

BOOKPALS STORYLINE PRESENTS:

"SOPHIE'S MASTERPIECE: A SPIDER'S TALE"

By *Eileen Spinelli*, illustrated by *Jane Dyer*

Watch online video of actor *CCH Pounder*

reading this story at <http://www.storylineonline.net>



Sophie's no ordinary house spider. She's an artist; and every web she spins is more wondrous than the one before. But don't mention that to the guests at Beekman's Boardinghouse, because they don't like spiders. No one there wants anything to do with Sophie or her magnificent creations - no one except the woman on the third floor. She's a new mother "weaving" something herself; and when she runs out of yarn, Sophie knows the time has finally come to create the masterpiece of a lifetime.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Retell this story in your own words.
- Discuss and then tell or write about what you enjoyed most about this book.
- Discuss and then tell or write about the reactions to Sophie at the Beekman's Boardinghouse.
- Read Sophie's Masterpiece aloud to someone.
- Research "spiders" in your library.
- Write a report about "spiders".
- Research "boardinghouses". Find out as much as you can from interviewing people,

using the internet, using resource books. Why do they exist?

- Interview someone who has lived in a "boarding house". Tell or write about what you learned about "boarding houses" from your interview.
- Draw a picture of the outside of a boarding house in which you would like to stay.
- Draw a map of the inside of a boarding house in which you would like to stay.
- Think of a time in your life when you were as intent on completing a task as Sophie was on completing the baby blanket. Describe the event and your feelings about it.

MORE ACTIVITIES

- Research the history of “knitting”.
- Make a list of questions to ask someone who loves to knit. Interview someone who likes to knit to find the answers to your questions. Take a photograph of the person you interviewed with their knitting.
- Write a report about what you learned about “knitting”. Draw sketches to go with your report.
- Learn to knit. Make a blanket for a stuffed animal or a pet. Take a photograph of your blanket. Write out the directions for your blanket.
- Read at least three other books by Eileen Spinelli. How are her books the same and different?

INTERNET ACTIVITIES

There are several interesting sites about “spiders” on the internet. Visit the ones listed below to learn more about spiders.

- Many people are afraid of spiders. To find out why so many people are afraid of spiders go to www.ohioline.osu.edu and go to “Yard & Garden”, and then click on “Insects & Pests”. Scroll down to “Spiders In & Around the Home”. Read to find out why so many people are afraid of spiders.
- Spiders bodies are divided into how many parts?
“Spider” is the common name for how many species of arthropod animals?
Go to www.everythingabout.net and click on “Everything about Spiders”. Then read to learn the answers to the two questions.
- Did you know that here are a lot of different jumping spiders? Go to www.tolweb.org. Type in “spiders” and click on “search”. Scroll down to Jumping Spiders and click; then click on Colorful Jumping Spiders. Enjoy seeing how many different colorful jumping spiders exist.
- Make a list of interesting facts about spiders that you learned from these websites.

ABOUT THE READER



CCH Pounder has a career as colorful and distinct as her upbringing. Born in Guyana and raised on a sugar cane plantation, she and her sister were educated in Britain where they were introduced to art and the classics. Following high school she moved to New York where she performed in regional and classical repertory theater, the New York Shakespeare Festival, and on Broadway. Known for a variety of roles on television including such series as *L.A. Law*, *The Shield* and *E.R.*, she is also acclaimed for work in such films *Postcards from the Edge*, *Bagdad Café* and *Avatar* (as the voice of “Mo’at”).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eileen Spinelli lived in a boardinghouse when she was a young woman. There, she met a young mother who couldn't afford to buy her new baby a blanket and had to use an old, brown, scratchy one provided by the landlady. Many years have passed, but Eileen never forgot that experience. She wrote *Sophie's Masterpiece* as a way of finally giving that baby the blanket she always wanted him to have. Eileen has written many children's picture books. She lives in West Chester, Pennsylvania with her husband, author Jerry Spinelli. Eileen says their house "is overflowing with books and papers." When their children are at home, their house is overflowing with people! Besides writing, Eileen enjoys flea markets, garage sales, gardening, and visiting New England.

Some Other Books By Eileen Spinelli:

"Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch"
"When Mama Comes Home Tonight"
"Naptime, Laptime"
"When You Are Happy"
"The Perfect Thanksgiving"
"Thanksgiving at the Tapleton's"
"Night Shift Daddy"
"Tea Party Today: Poems to Sip and Savor"
"Something to Tell the Grandcows"
"Wanda's Monster"
"The Best Time of Day"
"Kittycat Lullaby"
"In Out Backyard Garden"
"Lizzie Logan Is in the Wedding"
"Coming Through the Blizzard: A Christmas Story"
"Feathers: Poems About Birds"
"Do You Have a Hat?"
"Song for the Whooping Crane"
"Moe McTooth: An Alley Cat's Tale"
"When Christmas Came"
"Rise the Moon"
"Three Pebbles and a Song"
"What Do Angels Wear?"
"Whales"
"Puppies"
"Sharks"
"Zoo Animals"

"Sophie's Masterpiece" © 2001 by Eileen Spinelli
All rights reserved. Published by Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division.

Content developed by JAN POWELL, BookPALS National Program Director.

Storyline Online is brought to you by the Screen Actors Guild Foundation
and made possible by a generous grant from Idearc Media.

Learn more about the Storyline Online program at <http://www.storylineonline.net>