

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

The Trouble with Half a Moon

WRITTEN BY DANETTE VIGILANTE



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STORY SUMMARY

Ever since the death of her younger brother, Dellie lives with a sad, secret guilt that the accident that killed him was all her fault. But Dellie's life begins to change when she strikes up a friendship with Corey—a little boy who's just moved into her housing project building.

Corey's often left home alone and hungry. Dellie feeds him, comforts him and becomes his protector; she hopes she can do for Corey what she couldn't do for her brother—save him. But she doesn't count on Corey saving her.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Danette Vigilante grew up in the Red Hook Houses in Brooklyn, New York. Currently, she lives in Staten Island with her two daughters, one husband, a cat with a bad attitude and a Yorkshire Terrier to whom she sings when no one is home. *The Trouble with Half a Moon* is her first novel. Her second novel follows in 2012.

KUDOS FOR THE TROUBLE WITH HALF A MOON

“The first-person, present-tense narration allows readers to feel Dellie’s pain and confusion...Readers cannot help but cheer for Dellie and the little boy who helps pull her family together. Rich secondary characters add depth and dimension to this fast-paced tale of bereavement, forgiveness and healing.” ~ *Kirkus Reviews*

“What will grab readers in this first novel is the realistic sense of the diverse neighborhood community, both rough and caring. With lots of fast, immediate dialogue, the characters’ grief, anger, and heartbreaking coming-to-terms are realistic.” ~ *Booklist*

“This is a book you believe in, fervently and wholeheartedly...exquisitely drawn and powerful...a variety of readers will immediately connect with this family’s struggle to heal from a devastating loss...Dellie’s strength and capacity for love leap from the page right away; she grabbed my hand and still hasn’t let go.” ~ Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich, author of *8th Grade Superzero*

“The Trouble with half a Moon is a touching novel that shows how healing for both ourselves and others can unfold with every small, deliberate act of kindness. It’s a lesson no child is too young to learn and practice, and in Dellie and Corey, Danette Vigilante gives them beautiful examples.” ~ Sofia Quintero, author of *Efrain’s Secret*

TEACHER'S GUIDE CONTENTS

1. PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Activities and discussion starters that activate students' prior knowledge.

2. CHAPTER GUIDES

Chapter guides may be used to encourage whole class discussions, lead teacher-guided reading groups, or to provide structure for students working either in cooperative small groups or independently. **The guide is not meant to be assigned to students in its entirety.**

Each chapter guide includes:

- ▶ **Vocabulary** that might be new for your students. Choose a few words from each list and guide students in using context clues to infer meanings.
- ▶ **Discussion Starters** inspired by Bloom's Taxonomy that lead students from basic comprehension to higher level thinking skills.
- ▶ **Predictions** that invite students to make predictions based on their analysis of events and characters' traits in the story.

The chapter guides address the following curriculum standards:

Students will:

- √ Use prior knowledge and experience in order to understand ideas and vocabulary found in a variety of texts
- √ Use a variety of strategies (e.g., summarizing, forming questions, visualizing, and making connections) to support understanding of texts read
- √ Present a point of view or interpretation of a text, such as its theme or the author's intended message, and support it with relevant details from the text
- √ Read grade-level texts and answer literal, inferential, analytic, and evaluative questions
- √ Participate cooperatively and collaboratively in group discussions of texts

- √ Demonstrate comprehension and personal response to grade-level texts through a range of responses, such as writing, drama, and oral presentations
- √ Recognize how the author uses literary devices (such as simile and metaphor) to create meaning
- √ Identify the ways in which characters change and develop throughout a story
- √ Interpret characters, plot, setting, and theme, using evidence from the text, with assistance
- √ Identify the author's point of view, such as first-person narrator
- √ Respond to literature, connecting the response to personal experience
- √ Identify and describe characters and their motivations,
- √ Analyze the impact of the setting
- √ Draw conclusions and provide reasons for the conclusions
- √ Use supporting evidence from text to evaluate ideas, information, themes, or experiences
- √ Identify a character's motivation
- √ Synthesize and paraphrase information

3. CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

Following the chapter guides, you'll find suggested culminating projects that address the eight multiple intelligences identified by Dr. Howard Gardner: bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, logical-mathematical, musical, naturalistic, verbal-linguistic and visual-spatial. Consider having students choose a culminating activity that best matches their learning styles.

4. AUTHOR INTERVIEW WITH DANETTE VIGILANTE

PRE-READING

1. Look at the cover. What is the girl thinking? What character traits do you think might best describe her?
2. Next, read the book's summary on the back cover. What character traits would you assign Dellie now? How do these compare with your first impression of her from the cover?
3. The story is set in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Red Hook, where author Danette Vigilante grew up. Read about the real-life housing project here:
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/redhookjustice/redhook.html>.

