Making Friends with Billy Wong
Augusta Scattergood

GENRE: Historical Fiction
LEXILE: 640

RELEVANT WEBSITES:
Author’s Site
GoodReads Link
Author Video

BOOK SUMMARY: Azalea’s summer plans suddenly change when she is sent to Paris Junction, Arkansas to help a grandmother she doesn’t know. Shy and reluctant to talk to others, Azalea meets Billy Wong and finds an unexpected friend. She finds herself confused by the prejudices of others towards the Chinese-Americans who live and work in her grandmother’s small town. Azalea learns much about family and friendship before she heads home to Texas to begin 6th grade.

BOOKTALK: Have your parents ever made you help someone you would rather not? In this novel, Azalea’s parents not only make her help her injured grandmother but they send Azalea away to live with her for the summer. Her grandmother is crabby; many of the kids in the small town are snobby and mean, and everyone in the town knows her business. There is also the mystery of the garden shed she is not allowed to open, her grandmother’s abandoned art, and the broken relationship between Azalea’s grandmother and mother. How will Azalea handle all the challenges that are thrown her way?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. Why do Azalea’s mother and grandmother have such a strained relationship? What do you think could have been done differently so that they still talked to each other?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in a small town like Paris Junction?
3. Why do you think Willis is so mean to Billy and others?
4. Should Azalea have told her grandmother about who was sleeping in the shed? Why or why not?
5. Azalea experiences many emotions when she discovers the letters in the shed. What would you have felt? Do you think she should have brought it up with her Grandmother? Why or why not?

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1. Star Maker by Laurence Yep
2. Raymie Nightingale by Kate DiCamillo
3. Stella by Starlight by Sharon Draper

ACTIVITY SHEET CREATED BY: Elizabeth Lecher/Teacher/St. Roch School