Homeless Bird

By

Gloria Whelan

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed
Homeless Bird
By Gloria Whelan

Table of Contents

Suggestions and Expectations ........................................... 3
List of Skills ........................................................................ 4
Synopsis / Author Biography .............................................. 5
Student Checklist ............................................................... 6
Reproducible Student Booklet ............................................ 7
Answer Key ........................................................................ 63

About the author: Nat Reed has been a member of the teaching profession for more than 30 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, please visit the websites www.reedpublications.org and www.novelstudies.org.

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This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one chapter of *Homeless Bird* and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

**Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)**

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to:

a) determining the meaning of words and phrases . . . including figurative language;

b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;

c) compare and contrast two characters;

d) determine how characters . . . respond to challenges;

e) drawing inferences from the text;

f) determining a theme of a story . . . and many others.

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A portfolio cover is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A Student Checklist is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

**Themes** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include perseverance and determination, honor and loyalty, family and friendship, personal independence and growth and realizing a dream.

Additional icons courtesy of [http://www.iconka.com](http://www.iconka.com)
Homeless Bird
By Gloria Whelan

List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words / phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying / creating alliteration
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify personification.
7. Identify anagrams
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create similes
11. Identification of root words

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a time line of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify cliffhangers
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip
Homeless Bird
By Gloria Whelan

Synopsis

Koly's parents have arranged a marriage for their only daughter and now, like many girls her age in India, she will leave home forever. She yearns to flee, but tradition dictates that it's too late to turn back. On her wedding day, Koly's fate is sealed.

Caught up in a current of tradition that threatens to sweep her toward a terrifying fate, Koly finds herself cast out, lost in a strange and cruel world. But sometimes, courage and hope can be more powerful than tradition, and fate can be taken into one's hands. [The Publisher]

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found online at such sites as the following: http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeless_Bird

Author Biography

Gloria Whelan

Gloria was born 1923 in Detroit. She read many books as a girl, sometimes dictated stories that her baby sitter transcribed, and wrote poetry. She later edited the high school newspaper. Gloria earned a bachelor's degree in 1945 and a Master of Social Work in 1948 at the University of Michigan. In 1948 she and neurologist Joseph L. Whelan were married. They had two children and lived in the Detroit area where she was employed in social work. During that time she also wrote short stories and poetry. Whelan was almost fifty-five when Putnam's published A Clearing in the Forest in July 1978. In nearly thirty-five years since then, she has written fifty-two books of fiction for children and young adults. Many have been set in rural northern Michigan but her settings include Africa, China, Vietnam, India, Czarist and communist Russia.

Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gloria_Whelan
# Homeless Bird
*By Gloria Whelan*

## Student Checklist

Student Name:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade/Level</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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Homeless Bird

By Gloria Whelan

Name: ____________________
Homeless Bird
By Gloria Whelan
Chapter 1

Before you read the chapter:

The protagonist in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of Homeless Bird is Koly a young woman from India who is about to be married to someone she has never even met. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting protagonist?

Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dowry</th>
<th>muslin</th>
<th>auspicious</th>
<th>courteous</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>conscious</td>
<td>linger</td>
<td>dishonor</td>
<td>astrologer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Surely you will not __________ the bride and groom by wearing cut-off shorts to the wedding?

2. My aunt went to an __________ to find out when she should take her holidays.

3. The __________ provided by the woman's family was worth a lot of money.

4. We are hoping that the guests will not __________ for long after the game.

5. The Quarterback fumbled the ball on the first play, an __________ start to his career.

6. The gown was made from the finest __________ and was dyed a rich blue color.

7. He was barely __________ when we pulled him from the freezing river.

8. Jackson was such a __________ little boy that even Aunt Rachel was impressed.
What on earth does that mean?

Many of the words in this chapter may be particular to the country of India. Using a dictionary or the Internet, match each of the words in the left hand column with its correct meaning on the right.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ghee</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>sari</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>rupee</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>cumin</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>namaskar</td>
<td>E</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>kautuka</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>sass</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>charpoy</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>choli</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>baap</td>
<td>J</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A   | A light bedstead.     |
B   | A yellow woolen bridal thread |
C   | A deeply spiritual greeting. |
D   | Dress worn by a bride. |
E   | Father. |
F   | Butter. |
G   | A female's garment. |
H   | Mother-in-law. |
I   | An Indian currency. |
J   | A flowering plant (seeds used in cooking). |

