

ZigZagZine

Issue 10

CREATING, THINKING, IMAGINING

May/June 2009

Meeting President Carter

by Kira Wales

Three years ago, when I was 5, I went to Necker Island, a private island owned by Richard Branson in the British Virgin Islands. There, I met Former President Jimmy Carter. It was interesting, how I met him:

We arrived at the shore where our boat was going to come in to take us to Necker Island. My parents were very excited that they got invited to stay there with a former President, Jimmy Carter. I didn't really know what it meant, but I knew it was something special.

My mom and I were going separately from my dad, because we were staying in Illinois before then, but my dad thought we were coming on the boat. But then President Carter asked us if we would come on the helicopter that he was co-piloting. We definitely accepted!

When we arrived, my dad was very surprised to see us walking out of the helicopter, with me holding President Carter's hand. Then, I introduced them. I said: "Jimmy, this is Jimmy. Jimmy, this is Jimmy." (My dad has the same first name, Jimmy).

Having met President Carter

before, on December 5, 2008, I went to the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, to interview him for my gifted class presentation. I was a little nervous, but for the most part very excited. Here are a couple of the questions and their answers:

Q: I know that you are very concerned about the environment

and helping the earth, so do you have any ideas of how children like me can make a difference about the environment?

A: Well, you can do different very simple things around the house, like turn off the lights when not using them, or turn the thermostat down at night. Also, you can get your parents to drive energy-efficient cars and use compact florescent light bulbs.

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A former president, some books, a fish and two beetles

What do all these topics have in common? They're all featured in this issue of ZigZagZine!

Your work can be published in ZigZagZine, too! Kids and teens can send in articles, stories, poems, and artwork for our next issue. If you'd like to contribute to our July/August issue, you can flip to page 2 for details. In the meantime, you can check out our Web site at zigzagzine.com. (All clickable links in this issue are in blue type.)

— Jessica Chase, Editor

Q: If you could go back in time to your presidency, what would you do differently?

A: There was one time when I was sending helicopters to help release the hostages, and I had to have six working helicopters, so I sent eight just in case. But during the flight one had an oil leak and had to come down, so there were seven left. Later, one got caught in a sandstorm, leaving six, the amount I needed. But at the last minute, another went down, I'm not sure why, but that meant only five were left. Thankfully, the hostages were eventually released. But if I could go back, I would send just one more helicopter.

All in all, it was very fun interviewing President Carter, and it went really well. I know this was very special, because most 7³/₄ year-olds don't get to do that. It seems so long ago, now that I'm 8, even though December wasn't that long ago. Time flies! *zzz*



President Jimmy Carter with writer Kira Wales, and her parents Jimmy Wales and Christine Wales.

Did you know?

James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, Jr. was the 39th President of the United States, from 1977 to 1981. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002, for his work "to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development" through The Carter Center.

During his time in office, he helped negotiate a major peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. The hostages he referred to in the interview were the American diplomats captured and held by rebellious Islamist students in the American Embassy in Tehran, Iran from 1979 to 1981.

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CONTRIBUTE!

We accept stories, poems, articles, and artwork from kids and teens. The deadline for our July/August 2009 issue is June 15.

If you'd like to see your work in *ZigZagZine*, please send submissions to info@zigzagzine.com. Check out our Web site at zigzagzine.com for details!

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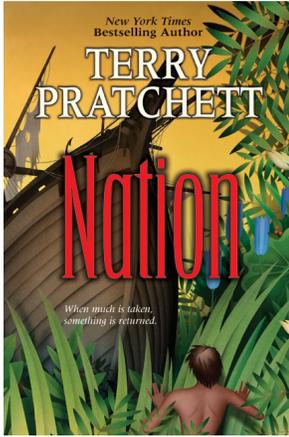
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A Look at Some Good Books

Reviews by Jessica Chase

Nation by Terry Pratchett



Imagine losing your family, your friends, your whole culture all at once through the crashing waves of a huge tsunami.

In *Nation*, that's what happens to

two young people, Mau and Daphne, although they come from completely different worlds. Over the course of the book, they bond, they mature, and they blend their worlds together with others to create a new nation that incorporates many different beliefs and cultures.

