

Nightbird

By Alice Hoffman

Grade Levels:

* 4-8

Synopsis:

* Twig's family has a secret. Because of it, they live a very lonely life. The secret stays hidden in the attic and only goes outside at night. It's safer that way. The secret is Twig's older brother James. Due to an old family curse- James has wings. When a new family moves in next door neither Twig nor her older brother James can resist their offerings of friendship despite the fact that these neighbors are direct descendants of the witch who cursed their family so long ago. When Twig starts to hear rumors the townsfolk are gearing up to hunt a monster, she worries that James has been spotted on one of his late night flights. Can the curse be broken in time to save James? Family loyalty, first love, old rivalries, town legends, curses, magic, true friendship... this book has it all!

Author Website: <http://alicehoffman.com/>

Curricular Connections:

- Legends/ folklore/ fairy tales
- Figurative language
- Fantasy/ Magical Realism genre
- Johnny Appleseed
- Emily Dickinson

Lesson Ideas:

- TeachingBooks.net resources <http://www.teachingbooks.net/qlme4fu>
- Random House Teaching Guide http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Nightbird_EG.pdf
- Have students identify examples of similes, metaphors, and personification from the text. Give them examples to write some figurative language of their own.
- Have students read a few other American legends and then have them try their hand at writing or retelling one on their own.

Suggested Companion Titles:

- *I'm nobody! Who are you?: Poems* by Emily Dickinson
- *The Aviary* by Kathleen O'Dell
- *A Snicker of Magic* by Natalie Lloyd

- *Saving Lucas Briggs* by Marisa De los Santos

Professional Reviews:

- *Booklist* (01/01/15)
- *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* (05/01/15)
- *Horn Book Guide* (10/01/15)
- *Library Media Connection* (10/01/15)
- *Publishers Weekly* (01/19/15)
- *School Library Journal* (01/01/15)
- *Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA)* (02/01/15)