



Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Splinter

by Sasha Dawn
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

Sami's mother disappeared ten years ago, when Sami was six, and the police have always suspected that Sami's father killed her. Sami's sure her father's innocent. But when new evidence emerges linking him to another woman's mysterious death, Sami sets out to uncover the truth. Will she prove her father's innocence — or will she stumble onto secrets she'd rather not confront?

Author/Illustrator Information:

Sasha Dawn teaches writing at community colleges and offers pro bono writing workshops to local schools. She lives in her native northern Illinois, where she collects tap shoes, fabric swatches, and tales of survival, and she harbors a crush on Thomas Jefferson. Her debut novel, *Oblivion*, was an Illinois Reads selection and one of The New York Public Library's best books for teens.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Secondary years 7-10
- Ages 12+

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Fiction

Themes/Ideas:

- Alcoholism
- Depression/
Mental Illness
- Death
- Family
- Honesty/Trust
- Mystery

National Curriculum Focus:*

Year 7

ACELT1619
ACELT1620
ACELT1621
ACELT1803
ACELT1622
ACELT1625
ACELT1805
ACELY1804
ACELY1724

Year 8

ACELA1543
ACELT1626
ACELT1627
ACELT1628
ACELT1807
ACELT1632
ACELY1732

Year 9

ACELT1633
ACELT1771
ACELT1634
ACELT1636
ACELY1742
ACELY1743
ACELY1744

Year 10

ACELT1639
ACELT1640
ACELT1641
ACELT1812
ACELT1642
ACELT1774
ACELY1749
ACELY1750

*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Discussion Questions and Activities:

English

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer after reading the book – how close were your predictions to the actual novel?

Design your own cover for the book with new imagery and a new tagline that will persuade and interest people in reading the book.

What is the purpose of this novel (i.e. to entertain, to inform or to persuade)? How can you tell? Write a paragraph about the novel using only informative language that is unbiased. Write another paragraph using persuasive language to convince the reader to share your opinion of the novel.

What are the themes in this novel? Identify and list the themes as a class or in small groups. Individually write a statement of belief about each theme.

How does Sami's attitudes towards her mother and father change as the story progresses, and why do you think that happens?

What do you think the book's title means?

Trust is explored in *Splinter* through Sami's relationships with a number of characters. Sami doesn't trust her dad and believes he often lies to her; Sami thinks if Delilah is alive, she should have let her know she is ok, when Sami finds the jacket and drawings at Heather's house, she feels that Heather has kept secrets from her; etc. How does trust or lack of trust affect Sami's relationships?

Sami's dad deals with depression and alcoholism. How does it affect him? How does Sami try to help him? What are the signs of alcoholism and depression? How can you help a friend or relative dealing with either or both of these illnesses?

How does Mercy's influence in the house affect Sami and her father?

A number of Sami's dreams are described in the book. How do these dreams indicate how she is feeling at the time?

What message does *Splinter* give the reader about family ties, whether they are biological or not?

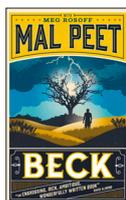
Sami maintains hope that her mother is alive since her disappearance. Why is hope so important to her? Discuss hope and how it might affect people faced with a difficult problem.

What are the characteristics of the mystery/whodunnit genre? How does *Splinter* comply with these characteristics? Discuss how Sasha Dawn's use of twists, red herrings and suspense add to the effectiveness of the narrative.

Splinter deals with issues of depression and alcoholism. Using the following list as a starting point, create a list of resources available to those affected by these issues.

- Beyond Blue www.beyondblue.org.au
- Black Dog Institute www.blackdoginstitute.org.au
- Lifeline www.lifeline.org.au
- Alcoholics Anonymous Australia www.aa.org.au
- Al-Anon Family Groups www.al-anon.org.au
- Drink Wise drinkwise.org.au

More great Young Adult Fiction:



Beck
by Mal Peet
HB 9781406331127



**Quarantine Book 1:
The Loners**
by Patrick Ness
PB 9781606844380



The Book of Pearl
by Timothée de
Fombelle
PB 9781406364620
Classroom ideas
available



**The Rest Of Us
Just Live Here**
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