Novel•Ties

No Promises in the Wind

Irene Hunt

A Study Guide

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of instructional material to use in conjunction with the novel No Promises in the Wind. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

NOVEL-TIES are either for whole class instruction using a single title or for group instruction where each group uses a different novel appropriate to its reading level. Depending upon the amount of time allotted to it in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in two to four weeks.

The first step in using NOVEL-TIES is to distribute to each student a copy of the novel and a folder containing all of the duplicated worksheets. Begin instruction by selecting several pre-reading activities in order to set the stage for the reading ahead. Vocabulary exercises for each chapter always precede the reading so that new words will be reinforced in the context of the book. Use the questions on the chapter worksheets for class discussion or as written exercises.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.
SYNOPSIS

No Promises in the Wind tells the story of fifteen-year-old Josh Grondowski’s struggle to survive along with his younger brother Joey during the bleak, despairing days of the Great Depression in the United States. It is October 1932, and the nationwide Depression has shattered the Grondowski family who live on the west side of Chicago. Dad lost his factory job eight months before, sister Kitty lost her clerking job, and Mother, no longer able to find students willing to pay for piano lessons, was forced to work in a laundry. Josh awakens early each morning to deliver newspapers before school to supplement his family’s meager income. Bitter over his inability to support his family, Dad lashes out at Josh who retaliates by arguing constantly with his father. Josh’s only solace is playing the piano to accompany his best friend Howie who plays the banjo.

Mrs. Grondowski, torn between loyalty to her husband and love for Josh, reluctantly concedes that Josh might be better off striking out on his own. Accompanied by his younger brother Joey and his friend Howie, Josh plans to leave Chicago on a freight train and head west to Nebraska. Tragically, Howie is killed while they are climbing onto a train. Although devastated by the loss of their friend, Josh and Joey are determined to continue. As they travel, they are helped by various strangers, attacked by a gang of toughs, forced to beg, and compelled to search through garbage cans for food. In spite of small kindnesses, they are usually starving, exhausted, and cold.

Josh and Joey are picked up on the road by Lonnie Bromer, a kindly truck driver. Lonnie is particularly sensitive to the boys’ plight because he sees in Josh his own dead son. He drives the boys to Baton Rouge, Louisiana where they meet Pete Harris, who reluctantly hires Josh to play the piano at his carnival. Because the carnival feeds, clothes, and shelters the boys, they are able to save some money from Josh’s five-dollar-a-week salary. Josh falls in love with thirty-year-old Emily, the circus clown and mother of three young boys, but is upset to learn that she is going to marry Pete. A ruinous fire at the carnival convinces Josh that it is time to head north again and find Lonnie.

Hitchhiking north, the boys are picked up on the road by Charley, a young hoodlum, in a luxury car outfitted to carry bootleg liquor. In an effort to show off, Josh uses all his money to change a twenty-dollar bill for Charley. When he later presents the bill to a shopkeeper to pay for overshoes for Joey, the bill is confiscated as counterfeit. Now almost penniless, the boys continue northward to Nebraska, where their physical condition deteriorates and Josh develops pneumonia. After fighting over half a loaf of bread, Joey abandons Josh.
Josh, weak and remorseful, searches for Joey, but collapses from illness and exhaustion on the road. A couple find him and contact Lonnie, who, with the help of his niece Janey, nurses Josh back to health. While Josh is recuperating, Lonnie searches for Joey.

Although Joey has relented for leaving his brother, he is now unable to find Josh and so joins a group of “wild boys.” After a wall collapse in the dilapidated barn where the boys have been staying, a radio broadcast describes the boys’ rescue. Lonnie, Janey, and Josh hear the broadcast and realize that one of the boys is Joey. Lonnie brings Joey to his home and helps him regain his health.

Josh, meanwhile, has fallen in love with Janey. He encounters another stroke of good fortune when the couple who had rescued Joey get him a job playing the piano in a restaurant, allowing him to pay back some of his debt to Lonnie. Finally Josh and Joey decide to return to their family in Chicago. They are met at the train station by their grateful family, and Josh, with a new level of understanding and compassion, is reunited with the parents he had vowed never to see again.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**The Great Depression**

The Great Depression refers to the severe worldwide economic crisis, which was precipitated by the Wall Street stock market crash in October 1929. At that time millions of dollars of stock were subject to panic selling in a matter of hours. This forced the closure of many banks whose reserves were involved in stock speculation. Suddenly, the investments of millions of people were lost. In the United States businesses closed, people lost their homes, and by 1933, sixteen million people, or one-third of the labor force, were unemployed. Complete recovery from the Depression came only with the heavy defense spending for World War II in the 1940s.

