Using Context Clues, define the following words or terms.

1. deciduous trees (p. 90)

2. compliment (p. 101)

3. anesthetic (p. 100)

4. investigate (p. 96)

5. motorized (p. 103)

CHAPTER 10

FLYING HIGH

Historical Background: Aviation in the 1940s

In the early 1940s, when Stan went off to flight school, the United States sent its pilots and other airmen to wage war in propeller-driven, single-engine fighter planes or four-engine bombers. On the home front, air transportation was also provided by propeller-driven planes, but few commercial flights were available.

There were no jet-propelled aircraft yet, nor computerized systems like autopilot. The airways were not crowded. Therefore, air-traffic controllers were less busy, but they were also less accurate. Since computers, radar, and satellites were not yet available, they had to depend on their eyes and radio communications to detect other planes coming in or taking off.

In contrast, today the airways are filled with jet-propelled aircraft containing the latest technology. Once the airplane takes off and it is at the designated flying level, the computerized autopilot can take over and fly the plane. However, because traffic is so dense, most controllers have a very stressful job. Even with radar and computers to aid them, air traffic is so dense that air-traffic controllers scramble to keep departing and arriving planes away from one another and prevent collisions in the air and on the ground. It is this world that Stan would have witnessed during his long career as a pilot, after leaving Lady's Island to go to flight school as a teenager.

Comprehension Questions: Locating Information (LI), Drawing Conclusions (DC), Context Clues (CC), Inferring (IN), Compare and Contrast (COM)

1. Do you think that Stan will be able to control his first motorized plane? (IN) What do you think will happen? (DC)

2. After spending so much time building his motorized plane, how will Stan feel if he wrecks it? (IN)

3. What had Stan forgotten to check on before flying his plane on the golf course? (LI)

4. Stan admits he wants to be a pilot. How will Mr. Wilcox help him do this? (DC)

5. Did Stan's first flight in an airplane go smoothly compared to his adventure with the bow and arrow? (LI) How so? (COM)

Using Context Clues, Define the Following Words or Terms.

1. stampeded (p. 107)

2. vibrating (p. 109)

3. trampled (p. 109)

4. stabilized (p. 117)

5. veered (p. 117)

CHAPTER 11

THE REPEAT

Historical Background: Sibling Relationships

In families, sibling rivalry is normal and has probably existed forever. However, there are many influences that affect sibling relationships, and this is evident in the subtle differences in sibling relations in the 1940s and today.

In the 1940s, children spent most of their time playing with their siblings, as did Stan and Tracy. Since it was wartime, it was a mobile era. Families often moved from place to place, and gas rationing limited travel, so distance also created limitations in access to other children. Consequently, siblings frequently had to rely on each other for companionship and entertainment until local friends were made. These siblings often made up their own games and entertainment, and let their imaginations run wild. So, in the time of war in the 1940s, sibling relationships typically became very close-knit.

In families with many children, the eldest girl often became a hard-working mother figure, since she was expected to help care for her younger siblings. On the other hand, in families with only two or three children, the oldest often held a position of respect, whose word was followed without question by the younger children.

Nowadays, children have many more activities outside the home and school, such as sports. Being so busy, siblings spend much less time together at home. Thus, a looser type of relationship among siblings tends to exist today.

Comprehension Questions: Locating Information (LI), Drawing Conclusions (DC), Context Clues (CC), Inferring (IN), Compare and Contrast (COM)

1. Why do you think that Stan wanted to go to the campsite? (LI)

2. Why do you think a shiver went down Tracy's spine when Stan suggested having a talk at the campsite? (IN)

3. Why did Stan's news affect Tracy so much? (DC)

4. Compare Tracy's attitudes before and after overhearing Mom and Dad's conversation about her moods. (COM)

5. What did Mom mean when she said, "I don't know if I can live through a repeat of Stan"? (DC)

Using Context Clues, define the following words or terms.

1. ambled (p. 121)

2. cope (p. 123)

3. vulnerable (p. 123)

4. squirmed (p. 127)

5. reputation (p. 127)

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