

The Sky is Falling

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Grade 4/5 Novel Study created by Janet Somerville

Chapters 1 & 2

The Plane; The Skywatchers

Building Vocabulary

Provide a **synonym** (word[s] that means the same) for each of the following words:

dogfight: _____

lorry: _____

wireless: _____

Airplanes

British	German
Spitfire	Messerschmitt 109
Hurricane	Junkers 52
	Dorniers

Historical figures & terms

Winston Churchill: Prime Minister of Great Britain, leader of Conservative Party (1940-1945)

Hitler: German Chancellor, leader of Nazi Party (1933-1945)

Hun: nickname for Germans

Nazi: racist Germans who believed that certain white people were better than any other race

swastika: spidery black symbol of the Nazi Party
Reading for Meaning

1. How does the author create suspense in the opening paragraph of chapter one?

2. What do the Skywatchers do in their fort in Old Mrs. Chandler's apple orchard?

3. What do each of the following people in Norah's family do to support the war effort?
 - a) Norah

 - b) Her sisters Muriel & Tibby

 - c) Her father

 - d) Her mother

Creative Extension

Draw your family tree. (Use a separate piece of paper.)

Chapters 3 & 4

Little Whitebull; "I Won't Go!"

Building Vocabulary

Provide a **synonym** (word[s] that means the same) for each of the following words:

tea: _____

sweetie: _____

Reading for Detail

1. What is the Skywatchers' secret signal?
2. What helped Norah calm down?
3. What news did Norah's dad have about the German pilot?
4. Why does Norah's granddad move in with them?
5. Why did Norah feel a special link to Princess Margaret Rose?

List the reasons Norah gives her parents for wanting to stay in Ringden and not to travel to Canada as a “war guest”:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Put these events in order on a plot timeline for June 1940.

- Messerschmitt crashes in Ringden
- Granddad’s house is bombed
- The Skywatchers find a pilot’s boot
- Dad says “you and Gavin are going to have a great adventure.”

< _____ >

Chapters 5 & 6

Too Many Goodbyes; "Are We Downhearted?"

Building Vocabulary

Provide a definition for each of the following:

- a) vicar

- b) shelter

- c) stile

- d) hostel

- e) dirge

Canadian History

Who were the Dionne quintuplets (also known as the quints)?

What was Anne of Green Gables?

Reading for Detail

List 3 familiar landmarks Norah cycled by with her father on their way to the railway station.

1.

2.

3.

What are 3 things Norah is told to remember while she and Gavin are war guests in Canada?

1.

2.

3.

What advice does Norah's mom give her and Gavin before they get on the train?

Explain why this advice from a stranger could be useful. "Be truthful, brave, kind and grateful."

How can you tell that Norah resents responding to the question, "are we downhearted?"

Why do you think that once on board the ship that Norah turns her back on home and faces the other way?

Chapters 7 & 8

The Voyage; Guests of War

Building Vocabulary

Match a word from Column A with a meaning in Column B.

Column A	Column B
convoy	underwear
vetted	a series of ships sailing in a group
bolted	ate quickly
knickers	checked over

Fill-in-the-blanks

Write the names of all of the geographic places the children travel through in Canada.

- a) Grand Banks of _____
- b) St. _____ River
- c) _____ City
- d) M _____
- e) T _____
- f) Hart _____
- g) _____ House

Reading for Meaning

Why do you think Gavin refused to take off his balaclava?

What did Norah watch for every day of their voyage to Canada? Why do you think she was interested?

How can you tell that Gavin is having a difficult time adjusting to being away from home?

How do you know that reading the novels *Swallows and Amazons* and *Swallowdale* is an escape from worry for Norah?

Why does Miss Carmichael insist on calling the children “war guests” and not “evacuees?”

Chapter 9

Alenoushka

Reading for Meaning

1. How do you think Norah felt when she overheard Miss Carmichael say, “Norah can be difficult. She’s such a loner, it isn’t natural?” (p. 77)

2. a) Where does the novel's title come from? (p.80)

b) Why is it a good choice?

