

# BOOKNOTES

EDUCATORS GUIDE

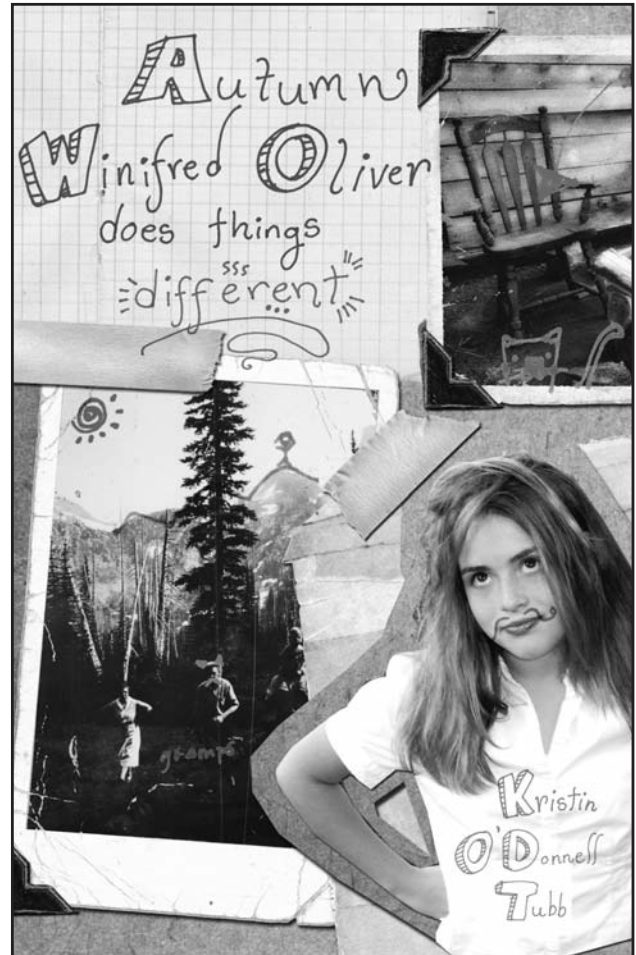
## thematic connections

Family • Dishonesty  
Fear & Anger • Good vs. Evil  
Secrets • Guilt

Grades 3–7

## about the book

Set in 1934 in Cades Cove, Tennessee, 11-year-old Autumn Winifred Oliver and her sister, Katie, are looking forward to joining their father in Knoxville, but their grandfather suffers a temporary illness, and the Olivers are forced to change their plans. Since their house has sold, Autumn's mother moves them into Gramps's tiny cabin. Gramps is cantankerous and difficult to live with, but things get worse when Autumn uncovers a secret about the building of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the future of Cades Cove. Gramps is harboring a secret, too. As the summer progresses, the secrets are revealed, and the residents of Cades Cove are faced with a difficult decision: Should they sell their land to the government for the park, or allow the lumber companies to continue destroying the land?



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GLB: 978-0-385-90558-9

*"I do things different. It helps to remind yourself of that when you realize that having the knowledge of good and evil and knowing the good from the evil are two different things."—Autumn Winifred Oliver*

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## pre-reading activity

Ask students to take an online virtual tour of Cades Cove in the Great Smoky Mountains by visiting [www.cadescome.net/auto\\_tour.html](http://www.cadescome.net/auto_tour.html).

After taking this tour, ask them to write a brief description of the land and the people who live there.



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# thematic connections

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

**Family**—Describe Autumn and Katie’s relationship. Why are both girls upset at the thought of moving in with Gramps? How does their relationship change during the summer? Autumn’s mom explains that “Kin is Kin. Gramps needs us.” (p. 10) Debate whether Gramps feels that he needs them. Trace Autumn’s relationship with Gramps from the beginning of the novel to the end. Explain what Colonel Chapman means when he says about Gramps, “He was the toughest man I ever met.” (p. 202)

**Dishonesty**—There is a misunderstanding about how Cades Cove fits into the plan for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Debate whether Colonel Chapman is dishonest, or whether the people of Cades Cove, like Gramps, were simply “chasing rainbows.” What does Autumn mean when she calls Cody a traitor? (p. 77) At what point does Autumn realize the truth about the park? Explain Gramps’s reaction when he learns the real plan for the park. Autumn confronts Cody about the park. Explain Cody’s remark, “Let’s just say I never saw a thing that lived up to its promises.” (p. 117)

**Fear & Anger**—Explain why Autumn’s mom fears moving to Knoxville. What is the greatest fear that the Oliver family faces at the end of the novel? Gramps doesn’t seem to fear the federal government. Discuss whether other folks in the Cove fear the government, or just want the money they are offered for their land. Discuss how fear changes into anger. Why is Autumn angry with Cody?

**Good vs. Evil**—Autumn seems confused about “what’s good and what’s evil.” (p. 197) How does what seems good at the beginning of the novel change into evil by the end of the novel? Explain how Pop sees the lumber company as both good and evil.

