We all started reading because of a REBEL LIBRARIAN.

PROPERTY of the REBEL LIBRARIAN

ALLISON VARNES

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About the Book
Seventh grader June Harper is an excellent student who loves to read. She enjoys hanging out in the Dogwood Middle School library because Ms. Bradshaw, the librarian, always has book recommendations. When her parents notice The Making of a Witch in her book bag, they start a campaign to fire Ms. Bradshaw and purge the school library of what they consider inappropriate books. June is grounded and her parents remove all books from her bedroom until they can read them. Then June discovers a Little Free Library on her walk to school, and an idea is born. She sets up a library of banned books in an empty locker and circulates them to students. Suddenly reading is the coolest thing to do at Dogwood Middle School. When Principal Booker discovers the library, June exercises her First Amendment rights and addresses the school board. The national news is there, and June, the rebel librarian, is presented as a hero.

About the Author
Like librarian Ms. Bradshaw in Property of the Rebel Librarian, Allison Varnes has fought for her students. She taught English in special education for eight years and once had to convince administrators that The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is not an endorsement of witchcraft. She’s from a family of teachers and a PhD in education from the University of Tennessee. And like heroine June, Allison is a former marching band student. When she’s not writing, she hosts books on the Hamilton soundtrack with a trio of Chihuahuas named after Famous characters. Find her on Twitter at @allisonvarnes or on Facebook at facebook.com/allisonvarnesauthor.

Pre-Reading Activity
Read the First Amendment of the United States Constitution to your students. Then have them write a one-page paper that discusses how the freedom to read is protected by the First Amendment.

Vocabulary/Use Of Language
The vocabulary in the novel isn’t difficult, but students should be encouraged to jot down unfamiliar words and try to define them before they read. The following words may include:
- imperceptible (p. 162),
- wistful (p. 173),
- adrenaline (p. 133),
- vengeance (p. 94),
- courageous (p. 114),
- resolve (p. 63),
- reliability (p. 94),
- divisive (p. 188),
- vengeful (p. 187),
- improvement (p. 151),
- impulsive (p. 162),
- heartbroken (p. 199),
- courage to face (p. 212),
- divination (p. 213),
- cross-examine (p. 241),
- and so on.

Classroom Discussion
The first chapter is titled “Ripple Effects.” What is a ripple effect? How does the ripple effect in the novel begin? Discuss Principal Booker’s role in the ripple effect.

A euphemism is a mild way of expressing a thought considered harsh or offensive. How is “book extraction” a euphemism for book banning?

Ms. Bradshaw, the librarian, is placed on leave. How do students feel about this? Should they be allowed to see her at the school board’s discretion? Do they have the right to see her in the future? Discuss how the school board rules are enforced.

Discuss the relationship between June and Emma. Contrast their feelings about the right to read. How does the book-banning incident end their friendship? At the end of the novel, Emma states that she wishes she had been a part of the banned books locker in locker 319. Why does she change her mind? Discuss whether June and Emma can repair the damage to their relationship.

It’s normal for middle school students to have crushes. At the beginning of the book, June has a crush on Graham, and Emma has a crush on Matt. What goes wrong with these relationships? Which of June’s qualities cause Matt to notice her?

Why does June make reading cool at Dogwood Middle School? June asks herself, “Is this what it feels like to be popular?” (p. 135). Discuss how June’s courage makes her popular.

The Student Club for Appropriate Reading places posters throughout the school. Which of the posters seem especially inappropriate? Explain why the school administration allows this group to display their blatant message but the other kids have to go underground with their rebellion.

What is the attitude of the teachers at Dogwood Middle toward the book banning? How does June’s courage and her passion for books give her the courage to face the school board.

Vocabulary
1. What is the irony in this? How does the message in the petition make you feel? Discuss how the events of the school board meeting fit into the overall theme of June trying to protect her right to read. What is the irony in this? How does the message in the petition make you feel? Discuss how the events of the school board meeting fit into the overall theme of June trying to protect her right to read.