PART TWO

Chapter 10

The Ogilvies

Reading for Meaning

1. How can you tell that Norah is delighted about her room at the Ogilvies's house? (p. 88)
2. What do you learn about Aunt Mary's brother Hugh? (p. 89)
3. Why do you think Norah feels lighter after tossing their identification disks into the trash? (p. 90)
4. Why is Norah jealous about the tin plane Gavin receives from Aunt Florence? (p. 92)
5. Why does Gavin say, "Creature thinks he might like to stay here?" (p. 96)

6. What two items does Norah hide in the window seat? (p. 99)

1)

2)

Chapter 11

Monday

Creative Extension

Pretend you are Norah and write a diary entry in which you confide your feelings about your first couple of days with the Ogilvies. (4-5 sentences long)

Chapter 12

Now in School and Liking It

Building vocabulary

List 3 words (synonyms) that Norah uses for “washroom.” (p. 117)

1)

2)

3)

Creative Extension

Telegrams were short messages that were sent over a wire service in the late 1800s & early 1900s. People were charged by the word, so kept the messages as short as possible. (Sort of like texting today, style wise)

If Norah could choose what to include in a telegram home to her parents, what do you think she would write?

What would Gavin want to tell his parents in his telegram?

Chapter 13

Misery Upon Misery

Reading for Detail

What do you think Aunt Mary's "secret sorrow" might be? (p. 122)

Why did the Ogilvies turn off the radio whenever Norah was near? (p. 124)

Why did Dulcie and Norah crowd their words on their schoolwork? (p. 131)

Building Vocabulary

Match a British word in Column A with its Canadian equivalent in Column B.

Column A	Column B
1 wireless	a) sweater
2 jersey	b) dinner
3 flannel	c) principal
4 headmaster	d) washcloth
5 tea	e) radio

Creative Extension

Pretend you are Gavin and dictate a short letter (3-4 sentences long) for Norah to write to your parents about your feelings about staying with the Ogilivies and what you like about being in Canada.

Chapter 14

Bernard

Reading for detail

List activities Norah does as she adjusts to life in Toronto.

a)

b)

c)

What does Norah learn from Bernard about the way he has been treated because of his German heritage? (p. 146)

How does she feel about it? Why?

Why does Norah think that Aunt Florence misses her son Hugh? (p. 154)

Chapter 15

News From England

Building Vocabulary

Provide a definition or a synonym (word that means the same) for each of the following words:

a) truant _____

b) conkers _____

c) censored _____

Reading for Detail

1. Why did Norah decide she'd never skip school again? (p. 156)

2. What is Gavin worried about back in England? (p. 159)

3. What 2 things made being a war guest more bearable for Norah? (p. 160)

1) _____

2) _____

4. How do you think Norah felt about the news about the ship called *City of Benares*? Explain why. (pp. 162-163)

5. List something Norah learns from the letters she receives from her family. (p. 163)

From Mum	
From Dad	
From Tibby	

Chapter 18

The Witches Are Out

Building Vocabulary

Provide a description or definition for each of the following words.

galoshes:

britches:

garters:

horse buns:

Reading for Detail

Even though it's cold, why won't Norah wear the long knitted leggings her mother sent? (p. 197)

Why did the children collect pennies in milk bottles on Hallowe'en? (p. 201)

What happened when Norah and her friends built a bonfire? (p. 206)

What evidence is there that Norah is fed up with Aunt Florence? (p. 210)

Chapter 19

Gavin

Reading for Meaning

Suggest a different title for this chapter that reflects its content.

When Norah runs away, she curls up in her snowsuit and falls asleep. Explain why you think she has the following dreams: (p. 214)

- a) walking and walking with no place to reach

- b) Little Whitebull demolished, burnt and flattened rubble

- c) goblin cackling “they’re gone”

Why do you think when Norah wakes up she keeps thinking about her family’s words to “take care of Gavin?” (p. 215)

Why does Norah start crying when she takes Gavin with her? (p. 221)

Why do you think Norah faints back at the Ogilvies’s house? (p. 223)

Chapter 20

Beginning Again

Reading for Meaning

Why does Norah insist that Gavin goes with her to HER school and not the fancy private school Aunt Florence would like to send him to? (p. 230)

List proof that Gavin is adjusting to Grade 1 quite well. (p. 232)

1)

2)

What good advice does Hanny give to Norah about Aunt Florence? (p. 234)

List 3 things that happened at Gavin's 6th birthday party. (p. 240)

1)

2)

3)

List the Xmas gifts that Norah buys with her \$1 allowance for each of the following people (p. 245):

Aunt Mary
Aunt Florence
Hanny
Edith
Paige
Bernard
Dulcie
Miss Gleeson
Gavin

Why does Gavin like wearing his sailor suit? (p. 248)

Copy the CBC Radio message to Norah & Gavin from Mr. & Mrs. Stoakes. (p. 253)

Mum:

“

_____”

Dad:

“

”

Why does the card that Norah gets from her friend Tom back home upset her? (p. 256)

The final sentence of the novel is perfect. Why?
“All that fell out of the sky was soft white snow.” (p. 264)