ELED 3113  
Fall 2018  
Hayley Nowlin

*Stargirl*

Author: Jerry Spinelli

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Guided Reading Level:

Awards: none

Multicultural: no

Protagonist: Stargirl (aka Susan Caraway)- round and dynamic character. She’s a little different than everyone else in her school, but she is unapologetically herself.   
Leo Burlock- round but static character. He doesn’t know how to be himself in public, and he sort of just goes with the crowd, so he’s a typical boy in high school.

Antagonist: Mica High school- all the students that attend here. They’re pretty basic flat and static characters because they don’t have any individuality. They don’t overcome any type of conflict.

Setting: Mica High school in Arizona.

Theme: nonconformity and staying true to yourself

Point of View: First person- Leo Burlock is the narrator of the story.

Conflict: Man vs. self- Stargirl uses her real name “Susan” when she’s acting normal and not like herself. Man vs. society- Stargirl is an outsider to everyone else in the school and she is treated like such.

All Elements of the Plot:

* The first day of Leo’s 11th grade year, there’s a new tenth grader at Mica High, and she’s not like the rest of the plain, boring, and same ole school students.
* Stargirl is avoided until there’s an incident at a football game and she’s asked to become a cheerleader. She becomes liked by everyone and even rubs some of her individuality off on them. Eventually her kind nature will also be her downfall. After she helps the member of an opposing team, Stargirl becomes hated and is shunned by everyone at school, except for Leo and her friend Dori. When Leo notices that he’s also being shunned, he tries to change who Stargirl is so that they can be together.
* After Stargirl becomes normal ole Susan, the students still shunned her and didn’t accept her no matter how much she changed herself. So, she goes back to being Stargirl again.
* Stargirl realizes that Leo cannot love her for who she is. She goes to the school dance all by herself and she has an amazing time. She is no longer shunned and is liked once more by the students at Mica High.
* After the dance, Stargirl disappears and never comes back to school. The students at Mica High are left feeling different.

Personal Response:

This is such an important story to read to students growing up. It’s a wonderful tale of the internal struggle in all of us, do we act like ourselves or like everyone else to fit in? The way the students at Mica High treated Stargirl is completely unacceptable. Someone should be praised for being themselves, not shunned and bullied. It’s important to share this story of Stargirl, because the reader is able to see her pain and experience what it’s like to be an outsider. Imagine how beautiful our world would be if there were more “Stargirls”.

Activity

In the book, on the last page, there are a few activities listed for teachers to try with their students. There was one activity listed that stuck out to me that I would like to try after reading this book to my students. The activity states: Stargirl and Leo have fun playing a “greeting card” game: After reading an advertisement on a bulletin board (“Odd Jobs- Ask for Mike”), they decide what that person needs most and create a card, such as a Keep-your-chin-up card. Carefully observe a stranger for 10 minutes. Create a greeting card that he or she needs. I will alter this activity by writing down every student’s name on a piece of paper, placing it in a bag, and going around so that every student may draw a name anonymously. This also controls the activity by making sure every student receives a nice card. I liked this activity because everyone needs a pick-me-up every now and then. We all have our own struggles and issues and it’s nice to receive some thoughtful words from someone we might not expect. This also enforces the act of inclusion in my classroom, and no one gets left out of the group assignment.

This activity came from: *Stargirl*, by Jerry Spinelli.