What is the difference between “The Back” and “The Houses”?

4. What do you think the title means?

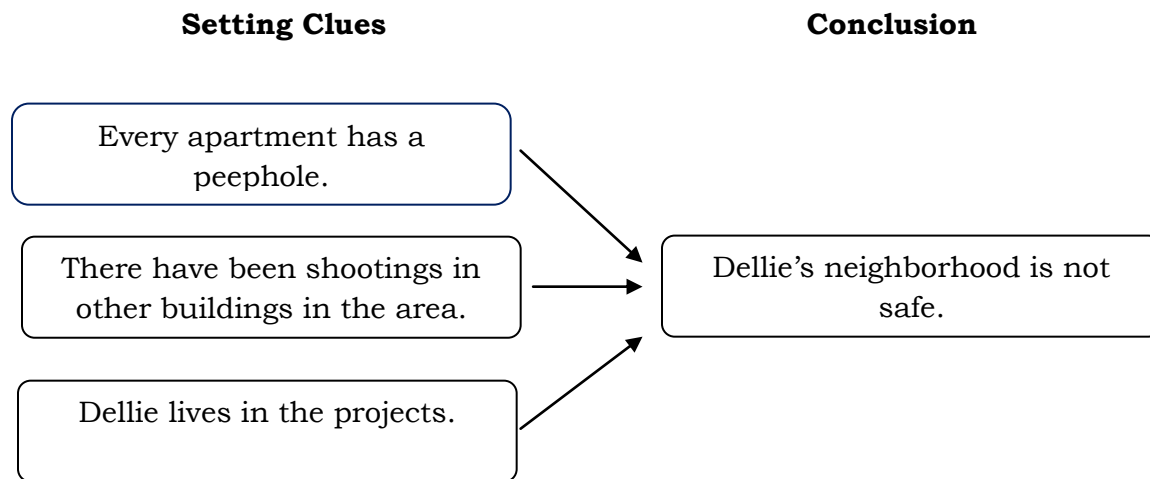
CHAPTER I

WORD STUDY

croaky	clench	bulge	rosary beads	figurines
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DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why does Dellie wake up? (*knowledge*)
2. What scares Dellie the most? (*comprehension*)
3. Read the following sound descriptions: “It’s louder than loud, like a firecracker,” “His voice sounds croaky with sleep,” and “A woman is screaming and there’s some loud crying. It starts and stops like a car trying to jump to life.” Choose a sound from a site like <http://www.wav-sounds.com/>. Write a descriptive line about the sound. Can your classmates guess which sound you’ve described? (*application*)
4. Read the description of the photo of Dellie’s brother. What might have happened to him? (*analysis*)
5. Write down clues about the setting in a graphic organizer like the one below. What do the clues infer about the story’s setting? (*synthesis*)



6. Dellie is upset when her father leaves the apartment. Should her father have left the apartment or stayed with his family? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

Do Dellie’s parents blame her for what happened to her brother? If so, how will she overcome her guilt?

CHAPTER 2

WORD STUDY

nudges	flexes
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DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Who knocks on Dellie's door? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Corey cover his head and crouch when he enters Dellie's apartment? (*comprehension*)
3. When Corey hears his mother calling, Dellie says, "His [Corey's] fun turns off like it has a switch." What other similes can you think of that describe various emotions? (*application*)
4. Why does Dellie panic when Corey begins humming? (*analysis*)
5. What do you think Corey's home life is like? Which clues from the text helped you arrive at an answer? Look at your own home the way Corey might. Make a list of things about your home that Corey might appreciate. How many items on your list are things that you usually don't notice? (*synthesis*)
6. Using clues from the text, evaluate the relationship between Corey and his mom. What are some positives and negatives? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

Will Corey be punished for not being home when his mother arrives? Will Dellie get into trouble for letting him into her apartment and feeding him?