**Prohibition**

The period of Prohibition in United States history was 1920–33 when the 18th Amendment to the Constitution was in force. The passage of this amendment prohibited the manufacture, transportation, and sale of intoxicating liquors. It represented the culmination of a long campaign by proponents of temperance. This led to bootlegging, or the illegal distribution of liquor, and increased organized crime activity. Public opinion insisted on its repeal by the passage of the 21st Amendment in 1933.
PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author’s name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. What do you think the book will be about? When do you think it takes place? Do you think it will be serious or humorous? Have you read any other books by Irene Hunt?

2. This novel tells of an era in United States history referred to as “The Great Depression.” Information concerning this period will enable you to have a better understanding of Josh’s family situation and conditions in the country. Read the Background Information on page two of this study guide and do some additional research on the Great Depression. Find out the years of the Depression, what caused the Depression, and what effect it had on people throughout the country.

3. Compare the economic conditions of the Great Depression to the economic conditions today. How are they the same? How are they different? Do some research to find out what measures the federal government provides to protect the population from total economic devastation.

4. Have you ever considered running away from home? What might cause you to take such drastic action? How would you survive on your own? How do you think your family and friends would view your departure? Can you think of any circumstances in which a child might be encouraged to leave home?

5. Read the Background Information on page two of this study guide and do some additional research to learn about Prohibition. Find out the years it was in effect, the motivation for its passage into law, and the reasons for its dismal failure and ultimate repeal.

6. The most dramatic way to appreciate the Depression is to see the human suffering it caused. Locate photographs and documentary films that depict the era. Share these images with your class.

7. **Cooperative Learning Activity:** Work with a small group of your classmates to discuss the effect of poverty and hopelessness on a family unit. What might happen to a loving family if the breadwinners lose their jobs? How might the situation have been worse during the Depression, a time when there was no government financial aid or social agencies to help desperate people?

8. Obtain a road map of the United States. Locate Chicago, Illinois. As you read, trace the boys’ journey from their home as they set out on their own.

9. Become familiar with the slang and words of the depression era that you will find in the Glossary on page four of this study guide. Refer back to these words and their definitions as you encounter them in your reading of the book.
# GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bank foreclosure</td>
<td>repossession of property by the bank when people don’t pay the mortgage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ballyhoo <em>(informal)</em></td>
<td>noisy attempt to attract customers to a show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayou country</td>
<td>area of southern United States; Louisiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bread lines</td>
<td>lines of people waiting for free food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulls <em>(slang)</em></td>
<td>railroad detectives whose job it was to remove hobos from trains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cajun</td>
<td>native of Louisiana descended from French-Canadian exiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dixieland</td>
<td>kind of jazz with a strong two-beat rhythm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feds <em>(slang)</em></td>
<td>government agents who enforced Prohibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hooch <em>(slang)</em></td>
<td>liquor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>installment buying</td>
<td>buying items and paying for them in equal segments over an extended period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Loop</td>
<td>business section of Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>panhandling</td>
<td>begging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army Kitchen or soup kitchen</td>
<td>place where soup and other food is supplied free to the needy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relief</td>
<td>aid or assistance to those in need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speakeasy</td>
<td>place for the illegal sale of alcoholic beverages during Prohibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windy City</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTERS 1, 2

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

1. rancor  a. leftovers
2. docile  b. untidy
3. disheveled  c. owner
4. paltry  d. deep-seated ill will
5. arpeggio  e. petty; worthless
6. remnants  f. notes of a chord played in succession
7. absurdity  g. foolishness
8. proprietor  h. obedient; weak

........................................................................................................................................

1. After an entire day of cleaning the house, everyone looked ____________________.

2. An excellent pianist, she was able to play the ____________________ with ease.

3. After being fired from his job, he spoke with ____________________ about his boss.

4. Because there were only a few ____________________ left from the bolt of fabric, there was not enough to make another outfit.