Questions

1. What is the setting of the story at the beginning of Chapter One?

2. What reason did Koly's family offer her as to why she couldn't attend school?

3. What did Koly's mother and grandmother enjoy doing?
4. When Koly was married where would she have to make her home? How do you think
you would find such an arrangement?

5. What particular activity did Koly undertake at this time to relieve her worries?

6. What was your impression of the groom's family during the negotiation of the dowry?

7. Who determined the date of Koly's wedding?

8. What did it seem was Mr. Mehta's chief concern when they first met him?

9. What do you think Koly's father meant when he said of the Mehtas, nothing here is
auspicious?

10. What concerned Koly's parents about the bridegroom? Do you think they have a
legitimate concern? Explain your reasoning.
Language Activities

A. Anagrams

An anagram is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word WAS can also form the word SAW. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:

a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first chapter of *Homeless Bird*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Anagram</th>
<th>Clue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rapped</td>
<td></td>
<td>A well-dressed man is said to be ___.</td>
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<td>pages</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stares at with an open mouth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>rings</td>
<td></td>
<td>Smiles.</td>
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<td>tears</td>
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<td>Assesses.</td>
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<td>parents</td>
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<td>Catches in a snare.</td>
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<td>rushes</td>
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<td>A seat-director.</td>
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<td>deserve</td>
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<td>Lopped off.</td>
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Now find three additional words from the first chapter which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

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B. A Poem Koly Might Enjoy on Her Wedding Day

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of **four** lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain is actually the start of a much longer poem called *Your Hand* which is found on the [poetrysoup.com](http://poetrysoup.com) website.

*I come looking to take your hand<br>We can no longer stay apart<br>This day I have forever planned<br>You have captured all of my heart*

Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A – B – A – B**. Other rhyming schemes include: AABB, AAAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBB, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first chapter of our novel.

### The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem on a subject of your choice. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

**Title:** __________________________

<table>
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<th>Line 1</th>
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**Good to Know ~ Hindu Castes**

The **caste system in India** is a system of social standing which separates communities into groups called jātis or castes. There are four main groups in the caste system: **Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras**. Certain groups, now known as **Dalits**, were excluded from the system altogether, ostracized as **untouchables**.
C. **Exaggeration**

Exaggeration is a literary device defined as *a statement that represents something as better or worse than it really is*. We find an example of this in Chapter One: *I was afraid my ears would stretch to the size of an elephant’s.*

Think of an exaggerated way of describing the following:

| A dog’s breath |  |
| A thunderstorm. |  |
| A fast runner. |  |
| A turkey flying. |  |

D. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is: *Was my marriage to be like the buying of a sack of yams in the marketplace?* What is being compared in this example?

Invent your own similes comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) a parrot's call

b) the roar of the crowd at a football game

c) a beautiful sunset
**Extension Activity**

**Storyboard**

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

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Homeless Bird by Gloria Ann Whelan was published in 2000 and is set in contemporary India. It is the story of a young girl, Koly, who is living in a village in rural India. Her family arranges to 1 Educator Answer. Homeless Bird. What is the time period in which this story is set? There is no definite time period given for Homeless Bird and because the culture of India seems so backwards to us in the United States, it seems like it must have been set in the "long ago and far 1 Educator Answer. Homeless Bird. Homeless Bird - Gloria Whelan. Publisher. one.Â I watched as the spoken words were written down to become like caged birds, caught forever by my clever baap. When they learned Maa and Baap were looking for a husband for me, my two brothers began to tease me. My older brother, Gopal, said, Koly, when you have a husband, you will have to do as he tells you.