CHAPTER 3

WORD STUDY

manicure	skanky	a kiss-up
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DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why does Dellie's father follow her to school each morning? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Dellie walk home by herself? (*comprehension*)
3. Read the section where Shayna criticizes Dellie. How do Dellie and Kayla react? Brainstorm what you might say if someone says something unkind to you or a friend. (*application*)
4. Both Dellie and Kayla think it would be a bad idea to tell their parents about Corey. Are they right? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. Kayla is convinced that Michael likes Dellie because of the way he acts around her. Observe two friends as they talk with each other. What do you notice about their body language? Now observe two people who don't know each other well in a conversation. How does their body language differ from the first pair? (*synthesis*)
6. How do you think Michael feels about Dellie? Do you agree with Kayla? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

Will Dellie let Michael know how she feels about him? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 4

WORD STUDY

grief counseling	therapist	courtyard	marinated
plantains	cutlery	dramatically	squeak by
pity	weave	gathering	

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why doesn't Dellie want her parents to meet Corey? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Dellie lie to Corey and say that her parents are home? (*comprehension*)
3. How do Dellie and her father try to make her mother feel better at breakfast?
What do you do when someone you know is upset and doesn't want to talk?
(*application*)
4. Dellie's father, with the help of the therapist, decides that Dellie no longer needs counseling. Do you agree? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. What does Dellie's dream symbolize? Keep a dream journal for a few weeks or a month. What might some of your dreams symbolize? (*synthesis*)
6. Evaluate Kayla as a friend. What does she do or say that shows what kind of friend she is? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

How will Dellie's dream affect her at school the next day?

CHAPTER 5

WORD STUDY

tutor	left back	minivacation	Einsteins
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DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why does Dellie have circles under her eyes? (*knowledge*)
2. Why doesn't Dellie think Bryan is a good match for Kayla? (*comprehension*)
3. How does the substitute teacher react to the teasing about his name? What effect does his reaction have on the students? Make a list of the ways he could have reacted, including what actually happened in the story. Choose one thing from the list that you would feel comfortable using to diffuse teasing. (*application*)
4. Why do you think Dellie doesn't tell Kayla about her dream? Should she have told her? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. Alexa has the responsibility of taking her younger sister to the babysitter each morning. What adult responsibilities do some of the characters in the story have? Which adult responsibilities do you wish you had? Which ones are you happy that you *don't* have? (*synthesis*)
6. How does Dellie feel when Shayna asks her to copy the math homework? Why does Dellie feel this way? Do you approve of how Dellie handled the situation? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

How will Dellie do on her math test? Why do you think so?

CHAPTER 6

WORD STUDY

maniacs	Kangol	forklift	lowlife
temping	Bengay	neglectful	capable
promptly	mobile	gummy	lullaby

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why is Dellie happy at the beginning of the chapter? (*knowledge*)
2. According to Dellie, what are the two categories into which all poor people can be divided? (*comprehension*)
3. Read Dellie’s description of the courtyard. Draw the view she has from her window. Using black construction paper, cut out “bars” and staple them to the top of the picture. How do the bars change the way you feel when you look at the scene? (*application*)
4. Dellie says being around Michael makes her “nervous and happy at the same time.” Is it possible to feel opposite emotions together? Tell about a time this has happened to you. (*analysis*)
5. Dellie was sure that her mother was being overprotective about playing in the courtyard. After reading Chapter 6, do you agree with Dellie or her mother? With a friend, act out a conversation between Dellie and her mother where they discuss playing in the courtyard. Act out two versions—one conversation that might take place before the fight breaks out in the courtyard, and one after. How do the two compare? (*synthesis*)
6. What do you think of Corey’s mother? Is she doing the best she can in difficult circumstances, or could she do better? Support your opinion with evidence from the text. (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

Will Dellie continue to feed Corey? If so, will his mother find out? What will she do?

CHAPTER 7

WORD STUDY

uneventful	accused	cursing	clenched
hisses	stoop	snickers	chute
blurt	desperate		

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. What does Dellie want to do with Alexa? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Dellie’s mom clean up the tomato and the elevator? (*comprehension*)
3. Alexa says, “When my father was around, he never said no to me. I had him wrapped around my little finger.” What does she mean? Which line in the text provides a context clue? How do you attempt to get your parents to do what you want? (*application*)
4. What advice does Mrs. Lawrence give Dellie? Why? Should Dellie follow her advice? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. Dellie is frustrated that she isn’t allowed to spend time outside with her friends. Come up with a plan for Dellie to convince her parents to give her more freedom. (*synthesis*)
6. Do you think it would be more difficult to have always been poor, like Dellie, or to lose your wealth and end up poor, like Kayla? Explain your answer. (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

Why do you think Kayla is ignoring Dellie?

