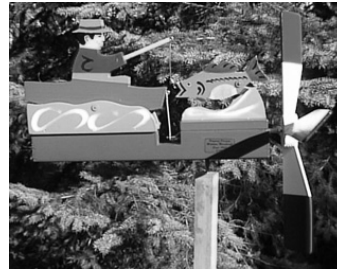




Whirligig

by: Paul Fleischman



Background

Bird's wings spin furiously in the wind...

A yellow flower's petals move around it's center in a circular motion...

A boat's propeller completes hundreds of revolutions but never gets anywhere...

Common yard or garden decorations, the above items are examples of whirligigs. Basically, a whirligig is a spinning toy that reacts to the speed of the wind. The faster the wind speed, the faster the parts of the whirligig move. Historically, whirligigs were used because their vibrations kept pesky moles away; the creativity and craftsmanship put into developing them transformed whirligigs into an American folk art over 200 years ago.

In Fleischman's novel, Whirligig, this art form helps to transform the main character, Brent Bishop.

Vocabulary: You will be tested on the definitions of these words.

reconnoitered— To make a preliminary inspection of

turreted— furnished with turret (tower-like) parts

tormentor— a person or thing that causes suffering

de facto— in fact; in reality

perennial— lasting for an indefinitely long time; enduring

harem— the part of a Muslim palace or house reserved for the residence of women

gesticulating— to make use of gestures in an animated manner

restitution— making amends for injury or wrongdoing by giving an equivalent or compensation for loss

ethereal— light; airy; delicate; refined

decompressing— relax; unwind

Characters:

Brent Bishop	Miss Gill	Hotel Desk Clerk	Jonathan	Lea Zamora	Emil
Chaz	Mrs. Zamora	Korean Orphan		Camp Owner	
Brianna	Canadian Camper	School Children		Artist	
Alexandra	Puerto Rican Immigrant	Jenny	Grandma	Stephanie	Constancia

Point of View:

The perspective, Whirligig, is told from is an interesting one. The narrative voice (speaker) changes in each chapter. As you read, be mindful of these changes. It will help your understanding of the book.

Study Questions:

Answer the questions on notebook paper with complete sentence responses as you read.

The following questions must be finished upon your return to school in August.

Party Time

1. Why does Brent feel like he doesn't fit in?
2. What situation causes Brent to react angrily?
3. What is Brent's intention after he leaves the party?
4. How does the end of the chapter leave the reader in suspense?
5. Who is the narrative voice in this chapter?

Weeksboro, Maine

6. Who is the narrative voice in this chapter?
7. What does Alexandra feel Stephanie's life is lacking?
8. What is Stephanie's focus in life before the whirligig?
9. After seeing the whirligig how does Stephanie's life change?
10. As a reader, can you predict how the characters are connected through the plot in the first two chapters?

The Afterlife

11. Who is the narrative voice in the chapter?
12. What is Brent's intention as he drives home?
13. What are the actual results of Brent's careless actions?
14. How do Brent's parents react to the tragedy?
15. How do Lea's parents' reactions towards Brent differ?
16. The judge hands down a four-part sentence for Brent. What are the four parts?
17. Why is Brent disappointed with the judge's ruling?
18. How do Brent's parents feel about Mrs. Zamora's request?
19. Why does Brent agree with Mrs. Zamora's plan?
20. Brent is going to Washington. Why?
21. Whom does Brent encounter at the campsite and how does this person influence Brent?
22. What whirligig does he decide to create? Why?

Miami, Florida

23. Describe the street-sweeper's life at work and at home.
24. Where did the street-sweeper encounter Brent's whirligig?
25. When he was looking at the whirligig, what did the street-sweeper realize?
26. What did the shearwater bird reveal to the street-sweeper?

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

27. Where does Brent find himself in this chapter?
28. Give three pieces of evidence as to how Brent is changing.
29. Explain the meaning behind the whirligig Brent created.
30. Why does Brent leave the whirligig at the hostel?

Bellevue, Washington

31. How does the reader learn about the boy's problems in life?
32. What does the boy's mother come to realize through her discussion with Mr. Mintz?
33. What are the boy's feelings toward the whirligig?

Apprentices

34. What state is Brent in when he makes the next whirligig?
35. What activities keep Brent busy during travel?
36. How does frequenting the Sand Dollar Café make Brent feel better?
37. How does Brent react to the children?
38. What whirligig does Brent make in this chapter?

San Diego, California

39. Who is the narrative voice of the chapter?
40. Why does the granddaughter drive her grandmother to various places?
41. What is the significance of the whirligig to the grandmother's experiences?

Everybody Swing!

42. How does the first sentence take the reader back to the party in the first chapter?
43. Why has Brent decided to continue his travels instead of return home?
44. Why does Brent feel he can open up to the artist?
45. How has Brent's perspective changed throughout the novel?