



My Near-Death Adventures (99% true)

By Alison DeCamp

Grade Levels: 3-6

Reading Level: 5.7

Synopsis:

Stanley Slater has problems, real problems --- bossy women, finding a father, and coming up with a way to prove that he is a real manly man when he's almost twelve in eleven months or so. His mother and grandmother have taken him to work with them at a lumber camp while they work as cooks. The evil ratings on his grandmother mostly hover in the 90%s. Geri, his cousin, finds ways to play innocent while getting him into trouble. His Mama has drawn the eye of more than one lumberjack, one of whom even killed a man and the other, a city fella, has an oily mustache. He wants to find his real father so Stan has written some fine letters for his absent father explaining why his many careers have kept his father away from Stan and his mother. He also has a scrapbook of images that he writes comments on. Stanley believes that has to prove that he is responsible, not klutzy, and can hold his tongue to go on a river drive. Unfortunately, most of what Stan is thinking comes out of his mouth as he is thinking it and most of what he is thinking is an exaggeration of the truth. Also, he just has to look at an ax to get hurt. This humorous historical fiction tale is told from Stanley's point of view.

Author Website:

<http://www.alisondecamp.com/>

Curricular Connections:

- English/Language Arts
- Social Studies

Lesson Ideas:

- Like the Diary of a Wimpy Kid's Greg Heffley, Stanley has delusions of being better at things than he is. Compare the characteristics of Stan and Greg. How Stan's relationship with Geri like Greg's is with his brothers?
- Find Michigan's Upper Peninsula on a map. Find some rivers that the logs for the river drive can go down. What cities will the logs pass through?
- Go to the Library of Congress's web site at <https://www.loc.gov/> Do a search for images of lumber camps trying to stick to the late 1800's and early 1900 to keep

- within the historical time period. Identify different places in the book where the images could be used. Then add some comments like Stan does on his images.
- All of the adventures and characters in the story are from Stanley's point of view. He exaggerates a lot of his skills and how he perceives others. Students write about an incident in their lives where they exaggerate the story and the characters like Stan does in his story.
 - Find an antique advertisement from the 1890's. Find a comparable product in today's marketplace. What is the same? What is different?

Common Core Standards:

- RL3 CCR Anchor Standard Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of text.
- RL6 CCR Anchor Standard Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- RL7 CCR Anchor Standard Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Additional Materials:

- This text also may be used in support of units of study developed by the Maryland State Department of Education: In Grade 4, *Actions Speak Louder Than Words*; Grade 5, *Faces of Immigration*; and Grade 6, *Express Yourself and Changes Over Time- The Ethics of Selling History*

Suggested Companion Titles:

- *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series by Jeff Kinney
- *The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg* by Rodman Philbrick

Professional Reviews:

- *Booklist*, 4/15/15
- *Kirkus Reviews*, 11/1/14
- *Library Media Connection*, 9/1/15
- *Publishers Weekly*, 12/1/14
- *School Library Journal*, 11/1/15