

A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan book discussions, library programs, or classroom activities.

Meet Ohio author Tricia Springstubb as she introduces readers to daily life, friendship, and family on a small island in a Great Lake.

Select from a range of discussion questions and extension activities to deepen the experience of reading *Moonpenny Island*.

Discover guidebooks, interactive websites, and other resources to explore topics and themes in depth.

Moonpenny Island

By Tricia Springstubb

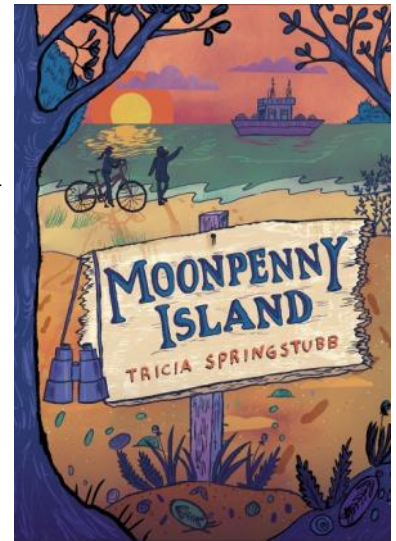


About the Book

Moonpenny is a tiny island in a great lake. When the summer people leave and the ferries stop running, just the tried-and-true islanders are left behind. Flor and her best, her perfect friend, Sylvie, are the only eleven-year-olds for miles and miles—and Flor couldn't be happier.

But come the end of summer, unthinkable things begin to happen. Sylvie is suddenly, mysteriously, whisked away to school on the mainland. Flor's mother leaves to take care of Flor's sick grandmother and doesn't come back. Her big sister has a secret, and Flor fears it's a dangerous one.

Meanwhile, a geologist and his peculiar daughter arrive to excavate prehistoric trilobites, one of the first creatures to develop sight. Soon Flor is helping them. As her own ability to see her life on this little lump of limestone evolves, she faces truths about those she loves—and about herself—she never imagined.



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Book Details

Moonpenny Island by Tricia Springstubb.
Balzer + Bray (HarperCollins), 2015. ISBN 9780062112934. Ages 8-12. 304 pages.
Leveled Reading: AR Points 7.0. ATOS Book Level 4.2. 640 Lexile.
harpercollins.com/9780062112934

Available as an ebook through the Ohio Digital Library: ohiodigitallibrary.com

Where is Moonpenny Island?

Moonpenny Island is a fictional location, made real by Tricia Springstubb's detailed descriptions and Gilbert Ford's evocative map at the beginning of the book. It was inspired by an actual island in Ohio. Kelley's Island, in Erie County north of Sandusky, is one of over 30 islands in Lake Erie, over a dozen of which are inhabited by people. See the "Go Further!" section of this toolkit for a related activity, and the "Explore More!" section for further reading and discovery resources about the Lake Erie islands.



Biographical information courtesy Ohioana Library. Permission to use author and illustrator photos granted by HarperCollins.

**“Sylvie shows
Flor the gray
rock she laid on
the very top.
One corner has
a pleat, like a
tiny white fan.
A fossil.**

**They put their
heads together
and make a
wish, the way
they always do
when they
find one.**

**Never parted,
wishes Flor.
Looking up into
Sylvie’s blue
eyes, she
knows their
wishes match.”**

About the Author

Tricia Springstubb is the author of books for kids of all ages (grown-ups seem to like them, too). Her work has made numerous Best of the Year lists, been chosen as Junior Library Guild selections, and been awarded the Ohioana Award for Children's Literature (twice!), the Ohio Arts Council Grant for Individual Excellence, and a fellowship from the Vermont Studio Center.

Tricia's most recent books include the middle grade novel **Every Single Second**, which *Publishers Weekly*, in a starred review, called “an unsettling, compelling, and heart-warming tale”, and **Cody and the Mysteries of the Universe** and **Cody and the Rules of Life**, the second and third books about Cody, her family, and her diverse neighborhood.

Tricia is also a book critic for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and a frequent speaker at libraries, schools, and conferences. Mother of three grown daughters, she lives with her husband in Cleveland Heights.

Author Resources

Tricia Springstubb's official website
triciaspringstubb.com

Tricia Springstubb on Twitter
@springstubb

Author page on HarperCollins website
harpercollins.com/cr-105856/tricia-springstubb

A Q&A with Tricia Springstubb (from Watch. Connect. Read.)
mrschureads.blogspot.com/2015/04/a-q-with-tricia-springstubb.html

For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:
Contact Tricia using the form on this page:
triciaspringstubb.com/teachers-and-librarians-resources.html

About the Illustrator

Artist and designer Gilbert Ford has illustrated many children's picture books and middle grade novels. He grew up in Jackson, Mississippi and currently lives in Brooklyn, New York.



Illustrator Resources

Gilbert Ford's official website
gilbertford.com

Inside the Studio with Gilbert Ford
thechildrensbookreview.com/weblog/2017/02/inside-the-studio-with-gilbert-ford-illustrator-of-soldier-song-a-true-story-of-the-civil-war.html

For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:
Email info@gilbertford.com

Go Further!

Ideas for extending the experience of reading **Moonpenny Island**.

Educators: Every CTRO book may be used to support Ohio's English Language Arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. Other Learning Standards, such as Science: Life Science: Earth's Living History (Grade 4) also apply. Discussion questions and educational activities for **Moonpenny Island** align with Learning Standards for Grades 3-6.

