

Bloom

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On Salt Spring Island, BC, there is trouble brewing: strange, flesh-eating plants have started to mysteriously grow everywhere, and three local teens discover that their unusual connection to each other may be the secret to fighting this growing biological danger. This suspenseful story about friendship, betrayal, identity, as well as alien invasions will keep readers in Grade 7-10 engaged, whether in literature circles, as a read-aloud, or as an independent reading choice. In the classroom, Bloom can provide an opportunity to explore environmental questions or to explore aspects of the English or Science curriculum.

Subjects: English Language Arts, Science

Grades 7-10

Evaluation Date: Nov 2020



Social Considerations

Resource Evaluation

CURRICULUM FIT

Does the resource support BC curriculum?



Extensively

From the standpoint of the English Language Arts curriculum, "Bloom" is a creative story. Through engaging the text, readers explore a plot that helps to understand themselves and to "make connections to others and the world." The plot encourages readers to "question what they hear, read, and view in life" daily, within the community, as well as on a larger scale. The book contributes to the reader's ability to be "educated and engaged citizens," encouraging readers (through the main characters' proactive behaviours) to also become educated and engaged in the world and governing systems. The book also covers aspects of botany and cell growth.

This resource supports the Core Competencies of the BC curriculum:

- Communication
- Creative Thinking
- Critical & Reflective Thinking
- Positive Personal and Cultural Identity
- Personal Awareness and Responsibility
- Social Awareness and Responsibility

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USAGE

"Bloom" can be used in a variety of ways in the classroom. It can be effectively studied as a class text for all the students to read. It would also be valuable as a book for independent reading for students to choose from or as a literature circle book that small groups study. It can also be used in conjunction with other aspects of English or Science study, including the connection to short stories, poetry, current events, botany, and cells. For Social Studies, the book provides an analogy for the pandemic, with a focus on unwanted intruders. Also, set in and around the Gulf Islands, it provides an opportunity to explore environmental questions and island life specific to BC.

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Multiculturalism

The setting for this book is largely on Salt Spring Island, BC, and is largely a non-multicultural perspective of Canada. There is a main character named Anaya, likely of Arabic or Indian origin, and her mother cooks paneer and then curry. "Every country on the planet" is also mentioned.

Violence

Pit plants eat animals and people, and the world is unable to control the plants until the end. As soon as a solution is reached, another biological danger emerges on the last pages, so the world still isn't safe. Some images are disturbing, for instance when one of the main characters, Anaya, finds her mother in bed, the air reeking of "sleeping gas," her mother's body "crisscrossed with vines. They grew across her face, covering her mouth. Two twitching tendrils had grown right into both nostrils. " "Mom made an awful wet choking sound. " "At the back of her throat was a dense tangle of vines. " The main characters gradually mutate, growing a tail, wings, and scales, respectively.

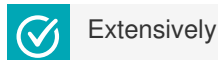
Safety

The main characters participate in dangerous activities to save Petra's father, resulting in a helicopter crash. While the main characters survive, the two pilots die. Another consideration is that while not stated, the plotline does involve several women being abducted and impregnated by alien beings.

Sustainability

Herbicides are used unsparingly in an attempt to eradicate the pit plants.

Do the social considerations support, rather than detract from, student learning?

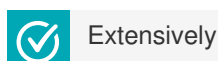


The author presents a largely non-multicultural viewpoint, although there are a few cultural hints. The focus is on citizens of British Columbia and then moves into a view of the world since the invasive plants appear elsewhere in the world. A possible discussion could be around having a variety of characters in a novel that are not described in terms of a specific ethnicity and how that affects the reader's view of the characters. Some of the violence in the book is due to invasion by alien life, while some results from daring choices on the part of the main characters. Sustainability is a significant focus and provides rich discussion opportunities.


GENERAL CONTENT

Content


Is the resource engaging?




Is the content current for the intended curriculum and grade?

 Extensively

Is the content accurate for the intended curriculum and grade?


 Extensively

Is the content relevant and important for student broad understandings?


 Extensively

Audience


Is the content appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?

 Moderately


Does the resource provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking?

 Extensively

Is the level of detail appropriate?


 Extensively

Is the language use appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?


 Extensively

The settings of Salt Spring Island, Vancouver, British Columbia, and Canada are interwoven into the plot. The story encourages the reader to consider aspects of a local concern that grows to be a provincial, Canada-wide, and then a worldwide issue, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides the opportunity to explore important issues at an appropriate level of cognitive and social development for students aged twelve to fifteen through the study of a meat-eating plant. Due to the horrific elements of a world in which something grows without a cure or solution, there is the possibility that some readers will be able to work through areas of fear that could otherwise not be addressed.

Is the location of illustrations appropriate?


 Extensively

Is the use of font, text size and presentation suitable?


 Moderately

The cover illustration is engaging, with bright orange and yellow, and with a single eye caught amidst a tangle of black, barbed vines. The font is large for Grade 10 or higher, and students may feel that it is for a younger audience.


Does the text show insight into the complexity of the human condition?

 Extensively

Does the text broaden students' experiences and understanding?

 Extensively

To what degree is this text stylistically rich?

 Moderately

Plot description

The plot is rich in timely topics, including everything from fostering friends, betrayal, allergies, aliens, to self-identity. It begins in a deceptively simple manner from the perspective of a young teenager, who experiences typical problems: a lack of friends, the hassle of allergies, and a friend's betrayal. It expands to introduce Petra and Seth, two more protagonists, and it moves from the simple to a worldwide dilemma of uncontrollable flesh-eating plants and alien invasions. As is often the case with heroes taking on worldwide danger, the heroes grow larger than life and develop superhuman capabilities to overcome the challenges. The book concludes with the promise of more danger.

Related Comments

"Bloom" engages a variety of readers through the wide-reaching genre and with strong elements of suspense. Sometimes the vocabulary is simple and colloquial, including simple dialogue like "Sheesh" and "Go, " yet there is also the opportunity for vocabulary study through words such as allomones, phragmites, cryptogenic, and genome. The point of view is somewhat confusing with Anaya's initial limited point of view, then Petra's, then Seth's, and then moving closer and closer together as the characters discover they are strongly connected as part-aliens. Ultimately, the language is easily accessible for students and the plot is engaging.

Genre

- Adventure
- Contemporary
- Science Fiction
- Horror
- Mystery/Suspense

Literary Highlights

- Complex conflict(s)
- Well-developed themes
- Strong suspense

Type

- Novel

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**Reading Level**

- At intended grade level(s)

"Bloom" is part of a trilogy. "Hatch" will be likely be published in the Fall of 2020, and then "Thrive" in the summer of 2021.

GRADES AND SUBJECTS**Subjects**

- English Language Arts: 7-10
 - Science: 7-9
 - Socials Studies: 9-10
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ADDITIONAL INFO**Copyright**

2020

Primary identifier (ISBN)

9781443450317