CHAPTER 8

WORD STUDY

peer	fastened	turban	Jamaican
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DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why was there a moving truck outside Dellie's building? (*knowledge*)
2. What happens when Dellie calls Kayla? Why? (*comprehension*)
3. Read the description of Miss Shirley. Make a sketch of what she might look like. (*application*)
4. What did Miss Shirley do before entering her apartment for the first time? Why do you think she did this? (*analysis*)
5. Dellie says Mr. Millson's apartment smells like Ivory soap and peppermint. What does this suggest about his personality? Think about Dellie's family and their values. What do you think their apartment smells like? Tell what your house smells like and what this says about your family. (*synthesis*)
6. Dellie is both scared and tempted to open the door when Miss Shirley knocks. Did Dellie do the right thing by not opening the door? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

What kind of neighbor will Miss Shirley be? Why do you think so?

CHAPTER 9

WORD STUDY

convince	drenching	snarls	mimics
capable	track record	ozone layer	desperate
static	suspicious	stairwell	propped

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why is Kayla angry at Dellie? (*knowledge*)
2. What does Dellie call Corey when she sees him outside his apartment crying? Why does she call him this? (*comprehension*)
3. Miss Shirley misses Jamaica, but can still, "...smell the sweet flowers or see the great mountains and the lovely turquoise sea." Learn more about Jamaica here: <http://www.jamaicans.com/childsguide/>. Click on one of the children's books to hear it read the way Miss Shirley might read it with her Jamaican accent. (*application*)
4. How do Alexa's actions reveal her character? Support your answer with evidence from the text. (*analysis*)
5. What could Dellie say that might convince her mom to let her run errands for Miss Shirley? How would the conversation change if Dellie's father were participating? What about if Miss Shirley were there? Act out each scenario with classmates. (*synthesis*)
6. Make a list of Michael's character traits along with his actions that illustrate each one. Do the same for Dellie. Are Michael and Dellie compatible? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

Will Dellie's mom let her run errands for Miss Shirley? Explain your thinking.

CHAPTER 10

WORD STUDY

bold	siblings	faith	considerate
nourishment	disloyal	etched	creased

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. What is painted on Miss Shirley's wall? (*knowledge*)
2. What does Miss Shirley explain about the moon? (*comprehension*)
3. Dellie says she doesn't want Corey to believe in her because she might not always be there to help him. What would you do to help Corey if you were Dellie? Come up with a plan of action you could follow if you think someone is being neglected or hurt. (*application*)
4. Miss Shirley tells Dellie, "Never minus points from your good deeds. There are plenty of people in this world who will do that for you." What does she mean by this? (*analysis*)
5. Write what you think Dellie said in her note to Michael, then write what you think his response might be. Have a classmate do the same and compare. (*synthesis*)
6. Will Miss Shirley think Dellie is rude? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

How will Michael react to Dellie's note? Will he spend the evening with Alexa?

CHAPTER II

WORD STUDY

unshaven	welt	flinches
nudges	grimy	roaches

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why doesn't Dellie want to get out of bed? (*knowledge*)
2. Why doesn't Dellie want to go to school at first? Why does she change her mind? (*comprehension*)
3. Read the description of Corey's apartment. How is it like Dellie's apartment? How is it different? (*application*)
4. Why does Dellie's mom ask her to stay home from school? Should Dellie have stayed? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. How do you think Dellie will react the next time Corey asks if he can come over to her place? Tell about an experience that made you appreciate something about your own life. (*synthesis*)
6. Unlike most of Dellie's dreams about Louis, this dream is a happy one. How does this dream make Dellie feel? Does she awake feeling better or worse than she did after having the sad dreams? Why? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

What will happen when Corey's mom comes in? What are Dellie's options?

CHAPTER 12

WORD STUDY

peroxide	distracting
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DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. How did Corey help Dellie to hide? (*knowledge*)
2. Why did Corey's mother return to the apartment? (*comprehension*)
3. List the possible reasons Corey's welt disappeared so quickly. Which explanation is the most probable? Why? Which one do you think Dellie believes? (*application*)
4. When Corey hugs Dellie, she says, "My sister feelings are trying to work their way up but I push them back because I'm no longer anyone's sister." What does she mean? Should she be pushing away these feelings? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. What do you think was going through Miss Shirley's mind when she saw Dellie and Corey? Narrate the scene from Miss Shirley's point of view. (*synthesis*)
6. How has Dellie's mom changed after spending time with Corey? Do you think she'll regret it later? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

When will Corey's mother return home? Will she find out that Corey has been at Dellie's house?