Librarians, parents, and others: These activities are also for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Learning Standards define what students should know and be able to do at each grade. For more information, see the Ohio Department of Education website, education.ohio.gov. From the Topics dropdown menu, click on "Learning in Ohio."

- If you can arrange it, a field trip to Kelley's Island or another Lake Erie island would be a memorable class trip or family adventure, and the ideal tie-in to reading and sharing **Moonpenny Island**. Research your trip at kelleysisland.com and parks.ohiodnr.gov/kelleysisland—or if you can't travel, use those sites to make a virtual visit to Kelley's Island.
- Ohio's 4th grade Model Curriculum (Ohio's Learning Standards: Science, p.117) includes researching and investigating specific areas in Ohio, such as Kelley's Island, to explore changes in ecosystems and the species that inhabit an ecosystem over time. As children learn about environments, fossil evidence, and living organisms in 4th grade, connect their science and reading lessons with a read-aloud of **Moonpenny Island** and a discussion of the ways science is part of the story.
- For an out-of-school-time activity, go on a fossil hunt, or share examples of Ohio fossils (either actual specimens, or photographs) with children, along with a discussion of fossils in **Moonpenny Island**. What do the trilobites on the island mean to Flor and Sylvie? What do they mean to Jasper and Dr. Fife?
- Using online resources available to students through INFOhio (infohio.org) and to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library (ohioweblibrary.org), look up articles about living on an island. What special considerations exist to island life? How do residents of a small island obtain resources such as groceries and clothing? How does adverse weather affect their way of life?

Talk About It!

Topics to share when discussing **Moonpenny Island** with young readers.

Spoiler warning! Some discussion questions refer to key elements in the book. Do not read if you do not want to find out what happens.

- What things does Flor value most about her friendship with Sylvie? How do these aspects of their friendship change (if at all) over the course of the story, and how does Flor adjust?
- The author chose to name this book after its setting, which is closely and vividly depicted throughout the text. How important is the setting to the story? Imagine if this book were set on the mainland, but with as many of the same geographic and social features as possible. Would the story be as effective and memorable?
- Tricia Springstubb has written that one of the book's themes is that each of us, no matter how small or insignificant we may appear, has an important role to play in the world. (triciaspringstubb.com/frequently-asked-questions.html) What does Flor learn about her role in the world? How do you have a positive impact on your own community? What have you learned, from your life experiences, about your role in the world?
- Look for and read aloud the sections of the text that describe Flor's school life. What is Flor's school like? How different is it from your school? Would you call your school large, medium, or small? Or are you homeschooled? How many people are in your grade or class? You can learn about the actual school on Kelley's Island by looking up Kelley's Island School on INFOhio or Ohio Web Library, and reading the articles published about the school in the *Toledo Blade*.

More on the next page!

Talk About It! (continued)

- What does Cecilia learn about herself after her relationship with Perry ends?
- Do you think Flor's Mama is back to stay? Why or why not?
- Dr. Fife tells Flor "I've always disliked that saying 'There's more than meets the eye.' Everything is visible, if only we know how to look." (p. 172-173). Do you think this is true? Why or why not? How observant do you think Flor is? What does she see, or fail to see, about Sylvie? About her mother? About Cecilia? About Perry? About Mrs. Defoe?
- The very last lines of the book read "Now the sun's in Flor's eyes, but still she keeps them open. Squints to see." (p. 292). Think about this ending in relation to Flor's conversation with Dr. Fife, above. Do you think the author is simply describing Flor's attempt to watch the seagulls, or could she be describing other ways of seeing? What has Flor learned about knowing "how to look"?

Explore More!

*Additional ideas and resources to use with **Moonpenny Island**.*

Visit the Lake Erie Islands

ohioseagrant.osu.edu/visit/attractions

From kayaking to nature camps, many attractions await visitors to the islands in Lake Erie. This site hosted by the Ohio Sea Grant College Program features a link to download a guidebook called *Explore the Lake Erie Islands: A Guide to Nature and History along the Lake Erie Coastal Trail* (find it under "Visitor Information"). Also of interest is the article "How Many Islands Are There in Lake Erie?" written by Middle Bass Island historian Michael Gora for the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society: middlebass2.org/IslandsInLakeErie.pdf.

Fossils and Fossil Hunting in Ohio

geosurvey.ohiodnr.gov/major-topics/fossils-in-ohio

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources provides a list of locations (most in southwest Ohio) and guidelines for fossil hunting, along with a variety of useful resources, including factsheets, newsletters, and a poster about Ohio fossils, available for free download.

Animals, Adaptation, and the Galápagos Islands: Discover with Darwin

teacher.scholastic.com/activities/explorations/adaptation

The American Museum of Natural History and Scholastic co-sponsor Science Explorations, a series of activity-based online modules covering various science topics at the elementary level. This interactive module provides key facts about Charles Darwin's historic trip, and opportunities for further exploration.

It's My Life

pbskids.org/itsmylife

Moonpenny Island explores relationships between friends and among family members including siblings, parent/child, and spouses. This site from PBS Kids offers kids ages 9-12 the opportunity to explore important issues, including family, friends, and school, in an interactive, peer-oriented environment.

Choose to Read Ohio, a project of the State Library of Ohio, the Ohioana Library Association, and the Ohio Center for the Book, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors, illustrators, and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits:
library.ohio.gov/ctro.

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