

An illustration of a young girl with short, white hair and blue eyes, sitting barefoot on a thick, dark brown tree branch. She is wearing a light purple t-shirt with a small owl graphic on the chest and blue pants. She has a gentle expression and is looking slightly to the right. Her right hand is resting on the tree trunk. On her lap sits a small, fluffy, light brown owl. In the upper right corner, a larger, more detailed owl is perched on a higher branch, looking towards the left. The background is a soft-focus forest scene with green leaves and a warm, golden light filtering through the trees, creating a magical atmosphere with small white sparkles.

An Odd Bird

A Curriculum Guide

Chapters 1-11

A Curriculum Guide

An Odd Bird (book one in the trilogy *Of the Wing*)

by P.K. Butler

About the Book

Hawk or hummingbird, birds find Claire Belle irresistible. In fact, they seek her out as if summoned. The question is, why? The eleven-year-old searches for answers with the help of two new friends: Victor, a Native American boy who rides her school bus, and Jerry, an old man who roams the forest with his pet chicken. Through their friendship, Claire awakens to an almost mythical hawk with whom she must communicate to learn the secret of her destiny as a champion for birds.

(See the Activity Guide for pre-reading activities)

Discussion Questions For Chapters 1-11

Chapter 1: Hawk

- 1) Why is Claire an “odd bird”?
- 2) How is she similar or different from other kids her age?
- 3) In your view, what is the most significant event in this chapter? Why do you think this?

Chapter 2: Strange Encounters

- 1) What are Claire’s secrets?
- 2) At midnight, outside her bedroom window, Claire sees Jerry by the pond with a beagle. Imagine possible reasons for why he is there.

Chapter 3: Lunatics and Bullies

- 1) Is Victor’s reaction to Claire’s news about seeing Jerry by the pond reasonable? Why or why not?
- 2) Why does Billy call Claire “Bird Brain”?
- 3) Why was Claire upset to learn that Victor plays video games with Billy? Consider as many reasons as you can.

Chapter 4: Red-belly and the Wolf Spider

- 1) Explain, if you can, what happens to Claire when she stares into the eyes of the Red-bellied Woodpecker?
- 2) Why does Claire feel like an imposter when she stares at herself in the bedroom mirror?
- 3) What is the widow's warning? Do you think the widow meant this warning or was she simply being disagreeable?

Chapter 5: Save the Beagle

- 1) Why do you think Victor ignored his mother's rules?
- 2) Why is Victor friends with Billy, the boy who bullies Claire?
- 3) Victor and Claire think that the Chicken Man has kidnapped a beagle. What do you think?

Chapter 6: Chasing the Chicken Man

Claire and Victor chase through the woods after the Chicken Man and his pet chicken. They catch up with him on an outcrop overlooking a shallow valley. Many unexpected things happen.

- 1) Which did you find most unexpected or interesting. Why?

Chapter 7: A Horrible Discovery

- 1) Describe the widow's odd preoccupation with a certain element of appearance.
- 2) Identify a scene where first Billy and then Claire are terribly angry. Compare and comment on how they handle that anger.
- 3) What is the "horrible discovery"?
- 4) On the way home from the widow Helen's home, Claire sees Wild Turkeys. What detail in the scene tells you that she expected this encounter?

Chapter 8: Moon Woman

- 1) Why is Victor angry with Claire on the morning school bus? How does he feel on the bus ride home from school?
- 2) Why doesn't Victor tell Claire his Cochiti name? Consider many different reasons.

Chapter 9: Midnight Rescue

- 1) What is Claire trying to prove by walking Moon Doggy at midnight?

Chapter 10: Call of the Barred Owl

- 1) After freeing Big Red from the trap, Claire discovers something is still in the cage. What is it?
- 2) Claire is not sure she wants to chase Moon Doggy into the dark woods. What changes her mind?

Chapter 11: Campfire Companions

Claire gets lost in the woods, but Jerry finds her. In the early morning daylight, Jerry sees Claire's golden eyes. He says to her, "So you're different. Thank God and stop being silly." Do you think this comment from Jerry was helpful or hurtful to Claire? Why?

For Chapters 12-22, See A Curriculum Guide, Part II