

Booktalk and Discussion questions suggested by:
Cass Beck, Children's Librarian,
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Shakespeare's Secret

Booktalk:

It's your first day at a new school. You have a highly unusual name. It would be unusual for a boy, and you are a girl! You have a history of being picked on in your past schools....your sister is gorgeous and gets along with everyone wherever your family moves....the house you have moved into has (possibly) been used as the hiding place for a diamond of incredible value and historical interest.....the cutest, most popular boy in Eighth grade is taking a particular interest in you (yikes)....your only other friend is a middle aged lady next door....but she has the most interesting stories about that diamond....and you find yourself getting very intrigued by the mystery of where it could be hidden.....You are Hero.....this is your story.

Websites:

www.elisebroach.com

Google search brings several interesting choices, with a literature guide from Scholastic in particular. (going directly to Scholastic makes it harder to find this link!)

Other Books to enjoy:

Down the Rabbit Hole, by Peter Abrahams

The Shakespeare Stealer, by Gary Blackwood

King of Shadows, by Susan Cooper

Great Writers and Kids Write Mystery Stories, edited by Martin Greenberg

Snacks:

Cinnamon toast

Muffins of every conceivable kind

Chocolate chip cookies!

Activities:

Crossword puzzles involving key words – Shakespeare, Hero, diamond, Anne Boleyn, etc.

- 1) Hero's family moves more than she would like. Have you ever moved? How did you feel about it? If you have never moved, how do you think you would feel if you had to do so?
- 2) Hero makes friends with people other than children her own age. Have you ever done this? Talk about your experience.
- 3) Hero feels betrayed when she finds out that Mrs. Roth was previously married to her friend, Eleanor's husband. Do you agree with Hero that friends should tell each other "everything"?
- 4) Hero hates her name because it is different. Do you have a name that is different? Do you like it? How would you feel if people made fun of your name?
- 5) Danny's Mother left him and his father when Danny was quite young, yet Danny does not seem to hold that against her at all. How do you think you would feel if this happened to you?
- 6) What does Hero say that reminds Danny of his mother? (p. 194 she refers to a hiding place as a "finding place", which she heard from Mrs. Roth). Why is this significant?
- 7) Danny sends the diamond to his mother without consulting either Hero or Mrs. Roth. What do you think of this? Do you understand why he did it? Do you think it was right? What would you have done in his place?
- 8) Did reading this book spark an interest in any other subjects for you? (such as Shakespeare's plays or the life and times of Anne Boleyn).
- 9) Where you surprised by anything at the end of the book? What was it, and how was it surprising?
- 10) Do you think that Hero's life is about to change for the better by the end of the book? Give examples of why you think this is so.

Shakespeare's Secret – Discussion Questions