The story is set in an imagined nineteenth century, at the time Great Britain ruled the seas. Daphne, actually named Ermintrude, is the daughter of the "139th heir to the throne of England," raised in a strict household run by her tyrannical grandmother. On a ship bound to join her father, Daphne and the ship are thrown off course, and she is shipwrecked on an island, the only survivor.

Mau is a member of a native tribe on this island, known as "The Nation." Mau has left his people to go on a vision quest to become a man, a central part of his culture. A male member of this tribe who has not completed this ceremony is considered a shadow of a person, an empty shell, not quite a boy, not quite a man. During Mau's quest the tsunami strikes. When he returns to his home island, he finds everything washed away, his entire family, his people, destroyed.

When Mau and Daphne encounter each other on the island, they begin a friendship that will help them through the many challenges they face. The book is really about maturing, becoming an adult, for both Daphne and Mau.

From the first, she calls herself Daphne rather than her much-disliked birth name, Ermintrude. When she takes that name, she's not just changing her name to one she likes better, she's changing to a different kind of person, from being an anxious, properly raised English girl who's afraid of getting her hands dirty to a quick-witted, smart young woman who does what is necessary to survive, and help the people she cares about.

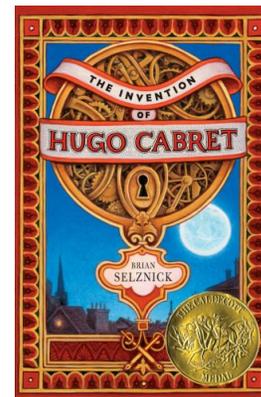
The book is really about maturing, becoming an adult, for both Daphne and Mau.

For Mau's part, he is learning that becoming a man isn't all based on being a great warrior but more on being responsible, being able to take desperate measures when they are needed, being a leader. He slowly comes to reject the unforgiving gods of his culture, refusing to accept that you can't change fate. This isn't easy to do considering that the gods are characters in the book, whose voices are heard by Mau.

One of the themes of the book is "When much is taken, something is returned." But that something that is returned has to be worked for. If after this disaster they had not taken action, hadn't tried to change things, but had just prayed to the gods and hoped for change, they would have had a different life. Mau and Daphne did work for that change and in the end it creates a better world for both of them.

This book is very complex and dense. It's filled with many implications and philosophical questions interwoven with witty dialogue and an interesting plot. But these kinds of characters deserve and even need the complexity. For us as readers it's worth it to devote our attention to their developing world.

The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick



Orphan, thief, and clock-keeper, Hugo Cabret lives a secret life in a train station in Paris. Always on the run from the stationmaster, he steals food from the shops in the station to survive.

When Hugo gets mixed up with a grumpy, bitter old man who runs a toy shop in the station, as well as a curious book-loving girl his own age, his most precious secret is put in danger. It's a machine that is his only remnant of his father, one that he believes will reveal a message from his father if he can fix it.

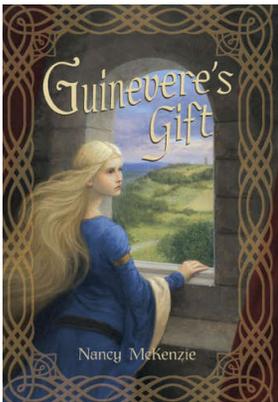
This wonderful book is illustrated with many, many black-and-white drawings, also by the author, the main reason it's so long (525 pages). The plot is unique, unlike that in any other book I've read. At first it seemed as if it would have common themes—an orphan trying to find his identity, a thieving child living out in the streets—but instead, the story is fresh and original, with twists and turns that make it a real page-turner.

Book Reviews continued next page

The Goldfish Who Had a Big Brain

Guinevere's Gift by Nancy McKenzie

by Amy Fawkes



This fascinating novel tells the story of the young Guinevere, in the years before she becomes King Arthur's Queen.

Thirteen-year-old Guinevere

(nicknamed Gwen) is the orphaned ward of her Aunt Elyse, queen of Gwynedd. Gwen's cousin, Princess Elaine, is the center of her mother's—and everyone else at court's—attentions, as the heir to the throne.

But Gwen, not Elaine, is the recipient of a prophecy made at her birth, a prophecy that foretold she would one day be highest lady in the land, wed to a great king. Even so, as the book begins, the prophecy couldn't seem more unlikely. While Elaine is ready to court and find a handsome noble to marry, Guinevere is a tomboy who would rather ride a horse than marry. Gwen dismisses the prophecy, and thinks that it won't affect her if she refuses to believe it.