CHAPTER 13

WORD STUDY

considering	desperate	beggars	gloating
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DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why is Kayla angry at Dellie? (*knowledge*)
2. Why did Dellie's father let her go outside? (*comprehension*)
3. Dellie says that adults sometimes ask questions that "don't want answers." Find two examples of this from the chapter. Make a list of "questions that don't want answers" that you've heard. (*application*)
4. Dellie is confused when Kayla says, "I don't even belong here." What do you think Kayla means? (*analysis*)
5. How do you think Alexa feels after she yells at Dellie? Why do you think so? If Dellie hadn't have stormed off, what might Alexa have said to her? (*synthesis*)
6. Miss Shirley says, "Tears help to carry bad *tings* out. If you don't let them come, they will stay inside, watering your bad feelings until they are wild and ugly weeds." Is this good advice? Why or why not? Tell about a time when crying helped or hindered a problem of yours. (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

What do you think happened when Dellie's brother was killed?

CHAPTER 14

WORD STUDY

left back	snap	legit	glare
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DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Who does Dellie run into on the playground? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Dellie go the long way to the store? (*comprehension*)
3. Remembering the mean things Kayla said to her, Dellie thinks, “I should have done something, anything other than cry and run away.” What else could Dellie have done? Which choice might have been the most effective? (*application*)
4. Dellie can’t figure out why Kayla is with Bryan. Why do you think Kayla chose him? Is Kayla more like Bryan now, or is she still the same person Dellie knew before the girls stopped speaking to each other? Explain your reasoning. (*analysis*)
5. Retell this scene from Kayla’s point of view. Have another classmate tell it from Bryan’s point of view. How do they compare with the scene as we see it from Dellie’s point of view? (*synthesis*)
6. Before Dellie responds to Bryan’s rude remarks, she decides that whatever she says “...has to be good.” What does she mean? Do you agree with her? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

Will Bryan try to get back at Dellie? If so, how? If not, why?

CHAPTER 15

WORD STUDY

whoopee cushion	dramatically	gaping
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DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why is Dellie in the store? (*knowledge*)
2. Why doesn't Dellie know what a 6-year-old boy would like for his birthday? (*comprehension*)
3. When Dellie runs into Kayla and Bryan at the store, Dellie thinks, "It seems like Kayla is about to say something to me, but she stops short." Why didn't Kayla say what she wanted to say? Write what you think Kayla wanted to say and have a classmate do the same. How does your guess compare with your classmate's response? (*application*)
4. Do you think Kayla believes Bryan or Dellie? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (*analysis*)
5. How does the shop owner react when Bryan accused Dellie of stealing? What does his reaction say about the neighborhood? How do you think a shop owner in your neighborhood might react in a similar situation? Why? (*synthesis*)
6. What do you think about the way Dellie handles herself in this scene? What, if anything, should she have done differently? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

Will Michael find out what happened at the store? If so, what will he do?

CHAPTER 16

WORD STUDY

bound	pace	startling	flourish
lounging	flinches	singsongy	

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. How do Dellie’s parents learn what had happened at the store? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Dellie hesitate to tell her mom what happened? (*comprehension*)
3. Dellie’s parents don’t believe her at first when she tells her side of the story. How would your parents react in a similar situation? How would you convince your parents that you were telling the truth? Write down your answers. Then read this section of the chapter to your parents and have them write down how they would react. Compare your responses. Do you and your parents have similar predictions about how your family would handle this kind of situation? (*application*)
4. Analyze the relationship that Kayla has with her mother. How do you think their relationship affects Kayla’s friendship with Dellie? (*analysis*)
5. Dellie wonders what Corey wishes for when he blows out his candle. Use a chart like the one below to make a list of characters and what their wishes might be. (*synthesis*)

Character	Wish	Why I think this character would make this wish
Dellie		
Corey		
Kayla		
Bryan		
Miss Shirley		
Michael		

6. How has Dellie’s mother changed in this chapter? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. What do you think caused this change? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

What will happen the next time Dellie runs into Bryan? Will he cause more trouble for her? If so, how?

CHAPTER 17

WORD STUDY

jacked	klepto	rumor	finals	betrayal
flinging	wails	muffled	patrolling	EMT

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why is Kayla upset when Dellie walks into class? (*knowledge*)
2. What gives Dellie the courage to confront Corey's mother? (*comprehension*)
3. When Dellie hears Corey's mother beating him, she says, "Corey's crying drops me to my knees." Think of other situations where an emotional reaction causes a physical reaction. Why do our bodies react in this way? (*application*)
4. Miss Shirley tells Dellie, "Love is strong. It can hold on, no matter how much it gets tugged and stretched." What does she mean? Do you agree with her? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. Now that you know what happened to Louis, do you think the accident was Dellie's fault? Does she deserve the blame she's assigned herself? Write a letter to Dellie explaining your thoughts. (*synthesis*)
6. When Dellie asks Miss Shirley how Corey's mom can be so mean to him, Miss Shirley answers, "...sometimes people either don't do what they're supposed to do, or they simply don't know how." Does one of these explanations apply to Corey's mom? If not, what other explanation might explain her behavior? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

What will happen to Corey? Will he be returned to his mother? If so, what will happen to him?

