



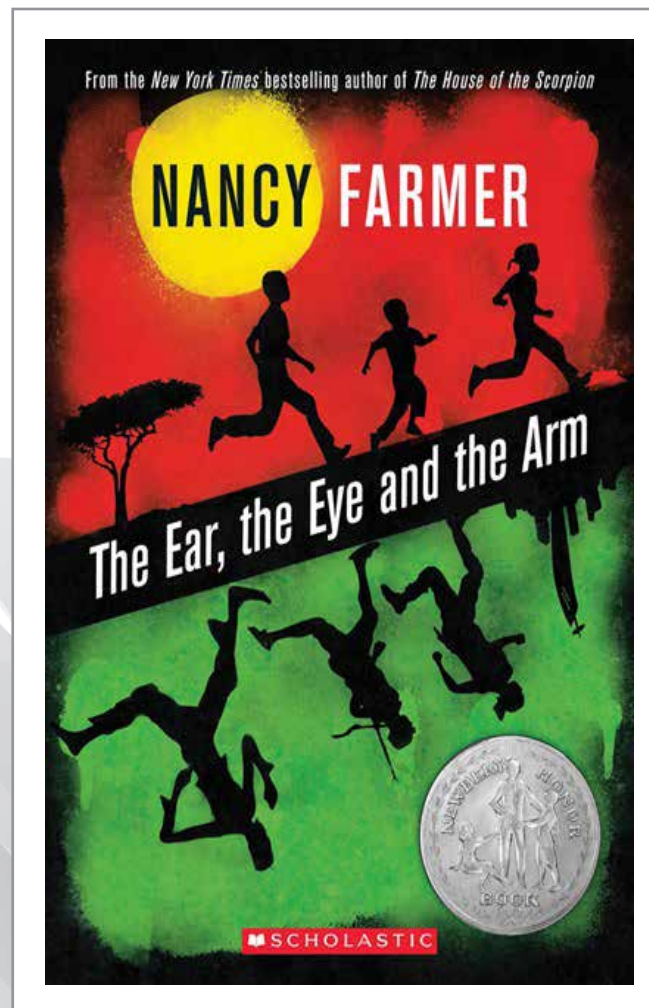
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 6-8**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# **The Ear, the Eye, and the Arm**

Nancy Farmer



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# The Ear, the Eye, and the Arm

Nancy Farmer

## TEACHER GUIDE

### NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Skills and Strategies

### Comprehension

Predicting, inference, details

### Vocabulary

Target word,  
synonyms/antonyms,  
defining

### Literary Elements

Literary analysis,  
characterization, similes

### Writing

Character journal, personal  
writing

### Listening/Speaking

Dramatizing, discussion, oral  
reports, oral presentation,  
role playing

### Thinking

Identifying attributes,  
research, conflicts, critical  
thinking

### Across the Curriculum

Social studies and science

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## Summary

*The Ear, the Eye, and the Arm* is set two centuries in the future in southeastern Africa. General Matsika, his wife, and their three children reside in Mazoe. The children, Tendai, Rita, and Kuda are overly protected, surrounded by robot maids, robot dogs, and mechanical birdsong in the high security garden. Indirectly, their father grants permission for a scouting trip, and the adventure begins. Their mother requests the services of detectives Ear, Eye, and Arm, but can these detectives rescue the general's children from the depths of Zimbabwe?

## About the Author

Nancy Farmer was in the Peace Corps where she taught chemistry and ran a chicken farm in India. She returned to the US and spent time in California. After many different jobs, she sailed to Africa where she ran a lab in Mozambique. The people she met there provided the information for this book. Seventeen years later, she returned to California. She has received a National Endowment for the Arts Grant, two Newbery Honor citations, and she was a finalist for the National Book Award.

## Major Characters

**Tendai:** thirteen-year-old son of General Matsika

**Rita:** Tendai's eleven-year-old sister

**Kuda:** Rita and Tendai's four-year-old brother

**General Matsika:** father; a general and Chief of Security for the Land of Zimbabwe; runs the house like the military

**Mrs. Matsika:** mother; a chemistry professor at the University; plays a significant role with all major characters in the story

