**Cornwall Reads!**

***Poppy***

**by Avi**

One School, One Book is a voluntary project that hopes to give families an opportunity to share the love of reading interesting books. Follow the calendar on the reverse side for nightly chapter reading. *If you are unable to join in reading the book along with the rest of the school, please consider the book a gift that can be enjoyed at another time.*

**What you need to know:**

Families need to know that *Poppy* is a fanciful tale featuring a cast of woodland creatures. This delightful adventure weaves action, suspense, and humor. Poppy, a timid, young deer mouse, discovers courage as she sets out on a quest to find her family a new home. Timeless themes about tyranny and heroism are within the story, as well as belief in oneself. The story also has some sensitive issues such as the loss of a loved one, and challenging authority, but the book deals with them in a manner that children can understand. The main character is a young female mouse who learns how to face her fears, search for truth, and break down stereotypes.

**Discussion Starters:**

* What makes a hero? Are heroes relevant today? Lloyd Alexander’s fantasy character, Taran says that, “every man is a hero if he strives more for others than for himself alone.” Do you agree? How do you define a hero?
* Even at a young age, the characters in the Poppy stories must discover their passions and find out about the world on their own. They question authority, follow their hearts, stand up for what they believe in, and face overwhelming challenges. Discuss what it means to be true to yourself. What are your passions? What dreams do you hope to follow?
* Throughout the Poppy stories, characters face challenges - but not without the love and encouragement of their family and friends. Can one person along accomplish great things, or do even heroes need a network of support? Write down an accomplishment that gives you great pride. Was it reached along or with the help of others? Identify how love and/or friendship played a part in this accomplishment.
* Avi’s characters each have a dominant personality characteristic: Lungwort is fatherly, Ragweed is cocky, Mr. Ocax is threatening, Poppy is thoughtful, and Ereth is prickly in his quills and his speech. Find examples of things each character says that reflects his or her personality. What are your favorite Ereth sayings?
* Families can talk about fears. What fears do you have? What are some ways you can face those fears?
* These discussion starters and more are found at https://www.avi-writer.com/teachers/teachers.html

**Possible extension activities:**

* Research one of the animals in *Poppy*. Include a description of the animal’s habitat, diet, life span, reproduction, predators, and any other fascinating facts.
* A spring visit to the visitor center at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area or the North Museum at F&M College in Lancaster to learn more about woodland creatures.

**Above all, the goal of this project is to bring families together to enjoy a good book. Let’s hope this can continue to be a yearly tradition at Cornwall Elementary.**