5. The ____________________ amount of food they were able to afford would hardly feed their family of five.

6. If you are looking for a pet for a young child, you should look for one with a(n) ____________________ disposition.

7. The ____________________ of the store was trying to hire someone to make deliveries.

8. The ____________________ of the situation made us all laugh.

Questions:
1. What evidence revealed the Grondowski family’s poverty?
2. What evidence showed that poverty was widespread in America?
3. What was Josh’s special talent?
Chapters 1, 2 (cont.)

4. What caused Josh’s father to become deeply unhappy?
5. Why did Josh feel secure at Penn High School?
6. What compassionate act did Joey perform that was unusual during these hard times?
7. How did Josh feel about his father?
8. How did Mother respond to Josh’s question about leaving home? Why do you think she reacted this way?
9. What were the boys’ plans when they first left home? Do you think these plans were realistic?
10. How did the hobo make Josh feel uneasy? What happened to confirm Josh’s feeling of uneasiness?

Questions for Discussion:
1. Do you think Josh’s feelings toward his father were justified?
2. How do you think your family would react if you told them you were leaving?
3. Do you think Howie’s tragedy could have been averted? Might people or the times themselves be blamed?
4. What do you think the boys will do next?

Literary Device: Point of View

Point of view in literature refers to the voice telling the story. It could be a character in the story or the author narrating the story. From whose point of view is this story told?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of this point of view?

Writing Activity:

Josh and his father were antagonistic towards each other. Josh felt his anger and hostility were justified. Write a journal entry that Josh might have written after one of his arguments with his father.
Chapters 1, 2 (cont.)

Literary Element: Characterization

You will meet many unusual characters as you read this book. Use this chart to make notes about each one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Physical Characteristics</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Other Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Josh Grondowski</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joey Grondowski</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitty Grondowski</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lonnie Bromer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janey Bromer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pete Harris</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charley</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### VOCABULARY

Synonyms are words with similar meanings. Draw a line from each word in column A to its synonym in column B. Then use the words in column A to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>extravagant</td>
<td>a. misery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ravenous</td>
<td>b. shame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vivid</td>
<td>c. indifferent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenant</td>
<td>d. starved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humiliation</td>
<td>e. excessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numb</td>
<td>f. renter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grief</td>
<td>g. bright</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. After living through the tragedies of war, the soldier became _________________ to everyday problems at home.
2. We were tired and _________________ after hiking for two days without food or rest.
3. The _________________ colors of my painting faded when it was exposed to direct sunlight.
4. It was difficult for the little girl to endure the _________________ of being scolded in public.
5. As a new _________________ in an old building, I expect to join a group to get the owners to make some needed repairs.
6. Because of his _________________ taste in clothing, the young man never had any money to add to his savings account.
7. The photographs clearly showed the _________________ of the family as they stood weeping at the funeral.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Why were Joey and Josh anxious to get off the train? Why did they refuse to eat with the men who offered food?
2. What decision did the boys make after Howie died? Why did they reach this conclusion?
3. How were the boys able to obtain food and shelter?
4. How have Josh’s thoughts and dreams changed?
Chapters 3, 4 (cont.)

5. What drove Josh to look through garbage cans for food?

6. How did Joey help to find food? Why was the role better for him than for Josh?

7. How did the elderly woman in Nebraska help the boys?

8. Why was Josh reluctant at first to share his reason for running from home with Lonnie? Why do you think he changed his mind and told Lonnie his story?

9. What mistake did Lonnie reveal to Josh?

Questions for Discussion:
1. Do you think Josh could ever forgive his dad?

2. Why do you think Lonnie helped Josh and Joey?

Literary Elements:

I. Plot—Plot refers to the sequence of events in a work of fiction.

Number these events from Chapters 1 – 4 in the order that they occurred in the story.

_____ Howie’s body was lifted by the express train and thrown down the tracks.

_____ Joey wrote a letter home.

_____ Josh’s father became angry with him for asking for more potatoes.

_____ Joey and Josh begged for food during hard times.

_____ The farmer’s wife gave the boys a bag of potatoes.

_____ The boys met Lonnie.

_____ Josh, Joey, and Howie left Chicago full of hope.

_____ The boys enjoyed their first bath since leaving Chicago.

_____ Howie and Joey earned seventy-eight cents playing and singing on the streets.

_____ Joey and Josh cooked a rooster in a ramshackle farmhouse.
Chapters 3, 4 (cont.)

II. Characterization—Compare and contrast the characters of Lonnie and Mr. Grondowski in the Venn diagram below. Record their similar personality traits in the overlapping part of the circles.