But when a meeting with a strange boy and a surprise visit from a suspicious young lord start a series of events that threaten the kingdom of Gwynedd, she is forced to accept the possible truth in the prophecy, to save her family, her kingdom, and herself.

This book kept me up all night with its intriguing plot. When every character has layers peeled away as the story continues, and every new discovery is a surprise, *Guinevere's Gift* is hard to put down. *Guinevere's Gift* is the first in the *Chrysalis Queen Quartet*, so if you like this one, keep an eye out for the other three books coming soon by Nancy McKenzie.

— Jessica Chase

I was prepared and ready to go to bed when I glanced at the goldfish tank. In the murky water where the dirt at the bottom was kicked up, I saw a goldfish. The most unique one, I'd say. I admired him. I know he was just a goldfish—small, tiny, and forgetful—but he really meant something to me. No matter what, he kept trying. He pushed his head up toward the bright fluorescent light on the roof of the tank and wriggled his tail, propelling himself up.

I looked at the fish with hope. "Come on, Brainy, you can do it!" I said suddenly. He seemed to push even harder. I watched in awe as he wriggled his way through the constricting waters surrounding him. He was almost at the surface. I kept cheering him on, even though he probably couldn't hear me through the thick glass.

His mouth stretched out for a food pellet at the top. Thunk! His soft, squishy, over-sized brain hit the glass and he drifted backwards, his attempt to get food failed. He tried again. Same thing happened, again and again.

Just as he was going to go for it once more, one of the more "normal" fish, Arrowhead, jumped in front of him and swallowed the pellet. It swam off without a care. He floated backwards once again from the collision. Bulgy and Blackeye stared at him with their big, bulging eyes as they floated toward the other food pellets. I wasn't sure, but I thought that Brainy was crying. I couldn't see his eyes for they were shaded by the huge brain that shielded the top and sides of his head.

I could only feel sorry for the poor thing. I couldn't do anything to help, just watch.

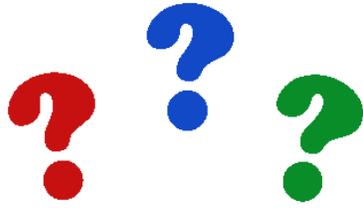
This is a story about a goldfish named Brainy. His name was given because of, well, his big brain. It was humongous. It was probably half the size of his body—and he was the biggest fish, so I'd say his brain would be the size of Cheeky—all piled up on

his head. I've seen him before, doing his best to survive. Sometimes I see him at the bottom of the tank, swimming downward into the tank floor, trying to push his brain up so that he could still eat and breathe, for his sight has been covered by his overgrown brain.

Most of my fish have defects. We have seven fish total. There's Brainy, my favorite who has a big brain. There's Tiny, who really isn't that small, but he has a big brain as well, but not as big at Brainy's. There's Bulgy, the one who has eyes that bulge out. There's Blackeye, the one who has bulging eyes that are black and a tail that is white. There's Cheeky; he's like Brainy in a sense. He has a big brain as well, but instead of piling on top, it goes all around his face and makes his cheeks big as well as his whole face. There's Chubby, he's like Cheeky except smaller and his cheeks are also smaller. Then there's Arrowhead, the only normal one. He has a pointy head and his whole underside is white.

I have to say this: I absolutely love Brainy. He's so courageous, he doesn't give up, and he does his best to survive even though there's certain death awaiting him in the near future. I love him for that. I love him because I know I could never possibly be as brave or hard-working. He reminds me of a past goldfish we had before, Blacky, a completely black goldfish had two bulging eyes. Somehow, one of his eyes was taken off and thus he had only one eye left that was bulging out of his skull. The other eye seems to disappear, but we always saw that scar left. He also was like Brainy; he never gave up even when death awaited him.

I know, I know, they're just fish. Well, to you maybe, but not to me. I believe these fish are like real people. I believe they think, talk, feel, cry, and rejoice. I believe that, and because of it, I believe that that's how Brainy gave me hope. Brainy, the goldfish who had a big brain. 



