

Let's Talk About ...

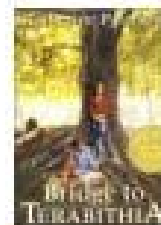
NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY



“Books written for children are intrinsically humanizing to any reader and are no less affecting than books written exclusively for adults. Adults also enjoy reading again books they loved as children.” – Elizabeth R. Baer, for the American Library Association, 1984

Featured book:

Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Patterson (1977), a poignant exploration of friendship and death. The novel introduces readers to two sensitive young people, Jess and Leslie, who form a close friendship. Their wish to escape humdrum reality inspires them to create their own fantasy kingdom modeled on C.S. Lewis’ land of Narnia discovered when reading *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Their secret place is reached by a rope swing over a creek. The swing becomes their bridge to a magical world where the realities of life don’t intrude.



The concept of the “bridge between worlds” becomes the author’s metaphor for her storytelling. “I have spent a good part of my life trying to construct bridges,” she said in accepting a Newbery Medal for the book. There were so many chasms I saw that needed bridging—chasms of time and culture and disparate human nature.” (Source: *Theme pamphlet by Elizabeth R. Baer, for American Library Association, 1984*).

Discussion Questions: [compiled from Let’s Talk About It program scholars]

- Are there disturbing elements of childhood presented in this book? What are they?
- As a child, did you ever experience bullying? How did you deal with it then? How would you deal with it now?
- Why do you think the author used swear words in writing a children’s book?
- Does learning about people’s personal problems help us deal with difficult people? How?
- Can dreaming and imagining be a good way to escape the pressures and stress of daily life or is it a waste of time?
- Does this book has therapeutic value in dealing with the loss of a loved one?



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