

Prepared by Suellen, Guilford Free Library

“Year of the Dog” by Grace Lin

Book Talk: Grace tried many things at school that didn’t work out too well. Her science fair project wasn’t “scientific.” She couldn’t find a book to read that had a real Chinese main character in it. She couldn’t decide what she should write about for her class book project. And this was Chinese “Year of the Dog” where she was supposed find herself. Just how was that going to happen?

Questions:

What was the point of Grace’s mom’s stories? (To make Grace feel better, etc.)

How was her childhood different? Ask your parents about their childhood – How are they different from yours?

What did you think of the stories? Were they distracting or helpful to you?

Why did the science fair judge say her project wasn’t scientific? (they thought that it proved that plants prefer soda over water, milk and orange juice...but the plants were not kept in a controlled environment)

How did Grace feel about being a munchkin? (she felt she couldn’t be Dorothy, and it was too late to be in the orchestra -= not too happy)

What did her teacher want her to do in the play? (be the munchkin that gives Dorothy a gift)

What was supposed to happen in the “Year of the Dog?” (good year for friends, family and finding herself) Dogs are loyal, true and friendly!

When does Grace find herself? When she wins the prize for her book and realizes that she wants to be an author/illustrator when she grows up.

Why is the year of the dog lucky for Grace after all? (the play and her book project)

When does Chinese New Year occur? Is it the same day every year?

What are some of Grace’s family traditions? Does your family have any special traditions?

Why do you think Grace and Melody quickly become friends? (same background – Taiwanese-American)

Grace is made fun of because she can’t speak Chinese or Taiwanese. Why do you think the girls made fun of her? Do you think this was right? How would you feel if you were Grace?