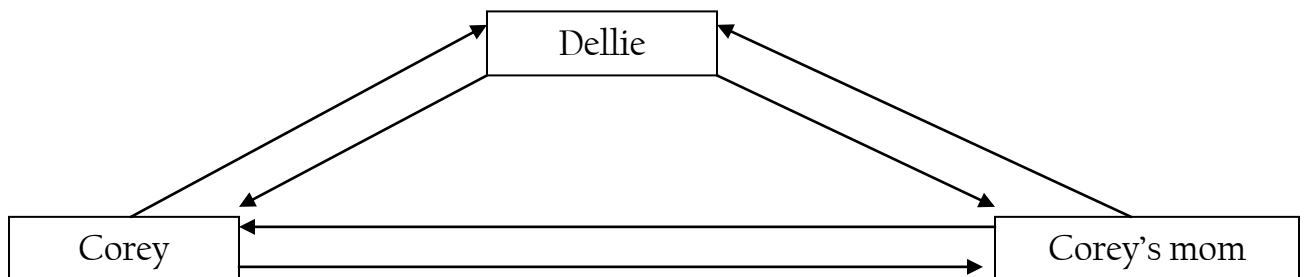
CHAPTER 18

WORD STUDY

hardheaded	a low profile	queasy	duffle
slung	stammer	social worker	duffle bag

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Who calls Dellie on the phone? (*knowledge*)
2. Who is the woman with Corey and his mother? (*comprehension*)
3. Dellie says that a part of her wishes Corey would come back to the apartment, and another part wishes he would stay away forever. This is an example of “character vs. self” conflict. Are there other examples of this kind of conflict in the story? Cite other types of conflict in the story (character vs. self, another character, nature or society). (*application*)
4. Dellie says, “I hate to admit it, but I miss Kayla.” Why does she say this? Tell or write about a time when you didn’t want to admit something to yourself. Why was it hard? Did you feel better afterwards? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. What are the dynamics between Corey, Dellie and Corey’s mother? Write how they feel about each other on the arrows below. Use evidence from the text to support your answers. (*synthesis*)



6. How has Corey’s mother changed? List evidence showing that she’s changed for the better and evidence suggesting that she might continue to mistreat Corey. Evaluate both lists. Which path do you think she’ll take? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

Will Dellie still need to protect Corey? Will she be less or more involved in his life now that the social worker has been assigned to Corey’s case?

CHAPTER 19

WORD STUDY

makeshift	shrine	memorial service
drizzle	gutter	fumbling

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why does Miss Shirley come to Dellie's apartment? (*knowledge*)
2. Why doesn't Dellie want to go to the Super Savings Mart? (*comprehension*)
3. What does Dellie do when she feels herself begin to panic? What do you do to calm yourself down? (*application*)
4. Why do you think Miss Shirley asked Dellie to go to the Super Savings Mart instead of another store? Why did Dellie's mother agree to let her go? (*analysis*)
5. If Louis could talk to Dellie, what would he tell her? How would she respond? (*synthesis*)
6. Dellie wonders if Miss Shirley is indeed a witch. List three things that happened in the chapter that made Dellie think so. What do you think? Explain your answer. (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

How will Dellie's life change from here on out?

CHAPTER 20

WORD STUDY

trailing	fuming	official
file	nudges	huff

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. What did the note from Dellie's parents say? (*knowledge*)
2. Why are Dellie's parents skipping therapy this evening? (*comprehension*)
3. Dellie tells Michael that he makes math make sense. Choose a math problem that you teacher has assigned. How might you explain it so that Dellie would understand? (*application*)
4. Why do you think Kayla steps in and defends Dellie with Alexa? (*analysis*)
5. Imagine Dellie telling Kayla about what happened with Michael. How would this conversation be different if Dellie and Kayla had remained best friends? (*synthesis*)
6. Why do think Michael was silent for most of the walk home with Dellie? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

How will Alexa react when she finds out that Dellie and Michael are a couple?

CHAPTER 21

WORD STUDY

winces

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Who is in the kitchen when Dellie gets out of bed? (*knowledge*)
2. Why is Corey crying? Name at least two reasons. (*comprehension*)
3. What would you say to Corey's mother if you had the chance to talk to her? Could anything you say change her? Why or why not? (*application*)
4. Why does Corey ask if he's, "...like the boy in the picture"? Why does Dellie's mother say yes? (*analysis*)
5. Name some possible options for Corey's future. What are the positives and negatives for each? Which one do you think is the most probable? (*synthesis*)
6. Whose fault is it that Corey is hurt? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

What will happen when Miss Sandra arrives? Will Corey's mother and Kendal return?