Writing Activities:
1. Josh and Joey showed qualities that help people face problems. Choose one of the boys and write about the qualities that made him a responsible person.
2. The elderly lady in Nebraska convinced Joey to write a letter to his mother. Pretend you are Joey and write that letter.
CHAPTER 5

Vocabulary: Use the words in the Word Box and the clues below to complete the crossword puzzle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD BOX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>antics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>optimism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bayou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ingenuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonchalant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skeptical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Across
2. funny acts
3. belief that good prevails
5. varied
6. cleverness
8. coolly unconcerned

Down
1. marshy land
4. doubtful
7. give or concede

Questions:
1. Why did Josh have a sense of relief now that he was with Lonnie?
2. Why did Josh keep track of the cost of the meals while traveling with Lonnie?
3. What evidence showed that Josh had not changed his feelings toward his father?
4. Why was Pete Harris hesitant to hire Josh? Why do you think he finally decided to hire him?
5. Describe the men who would be the boys’ neighbors.
6. What did Lonnie do that showed he would always care about the boys?
7. Why did Blegan have a negative attitude towards the boys?
8. What was Emily’s job and why did it come as a surprise to the boys?
Chapter 5 (cont.)

9. What warning did Emily give Josh?

10. How did Josh feel about the way he expected to act on the first night of the job? Why did he feel this way?

Questions for Discussion:

1. What particular dangers might Josh and Joey face if they stayed on at the circus?

2. In what ways do the lives of people in a carnival or circus differ from the lives of people who have ordinary careers?

Literary Device: Simile

A simile is a comparison of two unlike objects, using the words “like” or “as.” For example, Josh says:

I felt as heavy as lead inside.

What is being compared?

What does this reveal about Josh’s feelings?

Find at least one other simile in this chapter. Tell what is being compared and whether the comparison is appropriate.

Writing Activity:

Write about a time when you were asked to act in a way that ran counter to your nature. Describe what you were asked to do, why you didn’t want to do it, and how the situation resolved itself.
CHAPTER 6

Vocabulary: Antonyms are words with opposite meanings. Draw a line from each word in column A to its antonym in column B. Then use the words in column A to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. tedious</td>
<td>a. divested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. agony</td>
<td>b. acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. vain</td>
<td>c. unappreciative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. rebuff</td>
<td>d. genuine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. acquired</td>
<td>e. pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. imitation</td>
<td>f. exciting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. grateful</td>
<td>g. humble</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. You mistakenly judged my frown as a(n) ________________, when I really just wanted to warn you of danger.

2. The lottery winner ________________ a new home and automobile.

3. The field worker sang to make the ________________ job of picking strawberries go faster.

4. The injured athlete was ________________ to her teammates who got her immediate care.

5. The ________________ of losing their house and land was more than the family could bear.

6. The film actor was too ________________ to face reporters until he was perfectly dressed.

7. Even a good ________________ pearl necklace is worth very little in comparison to the real article.

Questions:
1. What was the carnival’s most popular act? Why were children fascinated by this act?
2. Why did the boys send money to Lonnie?
3. What did Joey and Josh send home for Christmas? Why do you think they did this?
Chapter 6 (cont.)

4. How did Emily explain Josh’s “blues”? Why did Josh disagree with Emily?
5. Why did Josh get upset with Emily at the Christmas Eve party?
6. How did Emily feel about Pete? Why did she feel that way?
7. How did Josh feel about Emily and Pete’s relationship? Why?
8. How did the fire change Josh’s feelings toward Emily? Do you think he is being more realistic now?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you think a relationship can survive when there is a large age difference between two people?
2. Why did the author title this book *No Promises in the Wind*? Do you think it is an appropriate title?

Literary Element: Characterization

We find out about people in a work of fiction from what other people say about them, as well as from what they say and do. Emily says of Josh, “I think of you as a sensitive, talented boy—a bit on the stubborn side, but never a fool.” Do you agree with her assessment? Support your opinion with evidence from the story.

______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

Writing Activity:

When Josh went off to be alone, he thought about how much he hated the wind. Write about your own reactions to weather. Tell about a time when weather affected your mood and actions.
CHAPTER 7

Vocabulary: Use the context to determine the meaning of the underlined word in each of the following sentences.

