

# A Taste of Blackberries



by **Doris B. Smith**

## **Lit Link** **Grades 4-6**

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# At Glance

## Learning Expectations

Chapters 1-3

Chapters 4-6

Chapters 7-8

Literary Devices

Spelling

Vocabulary

Grammar

Creative Writing

Enrichment

Research

### Literacy Skills

• Reading for detail	•	•	•										
• Story elements	•	•	•										
• Identifying supporting evidence	•	•	•										
• Description	•												
• Paraphrasing		•											
• Character analysis	•	•	•										
• Inference	•		•										
• Drawing conclusions		•	•										
• Personal opinion	•	•											
• Evaluation		•											
• Relating personal experience to events in the story	•	•											
• Decipher and encipher coded message												•	
• Solve word expression puzzles												•	
• Solve a letter logic puzzle												•	

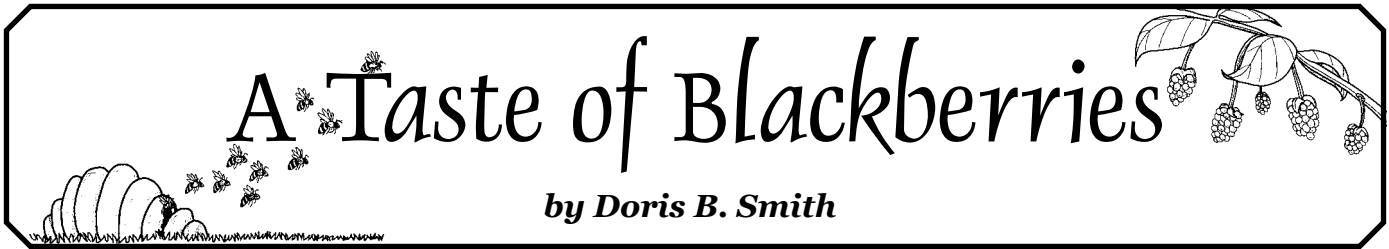
### Vocabulary & Grammar

• Similes				•									
• Personification				•									
• Onomatopoeia				•									
• Ordering Letters to make words					•								
• Word Search					•								
• Identifying silent letters					•								
• Synonyms, antonyms						•							
• Compound words (with and without hyphens)						•							
• Syllabication						•							
• Alphabetical order						•							
• Identifying common characteristics of groups of words						•							
• Parts of speech – nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs							•						

### Creative Arts & Research

• Writing: tongue twister, poetry, obituary, interview										•			
• Visual: memorial/epitaph, media center, mobile, collage										•			
• Research bees													•
• Research Morse code													•





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## Overall Expectations

The students will:

- become acquainted with the writings of Doris Buchanan Smith
- develop self-confidence in reading
- learn and/or reinforce several major reading skills in the reading process
- become aware of the need for taking responsibility for one's actions and to point out the dangers to oneself and others when this is not done
- appreciate the joy of life and the grief that comes when life is taken
- be involved in a wide range of opportunities that challenge, bring success, and provide enjoyment

## Synopsis

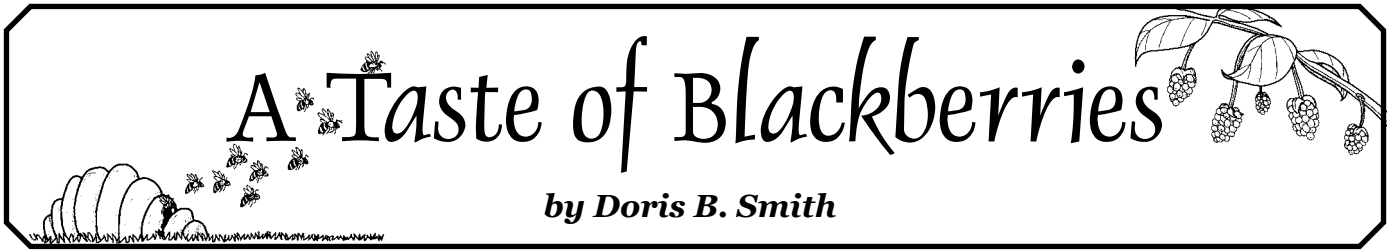
This story is about a young boy of about 12 years of age, his friend Jamie, and the special friendship that existed between them. The reader never really finds out the young boy's name so he can be referred to as "Young Writer". This early childhood friendship is suddenly cut short by a deadly bee sting. Both Jamie and his family members were unaware that Jamie had an allergy to bee stings.

Jamie was a boy full of surprise and very unpredictable. He could get into trouble very easily and enjoyed walking the edge of danger. He was always able to escape the likely tragedy until this "one" time.

Young Writer, Jamie and several friends were hired to remove Japanese beetles from the leaves of Mrs. Houser's grapevines. In no time at all Jamie became his usual troublesome self. Heather, a friend, had warned Jamie not to bother the bees' nest there in the ground, but Jamie ignored her plea and began poking the nest with a stick.

Suddenly, a swarm of bees flew out of the ground and started after the children. Young Writer stood still while Jamie and the other children quickly ran zig-zagging in different directions hoping to reach their homes in safety. Jamie's luck ran out. A bee was quick enough to land on him and sting him.

Jamie was able to get home he collapsed and lay there kicking and screaming. Young Writer, who lived across the street from Jamie, saw his weird but special friend writhing and screaming in pain. Young Writer's natural reaction to this scene was "there he is . . . still putting on his act". (p. 25)



## Chapter One

Complete the following activities.

1. Jamie and Young Writer were the best of friends. List **five** things the boys did that first day.
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Jamie called Young Writer (his friend) "a chicken." What was it that Jamie did that even our Young Writer friend was afraid to do?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Mrs. Houser asked the boys to do a job for her.
  - a) Tell what job it was.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
  - b) Was the wage for collecting beetles a fair wage? Explain your answer fully.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## Chapter Two

1. Why wasn't Mrs. Houser well liked by the children in the neighborhood?

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2. Why did Young Writer think it would be such a great opportunity to work for Mrs. Houser now?

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3. How did Young Writer and Jamie get some friends to help?

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4. List **two** things Jamie chose to do that were bad decisions to make after finding friends to collect beetles.

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5. What important fact did Jamie point out about severe storms?

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6. What dangers are Jamie, Young Writer, and Jamie's brother and sister "open to" if they decide to hitchhike a ride from a stranger?

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7. Find proof from the story that shows the driver of the car was not happy about the choice Jamie had made for Young Writer and the two young children about hitchhiking.

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8. Our Young Writer calls his friend Jamie "big mouth." Do you agree? Explain fully.

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9. Find **six** word phrases or even full sentences that show that the two older boys were frightened in the car.

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_
- f) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Jamie continues to show that he is not very trustworthy and is irresponsible about his actions. List **four** things that upset Young Writer.

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Why did Young Writer allow Jamie to make all these decisions and not stand up for what he felt was right?

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12. What do you think you would have done if you had been with Jamie instead of Young Writer?

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13. Write about a time when you were with others and somebody made a bad decision and created a similar dangerous situation for the group.

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