2. June learns from Ms. Bradshaw that a “heart book” is one that touches your heart. Select an appropriate heart book that June might give to her parents at the end of the novel. Share the book’s title and explain why you chose it.

3. At the end of the novel there is a list of titles that are in June’s library, and an additional list of banned titles mentioned in the book. Divide the class into small groups and ask them to conduct a survey of twenty-five students across these titles and determine which of the banned books have been read by students in their school. Construct a bar or pie graph that shows the collected data. Which is the most popular banned book in your school? What percentage of the students surveyed have read each title?


5. Write a letter that Steven Pico might write to June commending her for her courage and bravery in defending students’ right to read.

6. Write a letter to the superintendent of Dogwood Middle regarding the “book extraction” a euphemism for book banning.

Internet Resources
alsa.org/aboutus/offices/ofl/l
Official website for the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom
ncac.org/
Official website of the National Coalition Against Censorship
child.org/
Official website for the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund

Rebel librarians need to keep reading!

Recommendations for ravenous readers who love books

Mr. Lemonsalla’s Great Library Race
978-0-359-70699-6
The Losers Club
978-0-359-57775-3
The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary
978-0-359-52646-5
**Pre-Reading Activity**

Read the First Amendment of the United States Constitution to your students. Then have them write a one-page paper that discusses how the freedom to read is protected by the First Amendment.

- **Curriculum Connections (continued)**
  - Read about the landmark Supreme Court case *Board of Education v. Pico* (1982) ([www.firstamendmentcenter.org/schools/case/539](http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/schools/case/539)). Have a debate: some students should be allowed to put books on the side of the schools’ lockers, and others should argue for the Student Club for Appropriate Reading. Address whether the school board violated students’ First Amendment rights.
  - Write a letter that Steven Pico might write to June commending her for her courage and bravery in defending students’ right to read.

**Vocabulary/Use Of Language**

The vocabulary in the novel isn’t difficult, but students should be encouraged to jot down unfamiliar words and try to define them using context. The novel may include words such as *imperceptible*, *nuanced*, *accomplices*, *deviance* (p. 187), *quadrant* (p. 180), *wry* (p. 162), *defiance*, *imperceptible* (p. 91), *cavernous*.

**Internet Resources**

- [ axa.org/abouts/offices/edl](http://axa.org/abouts/offices/edl) - Official website for the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom
- [ncac.org/](http://ncac.org/) - Official website for the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom
- [cbldf.org/](http://cbldf.org/) - Comic Book Legal Defense Fund
- [encyclopaedia.com/literary/](http://encyclopaedia.com/literary/) - Vocabulary/Use Of Language

**Relief librarians need to keep reading!**

**Recommendations for ravenous readers who love books**

- [Mr. Lemonscale’s Great Library Race](http://mrlemonscale.com) - TBR: 978-0-553-52099-6
- [The Lounes Club](http://the-lounes-club.com) - TBR: 978-0-399-57758-0
- [The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary](http://thelastfifthgrade.com) - TBR: 978-0-399-52146-5
About the Book

Seventh grader June Harper is an excellent student who loves to read. The enjoyment spilling out in the Dogwood Middle School library because Ms. Bradshaw, the librarian, always has her book recommendation. When her parents notice The Mating of a Witch in her book bag, they start a campaign to fire Ms. Bradshaw and purge the school library of what they consider inappropriate books. June is grounded and her parents remove all books from her bedroom until they can read them. Then June discovers a Little Free Library on her walk to school, and an idea is born. She sets up a library of banned books in an empty locker and circulates them to students. Suddenly reading is the coolest thing to do at Dogwood Middle School. When Principal Beeler discovers the library, June exercises her First Amendment rights and addresses the school board. The national news is there, and June, the rebel librarian, is presented as a hero.