Riddles

by Calvin Price

A woman shoots her husband. Then she holds him under water for over five minutes. Finally, she hangs him. But a little while later, they go out together and enjoy a wonderful dinner. How can this be?

The woman was a photographer. She shot a picture of her husband, developed it, and hung it up to dry!

A murderer is condemned to death. He has to choose between three rooms: The first is full of raging fires. The second is full of assassins with guns. The third is full of lions that haven't eaten in three years. Which room is safest for him?

The third room. Lions that haven't eaten in three years are dead!

What is black when you buy it, red when you use it, and gray when you throw it away?

Charcoal, as it is used in barbecuing.

Name three consecutive days without using the words Wednesday, Friday, or Sunday.

Yesterday, today, and tomorrow!

This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious as to just how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it. It looks so ordinary and plain that you would think nothing was wrong with it. In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is highly unusual though. You might study it and think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out. Try to do so without any coaching!

The letter E, which is the most common letter used in the English language, does not appear even once in the paragraph!

Poetry

Why You Should Homeschool

By Kira Wales

Frankie, Frankie, Frankie
Had his hankie, hankie,
Had a very sad new day,
For he had no one with which to play,
At home he sat and lay, lay, lay,
He was new to modern, busy, New York City,
Made him feel such hard, hard, pity,
No friends he had or made,
No, not even at school,
Everyone called him a downright fool,
But it was just fun he wanted to find,
One day something came to his mind,
"What if I homeschooled?"
Frankie thought to himself,
His mother replied,
"If you homeschooled, you would've cheated,"
He pleaded and pleaded,
Yes, finally his mother was defeated,
To this day he still homeschools and homeschools,
As every day goes by, more and more he says...
HOMESCHOOLING RULES!

Young Toad

by Mara Hughes



A miniscule croak
A little bumpy toadlet
Calls to the others

Ponytail

by Jared Coleman

Up in a ponytail
Down goes the hair.

Unusual Pets: Ironclad Beetles

by Mara Hughes

I now have more than ten pets. Two of my pets are Ironclad beetles, the animals I'm featuring in this column!

Let's say you're on a bike ride with your whole family. You've been riding your bike pretty fast, when all of a sudden in front of you, you see something small and black skittering across the dusty bike path. You brake your two-wheeler to avoid running it over, and then you look down and see it's a Desert Ironclad beetle!

Facts about Ironclad beetles

- There are two types of Ironclad beetles that are more commonly kept as pets: the Dune Ironclad Beetle, or *Cryptoglossa laevis*, and the Desert Ironclad Beetle, or *Cryptoglossa verrucosa*.

- These types of Ironclad beetles are found mostly in California, Nevada, and Arizona.

- Ironclad beetles are low-maintenance pets; they don't require much space, and you can feed them organic apples and carrots, which will serve as food and moisture sources. You don't even need to change the reptile sand in their kritter keeper (unless it gets moldy, which is unlikely)!

- Ironclad beetles are easy and fun to handle; they don't bite and they aren't so fast that it's hard to hold onto them.

- Some Ironclad beetles have lived for 9 years or more!

Get the scoop on my creatures

Last year I purchased two Ironclad beetles at an annual insect festival, one Dune Ironclad and one Desert Ironclad. My Dune Ironclad beetle is named Lee and my Desert Ironclad is named Linnaeus (pronounced Lin-nay-is). Lee and Linnaeus live in a 2.5-gallon kritter keeper with about an inch of sand in it. I change their carrot as it gets dried up from the heat, and in July of this year I'll have had these great pet beetles for a whole year!



Lee and Linnaeus in their kritter keeper



Lee on the left, Linnaeus at right

Photos by Mara Hughes

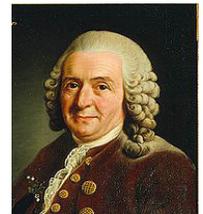


Even younger kids can make good Ironclad beetle owners if they're gentle with animals.

Did you know?

- **Carolus Linnaeus** was a Swedish botanist, physician and zoologist who created a system of naming plants and animals using the Latin names for genus and species. For example:

- *Homo sapiens* (human)
- *Cryptoglossa laevis* (Dune Ironclad beetle)



- **Charles Darwin** was a fanatic about beetles when he was young, spending many hours making a large collection of them.