**Mellow:** the family's personal Praise Singer; responsible for the children leaving home

**Arm:** spider-like detective who can read minds; capable of feeling other people's emotions

**Ear:** detective with incredible hearing and cauliflower ears

**Eye:** detective with incredible sight; afraid of heights

**She Elephant:** kidnaps children and sells them to the Masks

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## Minor Characters

**Blue Monkey:** assists the She Elephant in the kidnapping

**Granny:** lives in Dead Man's Vlei; hates criminals and always complains

**Knife:** jealous hoodlum; grandson of Granny

**Fist:** Knife's partner in crime

**Trashman:** also known as Chedu; simple, strong man; wanders to different places; watches over Kuda

**Garikayi:** a leader in Resthaven; head of Garikayi clan

**Myanda:** gatekeeper at Resthaven and one of Garikayi's wives

**Chipo:** Garikayi's younger wife who bears twins

**Mr. Thirsty:** owner of Mr. Thirsty's in the Cow's Guts

**Mrs. Horsepool-Worthingham:** the Mellow's mother

**Masks:** gang with a leader who has a powerful spirit force

## Introductory Activities

1. **Previewing the Book:** Have students look at the cover and leaf through the book. Discuss the setting and title and make predictions about the book's content.
2. **Prediction:** Have students read a page at the beginning, middle, and end of the book. They should predict what the book is about by answering the questions *Who? What? When? Where? Why?* and then set up a prediction chart. See pages 9–10 of this guide.
3. **Characterization:** Create a character attribute web with your students. During class discussions, characterize Arm. See page 8 of this guide.

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## Character Attribute Web

**Directions:** Fill in each circle with information about a character in *The Ear, the Eye, and the Arm* using evidence from the book.

A central circle is connected to five surrounding circles. The central circle contains a single horizontal line. The surrounding circles are labeled as follows:

- His/her statements** (top): Three horizontal lines.
- His/her thoughts** (top-left): Three horizontal lines.
- His/her behavior** (top-right): Three horizontal lines.
- Others' statements about him/her** (bottom-left): Three horizontal lines.
- Others' statements toward him/her** (bottom): Three horizontal lines.
- Others' behavior toward him/her** (bottom-right): Three horizontal lines.

- 
3. Social Studies: Have students look at a map of Harare. Instruct students to draw the design Tendai sees when he looks down at the beautiful crisscross of streets that make up the city in which he lives.
  4. Poetry: Have students write a name poem for the Masks, characterizing what the readers know about them. Pattern: Place the letters MASKS vertically on paper. Write a descriptive word or phrase beginning with each letter that describes the Masks. Refer to a dictionary or thesaurus if needed.

## Chapters 39–Epilogue, pp. 284–30

Tendai gains power, and the children are reunited with their parents on Tendai's fourteenth birthday. The detectives raise Sekai in Mufakose instead of the Cow's Guts, but Arm is no longer psychic. Tendai studies medicine and spends time with the Lion Spirit medium. Rita becomes a math whiz, and Kuda, a fighter pilot, who learns military strategy from the inside out.

### Vocabulary

exploited (286)	reverently (286)	writhed (288)	demoralized (289)
implored (289)	caterwauls (294)	vat (295)	idly (296)
pulverized (297)	ill-gotten (298)	psychic (301)	moderately (301)
keen (301)			

### Discussion Questions

1. Explain how Tendai knows immediately that Arm is a friend. How does the reader know the man is Arm? (*The man shoots three Masks; He is long and skinny like a wall spider. p. 284*)
2. Discuss what causes Tendai to see good in the She Elephant. What is Tendai's reaction to this awareness? (*The mhondoro guides him to see her as a fat, unwanted child with no friends. She was ignorant, graceless, and rough. She ran away from home and believed that you must bash people before they had a chance to bash you; When they make eye contact, Tendai gives her a good, friendly, "belonging" kind of smile. p. 286*)
3. Explain why the Big-Head Mask has trouble finding form. Who snaps the Big-Head into halves? (*because Tendai destroyed the Warthog Mask; The She Elephant is able to do it once the Mask is fully in the real world. pp. 288–289*)
4. What does Mother see when the door finally opens, and what makes it a bitter moment? (*She sees her three children, but Kuda does not recognize her. p. 291*)
5. Mother feels that the two halves of the Big-Head Mask are crawling toward each other, but she believes it is just the candlelight that makes them appear that way. Do you agree? Explain. (*Answers will vary. p. 293*)
6. Describe how Arm feels about his time in Mask country. (*"There's nothing like it in our world. Imagine fire that burns but has no warmth, darkness that blinds you, but is no relief from light. All I can say is that it was like being dropped in a vat of acid. Whatever makes real things real was eaten away. I can't describe it! Only that it was horrible!" p. 295*)

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## Supplementary Activities

1. Literary Analysis: Have students add the following similes to their lists—"The spirit-ridden men writhed as though stricken with disease" (p. 288), "shook it off like a gnat bite" (p. 289), "tied up as neatly as a bale of cotton" (p. 292).
2. Poetry: Have students read "If" by Rudyard Kipling, which expresses the idea of keeping your wits about you. Students should then explain how elements of this poem compare to Tendai as his "wits returned" (p. 291).
3. Culture: Have students write a short essay explaining the significance of the spirit world to the events that occur in *The Ear, the Eye, and the Arm*. The essay should also address how this novel would have been different if the characters had no concept of a spirit world.