June learns from Ms. Bradshaw that a “heart book” is one that touches your heart. Select an appropriate heart book that June might give to her parents at the end of the novel. Share the book in class and explain why you chose it.

- Correlates with Common Core State Standards in Speaking & Listening: Presentation of Knowledge, skills and information (6-7.5).
- Correlates with Common Core State Standards in Language: Acquisition & Use of Language (5-7).
- Vocabulary: L. 5-7.4

Curriculum Connections (continued)

• June misses her sister, Kate, who is away at college. How does Kate judge her own rebellion against her parents? What is Kate’s reaction to the rashness that her parents have caused at Dogwood Middle? Explain Kate’s statement to June: “You won this round.” (p. 252)

• Why does June need to see Ms. Bradshaw one last time? At what point does June suspect that Ms. Bradshaw is the owner of the Little Free Library? How is Ms. Bradshaw triumphant by the end of the novel?

• The speech to the school board is a pivotal moment for June. Her parents wonder if she will do June’s words come true and her parents remove all books from her bedroom until they can read them. Then June discovers a Little Free Library on her walk to school, and an idea is born. She sets up a library of banned books in an empty locker and circulates them to students. Suddenly reading is the coolest thing to do at Dogwood Middle School. When Principal Beeler discovers the library, June exercises her First Amendment rights and addresses the school board. The national news is there, and June, the rebel librarian, is presented as a hero.

Pre-Reading Activity

Read the First Amendment of the United States Constitution to your students. Then have them write a one-page paper that discusses how the freedom to read is protected by the First Amendment.

- Correlates with Common Core State Standards in Writing: Text Types & Literature; Language: Acquisition & Use of Language (5-7).

Read your school district’s policy regarding controversial materials. Have students explain how the policy justifies a school library’s right to circulate the following books: The Crucible, The Giver, Of Mice and Men, The Long Winter, The Wallflower, The War of the Worlds, and The Yellow Wallpaper. Have students explain how the book-banning incident ended their friendship? At the end of the novel, Emma states that she wishes she had been a part of the banned books locker in locker 319. Why does she change her mind? Discuss whether June and Emma can repair the damage to their relationship.

- Correlates with Common Core State Standards in Language: Knowledge of Language (5-7).

Classroom Discussion

• The first chapter is titled “Ripple Effects.” What is a ripple effect? How does the ripple effect in the novel begin? Discuss Principal Beeler’s role in the ripple effect.

• Remind students that irony is the use of words to convey a meaning that is opposite of the literal meaning. Explain the irony in June’s mother crossing the street on a yellow for her.

• The Mating of a Witch is the novel that June’s parents want banned from the Dogwood Middle School library. Yet The Crucible is taught in Ms. Goborn’s seventh-grade home economics class. What is the irony in this? How does the irony in June’s life mirror what is happening at Dogwood Middle School?

• June’s parents remove all books from her bedroom until they can determine if they are “quality reading material.” How might they define “quality”? When they return the books, there are words covered up and pages ripped out. What message does this send?

• Explain the prison metaphor (p. 28). How do June’s parents and the Dogwood Middle community “jail” books? Debate how students are the real losers in this battle.

Vocabulary/Use Of Language

The vocabulary in the novel isn’t difficult, but students should be encouraged to jot down unfamiliar words and try to define them using context clues. Some difficult words may include: 
- cavernous
- imperceptible
- accomplices
- impact
- acclaimed
- scathing
- deviance
- crass
- toil
- hearken
- stonewall
- mendacious
- culpable
- arrogant
- seditious
- doleful
- audacious
- scrounging
- irascible
- circumstance
- glib
- effrontery
- sequestered
- pugnacious
- pernicious
- prosaic
- histrionic
- circumspect
- churlish
- miasma

Internet Resources

ala.org/aboutavax/offices/edlit/ - Official website for the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom 
ncac.org/ - Official website of the National Coalition Against Censorship 
child.org/ - Official website for the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund

Relibean librarians need to keep reading!