1. We felt **complacent** about the value of our land until we learned that the state was planning to build a road through our acreage.
   a. disheveled     b. self-satisfied     c. angry     d. tired

2. After years of neglect, the cabin in the woods had become a **dingy** place.
   a. bright     b. narrow     c. dreary     d. luxurious

3. Only a worker with incredible **gall** would challenge the president of the company.
   a. nerve     b. height     c. weight     d. weakness

4. Without any light or flow of air, the cellar bedroom seemed like a frightful **abyss**.
   a. sleepiness     b. town     c. colorful space     d. bottomless pit

5. Everyone was astonished when the shabbily dressed man paid fifty dollars for his meal with a **flourish**, and then left the restaurant without any other gestures in the waiter’s direction.
   a. smile     b. wave in the air     c. smirk     d. stamp of his foot

6. Once the police posted notices of crime suspects, she became **notorious** throughout the state.
   a. fancy     b. well regarded     c. unfavorably known     d. ugly known

Questions:

1. Why did Pete have to let Josh go?
2. Josh left the carnival with “mixed emotions.” How did he feel about leaving Emily, Pete, Edward C., and New Orleans?
3. Who was Charley and what was his “special job”?
4. What did Josh mean when he said, “We were still able to feel superior to the shallowness of a well-dressed minor hoodlum”? Why did he feel this way?
5. Why did Josh change Charley’s twenty-dollar bill?
6. How was the shoe salesman able to get the boys to leave without their twenty dollars?
7. In spite of their loss at the shoe shop, the boys weren’t as poor as they often had been. What did they have to help them get by?
Chapter 7 (cont.)

8. Why did Josh feel unhappy about just showing up at Lonnie’s door and expecting him to care for them?

9. What did Josh mean when he said he was “pulling his belt a little tighter”?

10. How did Joey spend the last of his money?

Question for Discussion:

The shopkeeper accused Josh of having a counterfeit bill. Do you think that the bill was counterfeit?

Language Activity: Multiple Meanings

Some words in our language have multiple meanings. They must be considered in context in order to determine their meanings.

What are some of the meanings of the word “bar”?

______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

What does “bar” mean in the following sentence:

The latch was broken, and there had been no attempt to bar entrance.

______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

Writing Activity:

Write about a time when you or someone you know was tricked. Describe the situation and its outcome. Also, tell how the situation might have been avoided.
CHAPTER 8

Vocabulary: Replace each underlined word in the sentences below with a word from the Word Box. Write the word you choose on the line below the sentence.

WORD BOX
- commenced
- defiance
- envelop
- lurched
- compassion
- dominate
- foremost
- preoccupied

1. After the introductions were completed, the meeting began.  
__________________________________

2. After the plane crashed in the mountains, surviving was first in everyone's mind.  
__________________________________

3. During the earthquake, our bodies lunged forward, knocking us to the floor.  
__________________________________

4. A strong personality will usually control a weaker one.  
__________________________________

5. I was so engrossed with reading my program, I did not realize the play had begun.  
__________________________________

6. Everyone who saw photographs of war orphans felt sympathy and a desire to help.  
__________________________________

7. We couldn't see the road as fog began to cover the area.  
__________________________________

Questions:
1. What windfall resulted from Joey's attempt to sing and accompany himself on the banjo?
2. What caused the hysterical woman to change her mind about feeding Josh and Joey?
3. What act of kindness did Joey perform that upset Josh?
4. How did Joey and Josh become separated?
5. Why do you think the expression “lowest common denominator” kept whirling through Josh's brain? When did this phrase appear before?
6. What events led to Josh's arrival at Lonnie's home?
Chapter 8 (cont.)

7. As Josh regained consciousness, what did he worry about?
8. What historical event did Janey and Josh listen to on the radio?
9. As Josh watched Janey at the stove, why did he ask her if she ever wore earrings?

Question for Discussion:
Do you think Joey would have acted differently if he had known that Josh was very sick?

Literary Device: Foreshadowing
Foreshadowing refers to clues an author gives to forthcoming events in a novel. What foreshadowed Josh’s illness?