CHAPTER 22

WORD STUDY

slinging	briefcase	foster family
triggers	adjusting	pries

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why does Dellie go to Corey’s apartment and who does she run into? (*knowledge*)
2. What does Kayla say to Dellie? (*comprehension*)
3. Corey’s mom had to attend a “strict parenting program” to learn “...what comes naturally to others.” What kinds of things might be taught in programs like these? (*application*)
4. Why doesn’t Dellie accept Kayla’s apology? Should she? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. Why does Dellie’s mom give Connie Boy to Corey as he leaves? What does this gift symbolize for both Corey and Dellie’s mom?(*synthesis*)
6. Will Corey be better off with Jayden and his family, or should he be with Dellie and her family? Explain your reasoning. (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

Will Dellie and her family see Corey again? Will Dellie and Kayla mend their friendship?

CHAPTER 23

WORD STUDY

bolt	awkward
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DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Who does Dellie meet in the hall? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Kayla ask what happened to Corey? (*comprehension*)
3. One of Miss Shirley's mottos is "Trouble no set like rain." What does this mean? Name a motto that you live by. (*application*)
4. How does Miss Shirley feel when she sees Kayla coming down the stairs? How do you know? Why does Miss Shirley invite Kayla in for a piece of warm bread? (*analysis*)
5. What happened to Miss Shirley's sister, Abby? What similarities and differences are there between this tragedy and Louis' death? How will Miss Shirley's sorrow help Dellie to face her own sadness? (*synthesis*)
6. Miss Shirley tells Kayla, "I'm not one to worry about what others think of me or how fast their tongues wag, you know? I stay true to myself and I always have." What does Miss Shirley mean? Do you agree with her attitude? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT

How will Dellie's life be different from now on? How will her relationship change with her parents? With Kayla? With Michael?

CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

The following projects incorporate Dr. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Consider having students choose a culminating project that best matches their learning styles.

POINT OF VIEW

(Verbal-Linguistic, Intrapersonal)

Author Danette Vigilante wrote *The Trouble with Half a Moon* in first person present tense. Choose an emotional scene from the book and rewrite it in third person past tense. For example, below is the opening scene of the book rewritten in third person past tense:

The noise woke up the entire building. It's louder than loud, like a firecracker.

Before Dellie knew what she was doing, she was out of bed. Her parents were already in the dark living room.

None of her neighbors dared go out into the hallway. Instead, they stayed behind their doors asking questions through the cracks.

"What's going on out there?" Mr. Brown, from apartment 2C asked. His voice sounded croaky with sleep.

"Everything okay?" That sounded like Mrs. Lawrence. She was really old and lived by herself in 2F. Dellie imagined her hunched over by the door with her hand on the doorknob, listening for an answer.

A woman was screaming and there was some loud crying. It started and stopped like a car trying to jump to life. Dellie's best friend, Kayla, lived upstairs near the roof door, so Dellie hoped whatever was happening wasn't coming from there.

When Dellie's father grabbed his baseball bat, she knew he was also worried. "It's June, too early for firecrackers," he said. "That was a gunshot."

Read both versions out loud. How do they compare?

Write about an exciting or emotional moment from your life. Experiment with tense and point of view. Which is the most effective way to tell your story?

PICTURE THIS *(Visual-Spatial, Interpersonal)*

Andy Vernon-Jones, a counselor and photography teacher at an alternative high school in Red Hook, Brooklyn, has photographed the neighborhood's people and places. His photos have appeared on exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum and may be viewed on his website www.vernjones.com. Go to his blog <http://www.hereinredhook.blogspot.com/> to read captions that accompany his photos.

What do Vernon-Jones' photos reveal about Dellie's neighborhood? What do the captions reveal about his feelings for the people and places of Red Hook?

Create a photo essay of your own neighborhood or school and have your classmates do the same. Lay out all of the photos and compare. Is there anything (place, person or thing) that all of you photographed? Which photos are unique? Plan a public display of your photos. How will you group the photos (by color, subject, mood)?

Write captions for each photo. Fold an index card in half and write your caption on the inside. This will allow viewers to come to their own conclusions about the photos before opening the cards to read your captions.