**Secrets**—Discuss how Autumn knows that Gramps is harboring a secret. Ask the class to discuss why Autumn doesn’t want to tell her mom that she saw their old house being demolished. What is Katie’s reaction to the news? Autumn has trouble holding on to the secret. Why does she feel that the people of the Cove need to know about the demolition of the houses?

**Guilt**—Ask students to discuss the moments in the novel when Autumn wrestles with guilt. What about Gramps? How does he feel guilty for believing Colonel Chapman? Explain how Pop experiences guilt about working for a lumber company.

# connecting to the curriculum

**Language Arts**—Draft an editorial that Pop might write for the *Knoxville Sentinel* at the end of the novel after he loses his job with the Little River Lumber Company. Have students consider all the points that he will make about the formation of the park and how it will change Cades Cove.

Autumn paints a picture that she puts in Gramps's coffin. Consider why the picture might serve as a eulogy to Gramps. Prepare a eulogy that Autumn might deliver at Gramps's funeral that reveals the same thoughts that she includes in her drawing.

**Science**—Cody collects rocks. His collection already includes phyllite, quartzite, and slate. Have students research other types of rocks that might be found in Cades Cove. Then have them write an illustrated guide to rock collecting in Cades Cove. Make sure that each rock is properly described, including the name origin.

**Social Studies**—Instruct students to find out the difference between a national park and a national forest by visiting the following Web site: [www.nps.gov/grsm/historyculture/stories.htm](http://www.nps.gov/grsm/historyculture/stories.htm). Based on the concerns of the people of Cades Cove about the formation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, have students write a speech that Grandpa might have delivered called "National Park or National Forest: The Best Option for Cades Cove."

Autumn says, "That ring of mountains around us didn't just keep the new out, it kept the old in." (p. 205) Ask students to pick one tradition, superstition, or custom of Cades Cove to further research and write about in a book for tourists who might be visiting Cades Cove for the first time. For example, students might consider the tradition of the Syrup Soppin' Festival, the custom of jumping the broom, or the graveyard superstitions.

Ask the class to find out about the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Stage a Fireside Chat that President Franklin D. Roosevelt might have delivered that explains the purpose of the CCC.

**Art**—Autumn and her dad are artists. Autumn likes looking at Pop's paintings of Cades Cove because they help her keep him nearby. Ask students to use books in the library or Web sites to study the scenery of Cades Cove and the Great Smoky Mountains. Then have them paint a picture that Pop might have painted.

**Drama**—The Appalachian culture is filled with stories. Have students reference the Web site: [www.ibiblio.org/bawdy/folklore/tales.html](http://www.ibiblio.org/bawdy/folklore/tales.html). Then prepare a tale for a storytelling festival that might occur in Cades Cove.



## vocabulary/ use of language

Autumn makes reference to an occasional spelling bee held at the school in Cades Cove. Have the class identify unfamiliar words in the novel, and then host a spelling bee using the words. Ask contestants to define the words after they spell them. Such words may include: *cunning* (p. 4), *rampageous* (p. 2), *suspension* (p. 14), *constitution* (p. 17), *antics* (p. 18), *archenemy* (p. 40), *repentance* (p. 46), *gargantuan* (p. 68), *placard* (p. 68), *premonition* (p. 83), *poultice* (p. 85), *ember* (p. 106), *condone* (p. 114), *coincidence* (p. 118), *staid* (p. 120), *stolid* (p. 120), *sully* (p. 144), *injunction* (p. 187) and *traipse* (p. 193).

## related titles

### by theme



### **Belle Prater's Boy**

**Ruth White**

Grades 5 up

Family • Secrets

Yearling PB: 978-0-440-41372-1



### **The Search for Belle Prater**

**Ruth White**

Grades 5 up

Family • Secrets

Yearling PB: 978-0-440-42164-1



### **Flush**

**Carl Hiaasen**

Grades 5 up

Family • Secrets

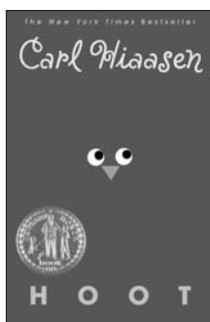
Conservation • Loyalty

Alfred A. Knopf

PB: 978-0-375-84185-9

HC: 978-0-375-82182-0

GLB: 978-0-375-92182-7



### **Hoot**

**Carl Hiaasen**

Grades 5 up

Friendship • Secrets

Conservation • Bullies

Yearling PB: 978-0-440-42170-2

Alfred A. Knopf

PB: 978-0-375-82916-1

HC: 978-0-375-82181-3

GLB: 978-0-375-92181-0



## about the author

**Kristin O'Donnell Tubb** grew up in East Tennessee, near Cades Cove. The idea for Autumn's story came to her while on a tour of the Great Smoky Mountains. She lives in middle Tennessee with her husband and two children.

For more information about the author, visit [www.kristintubb.com](http://www.kristintubb.com)

## internet resources

### **National Park Service**

[www.nps.gov/grsm/](http://www.nps.gov/grsm/)

This is the official Web site for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

### **Roosevelt's Tree Army**

[www.cccalumni.org/history1.html](http://www.cccalumni.org/history1.html)

This site provides a history of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

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