Social Studies Connection:
In the 1932 presidential election, President Hoover was not re-elected as president. Do some research to find out about this election during the Depression. Learn why Herbert Hoover was not reelected and why the electorate chose Franklin Delano Roosevelt instead. Then go to www.americanrhetoric.com/speechbank.htm to find FDR’s famous first inaugural address in which he tells Americans that “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

Writing Activity:
Pretend that you are Josh, Janey, or Lonnie. Write a journal entry describing your feelings at this time.
CHAPTER 9

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

1. convalescence  a. likely to be stricken or affected
2. speculate   b. reflect; guess
3. incredulously   c. ability; talent
4. remorse   d. fall back; return to a former state or condition
5. aptitude   e. time of healing
6. susceptible   f. disbelievingly; skeptically
7. malnutrition  g. result of not getting a balanced or sufficient diet
8. relapse  h. painful feeling of guilt; sorrow

1. After three years of drought, many who lived in farming communities suffered from ________________.
2. The smile on the convicted murderer’s face showed that he had no ________________.
3. There might be a long period of ________________ after a bout with the flu.
4. Going without sleep and sufficient food may make you ________________ to illness.
5. Before the first lunar landing, people could only ________________ about the surface of the moon.
6. If you return to work before you have completely recovered, you run the risk of a(n) ________________.
7. Aware of my lack of athletic ________________, I was surprised to be invited to join the track team.
8. She stared ________________ at the tightrope walker who seemed fearless as she moved across the highwire.

Questions:
1. Why did Josh have a troubled convalescence?
2. Where did Lonnie search for Joey?
3. How did the presence of an unopened letter to Lonnie from Mom affect Josh?
Chapter 9 (cont.)

4. In what ways did Mom encourage Josh to come home?
5. How did Lonnie feel about Janey and Josh spending time together?
6. Why did Lonnie rush from the house at night after hearing a radio broadcast?
7. Why didn’t Josh hug Joey upon his return?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you think Janey began wearing dresses when she came to visit Josh?
2. Do you agree with Josh that it would have been inappropriate to hug his brother? Would it be inappropriate today?

Writing Activity:
Pretend you are Josh. Write a letter to your mother answering her letter and telling her about Joey’s rescue.
**CHAPTERS 10, 11**

**Vocabulary:** Analogies are equations in which the first pair of words has the same relationship as the second pair of words. For example: RAPID is to SLOW as ATTRACTIVE is to HOMELY. Both sets of words are opposites. Choose a word from the Word Box to complete each of the analogies below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD BOX</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aghast decrepit repertoire</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>alcove improvised turmoil</td>
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1. TRAVEL is to JOURNEY as RAMSHACKLE is to ________________.

2. AMUSED is to COMIC as ________________ is to HORROR.

3. HALL is to CORRIDOR as NOOK is to ________________.

4. OBJECT is to COLLECTION as WORKS is to ________________.

5. SUPERIOR is to INFERIOR as REHEARSED is to ________________.

6. PEACE is to CONTENTMENT as WAR is to ________________.

**Questions:**
1. Why did the people who had taken in Joey resent Lonnie?
2. How did Joey help Josh realize that the same difficult circumstances that had affected him had also affected their father?
3. What did Josh feel he had to do before he could return home?
4. How did Mrs. Arthur help Josh find work?
5. Why did Lonnie agree to take part of Josh’s salary?
6. Why didn’t Janey trust Josh’s promise to return?
7. How was the train ride home different from the train ride they had taken to leave Chicago?
8. Compare Josh’s and Joey’s thoughts about returning to Chicago.
Chapters 10, 11 (cont.)

9. Josh compared their “borrowed” home in Omaha to their home in Chicago. What were his feelings towards each home?

10. Why did Josh decide to give his dad a chance?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you think it might have been better for Joey to stay with the Arthurs?

2. Lonnie sent a wire, or telegram, to Josh and Joey’s parents. How might Lonnie have communicated with the boys’ parents if this happened today?

3. Do you think Dad should have been forgiven for the way he treated Josh in the past? Did Josh deserve to be forgiven for the way he treated Joey?

4. In your opinion, did Mr. Ericsson have the right to advertise Josh’s history without permission?

5. Do you think that Josh and Janey really loved one another? Could you imagine them getting married later in their lives?

6. How do you imagine Josh will get along with Dad upon his return?

Writing Activity:

Write about a time when you or someone you know was able to forgive another individual. Tell whether it was difficult to grant forgiveness and why it was offered.
CLOZE ACTIVITY

The following excerpt has been taken from Chapter Eight of the novel. Read the entire passage and then fill in each blank with a word that makes sense. Afterwards, you may compare your language with that of the author.