GREENING UP DELLIE'S NEIGHBORHOOD *(Naturalistic, Logical-Mathematical)*

The Gowanus Canal is an estuary near Dellie's apartment in Red Hook. What is a canal? An estuary? Find an online map of this area by entering "Gowanus Canal" on www.bing.com and clicking on "maps." Into which bodies of water does the Gowanus Canal flow?

The real-life residents of Red Hook are concerned about the water pollution near their home. Read more about their concerns and possible solutions here:

<http://www.southbrooklyn.net/gowanus/gc01a.htm> and here:
<http://www.urbandivers.org/sbrooklyn.php>.

Choose a local area that could use some cleaning up and make a plan to help. What would be most effective (fund-raising, petitions, letters to the city council, communication with local media, student volunteers, etc.)?

CITY PLANNING

(Logical-Mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic)

New businesses and restaurants have come to Red Hook area, including an Ikea super store. Investors would like to build luxury water front condominiums along the canal, but the water needs to be cleaned first, and some areas of Red Hook are still considered unsafe.

Search for a map of Red Hook, Brooklyn on www.bing.com and choose “Automatic” view. Find the IKEA store on Beard Street near the waterfront. Zoom in on the undeveloped areas along Richards Street and Beard Street. Richards Street divides “The Front” to the east (where Dellie’s building is) and “The Back” to the west (where Michael lives).

Go to <http://redhookbrooklyn.net/> to download a city guide and map. Compare this map with the aerial map on Bing.com. Working with classmates, use both maps to develop a neighborhood improvement plan. What kinds of shops and services might bring revenue to the neighborhood? What would be the best use of the waterfront area? How could you convince potential investors to invest in the neighborhood? How could you make the area safer for residents and business owners?

Draw up a plan. Sketch out a giant map of the waterfront area either in chalk on asphalt or with tape indoors. Mark the areas that would become businesses or residential areas. Take your classmates on “tours” of the new Red Hook. How would Dellie react if you took her on the tour?

SETTING LIFE TO MUSIC

(Musical)

Miss Shirley came from Jamaica, as did singer/songwriter Bob Marley. Like Dellie and Miss Shirley, Bob Marley grew up in a government housing project. Trench Town, Bob Marley’s neighborhood in Kingston, Jamaica, is mentioned in his song “No Woman, No Cry.” His lyrics and live performances of the song can be readily found through an online search. What problems and issues are mentioned in the song? How is the overall theme of hope expressed?

If Dellie wrote lyrics about her neighborhood, what might they be? Would hope be present in her lyrics? Write lyrics that reflect life in your community.

AN INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR DANETTE VIGILANTE



How did you get the idea for *THE TROUBLE WITH HALF A MOON*?

Corey, the little boy in the story, reminds me of a little boy from my childhood. He's actually been tugging at my heart for a long time.

What was the most challenging part of writing this book? The most rewarding?

I'd say the most challenging part of writing *TROUBLE* was pushing myself to see past what was right in front of my face. It was as though I had the roots down, but they needed to be nourished in order to spread out and strengthen. As for the most rewarding, there are a few, but this is what sticks out in my head. My love for reading began when I was a child. I read all the time, even when I should've been asleep! So, to think that somewhere someone else might be enjoying *TROUBLE* the same way I enjoyed reading say, Judy Blume, just makes me so happy.

Are any of the places in the story modeled after real places?

Absolutely! Though I don't mention the housing project *TROUBLE* takes place in, it is most definitely the Red Hook Houses in Brooklyn, New York where I grew up.

How did you learn to write a novel?

Um, I think I simply jumped off and tried to figure everything out on the way down (I'm still learning). Yes, that sounds about right to me.

What advice do you have for young writers?

Never. Give. Up. But, that doesn't mean trying to get in the same door over and over again using the wrong key. You have to be open to learning and to listening (or reading) to what people are saying. Then go back to your work and see how you can apply your newly found knowledge. Remember, you will come face to face with

rejection, everyone does, but it doesn't mean it has to be The End. Acknowledge the rejection; let it cook in your mind a bit. Put it away if you have to and when you're ready, take it out again and weigh it. Take what you can from it and leave everything else behind. I'd also like to add how important reading is. I truly believe if you want to be a writer, you must also be a reader.

Do you have a writing routine?

I like to treat writing as my job so that means sitting at my desk in the morning, breaking for lunch then back to my desk until dinner. Even though I can work in my pajamas, I never do. I feel like I have to be ready for the day and that means being showered and dressed.

When you aren't writing, what are some of your favorite things to do?

I love to read! Did you already guess that?

What was your favorite subject in school?

I've always liked history. I enjoy imagining what it would be like to live in different time periods (except for pre-historic days!). Of course, only from a distance, then I'd transport right back here!