We got to Nebraska the last week in February, exhausted, penniless, and hungry. Joey tried to pick up a __________________ 1 coins by singing and accompanying his __________________ 2 on the banjo, but icy __________________ 3 made his fingers numb and the __________________ 4 of people in general made them __________________ 5 past him without paying much attention __________________ 6 the plea that promoted his singing. __________________ 7 did get one windfall, though, in __________________ 8 gift of some beef bones from __________________ 9 kindly butcher who heard Joey's songs __________________ 10 helped him in the kind of __________________ 11 a butcher could afford.

It was __________________ 12 precious gift, and we eagerly hunted __________________ 13 of the shabbiest houses we could __________________ 14—we tended to seek out people __________________ 15 shabby as we were—and we __________________ 16 the good fortune to meet an __________________ 17 man who agreed to boil the __________________ 18 on his cookstove for a share __________________ 19 the soup. He was a gentle __________________ 20 man, very quiet and sometimes seeming __________________ 21 little dazed. He asked us no __________________ 22 but he frowned when I had __________________ 23 particularly hard coughing spell; later he __________________ 24 up the broken shoes which I __________________ 25 taken off to dry in front __________________ 26 the fire, and he spent a __________________ 27 time fitting cardboard soles inside them. When we were leaving, he gave me a pair of heavy gray socks and in the quavering voice of aged people, warned me about keeping my feet dry.
POST-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Return to the character study that you began on page seven of this study guide. Add more information about each character and compare your responses with those of your classmates.

2. The ending of this book could be the beginning of another story. Choose one set of characters and write another episode about them. You might choose to write about Josh and Dad, Josh and Janey, Pete and Emily, Josh and Joey, or Josh and Emily.

3. **Social Studies Connection:** Do some research to find out about major events that occurred in America from 1932 to 1939. Select five of these events and tell how each might have affected the Grondowski family.

4. **Cooperative Learning Activity:** Work with a small cooperative learning group to compile a list of questions that you would like to ask Josh. Write a script with your questions and Josh’s probable responses. Present this Q and A to your classmates.

5. Through the many difficult situations Josh endured: he was forced to grow up quickly. Select two incidents from the story in which Josh was forced to make a decision. At least one of the incidents should show a mature decision that he made.

6. Some of the following adjectives could be used to describe Josh. Select three from the list below and briefly cite an incident from the story to justify each choice.
   - compassionate
   - loving
   - realistic
   - courageous
   - malicious
   - spiteful
   - fickle
   - mischievous
   - stubborn

7. Lonnie proved to be a true friend to the boys. Do you feel his reasons were selfish or did he really care for the boys? Use incidents from the story to support your answer.

8. Why do you think the book was called *No Promises in the Wind*? What might be another good title for this book?

9. Imagine that this book is being made into a film. Who do you think might play the roles of Josh, Joey, Mom, Dad, Emily, and Lonnie? Should any scene be added, omitted, or changed? What kind of background music might accompany specific parts of the book?

10. **Vocabulary Review:** Select two vocabulary words that challenged you from each chapter unit. Create a sentence about the story using each of the words. Work with a partner to compare and edit your sentences. Then choose ten of these sentences, replace the vocabulary word with an underlined space and project the page on your classroom whiteboard. Challenge your classmates to replace the words in the sentences.
Post-Reading Activities (cont.)

11. **Literature Circle:** Have a literature circle discussion in which you tell your personal reactions to *No Promises in the Wind*. Here are some questions and sentence starters to help your literature circle begin a discussion.
   - Do you identify with any of the characters in the book?
   - Do you find the characters in the novel realistic? Why or why not?
   - Which character did you like the most? The least?
   - Who else would you like to read this novel? Why?
   - What did you learn about the Great Depression in this book of fiction that you might not have understood from reading a textbook?
   - What questions would you like to ask the author about this novel?
   - It was not fair when . . .
   - I would have liked to see . . .
   - I wonder . . .
   - Josh learned that . . .
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

**Fiction**

  Kirby, Susan E. *Home for Christmas*. Avon.
* __________. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Puffin.
* __________. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Dover.

**Nonfiction**

Lawson, Don. *FDR’s New Deal*. Ty Crowell Co.
____________. *Modern America: The Turbulent Thirties*. Franklin Watts.

**Other Books by Irene Hunt**

* *Across Five Aprils*. Berkley.
* *The Lottery Rose*. Berkley.
* *Up a Road Slowly*. Berkley.
  *William*. Ace Books.

* NOVEL-TIES Study Guides are available for these titles.