Recommendations for ravenous readers who love books

Mr. Lemonsay’s Great Library Race
TR: 978-0-553-52999-6
The Branch City Library
29143 10 Mile Road, Suite 10
Romulus, MI 48174

The Losers Club
TR: 978-0-307-55778-3
The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary
TR: 978-0-553-52466-5

This guide was prepared by Pat Slade, Children’s Library Consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.
About the Book

Seventh grader June Harper is an excellent student who loves to read. The enjoyment brought out in the Dogwood Middle School library because Mr. Beeler, the librarian, always has her book recommendation. When her parents notice The Making of a Witch in her book bag, they start a campaign to fire Mr. Beeler and purge the school library of what they consider inappropriate books. June is grounded and her parents remove all books from her bedroom until they can read them. Then June discovers a Little Free Library on her walk to school. She sets up a library of banned books in an empty little shed and circulates them to students. Suddenly reading is the coolest thing to do at Dogwood Middle School. When Principal Beeler discovers the library, June exercises her First Amendment rights and addresses the school board. The national news is there, and June, the rebel librarian, is presented as a hero.

About the Author

Like librarian Ms. Bradshaw in Property of the Rebel Librarian, Allison Varnes has fought for her students. She taught English in special education for eight years and once had to convince administrators that The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is not an endorsement of witchcraft. She’s from a family of teachers and has a PhD in education from the University of Tennessee. And like heroine June, Allison is a former teaching aide. When she’s not writing, she blogs along with the Hamilton soundtrack with a trio of Chihuahuas named Famous character. Find her on Twitter at @allisonvarnes or on Facebook at facebook.com/allisonvarnesauthor.

Curriculum Connections

A student draws a cartoon of Principal Beeler. His holding a book titled A student draws a cartoon of Principal Beeler.

June learns from Ms. Bradshaw that a “heart book” is one that touches your heart. Select an appropriate heart book that June might give to her parents at the end of the novel. Share the book in class and explain why you chose it.

Curriculum Connections (continued)

• June misses her sister, Kate, who is away at college. How does June find her own outlet against her parents’ wishes? What is June’s reaction to the news that her parents have authorized the Library to circulate a banned book? Explain June’s statement to June: “You see this round?” (p. 252).

• Why does June need to see Mr. Beeler one last time? At what point does June believe that Mr. Beeler is the owner of the Little Free Library? How is Mr. Beeler triumphant by the end of the novel?

• The speech to the school board is a pivotal moment for June. Her parents wonder if she will ever forgive them. Debate whether this means that they have gained respect for their daughter and her views.

Ask students to read about the Jefferson Muzzles on the following websites: fncac.org/muzzles. What is the purpose of the award? Then have them think about which characters in Property of the Rebel Librarian are contenders for a Muzzle. Write a short essay that nominates one or more characters for this award.

Vocabulary/Use Of Language

The vocabulary in the novel isn’t difficult, but students should be encouraged to jot down unfamiliar words and try to define them within context. These words may include (p. 7), zephyr (p. 19), epigrams (p. 92), diatribe (p. 11), cavernous (p. 146), wistful (p. 63), imperceptible (p. 199), queue (p. 111), arcane (p. 133), improvable (p. 151), impure (p. 162), sourly (p. 167), misread (p. 175), venomous (p. 185), abomination (p. 187), admirable (p. 188), quaint (p. 195), quizzing (p. 213), diviner (p. 241), and wry (p. 252).

Internet Resources

ala.org/aboutala/offices/oif/ Official website for the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom
ncac.org/ Official website of the National Coalition Against Censorship
child.org/ Official website for the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund

Rebel librarians need to keep reading!

Recommendations for ravenous readers who love books

Mr. Lemonsalla’s Great Library Race
Tel: 970-935-0060 x6

The Emma Library
Tel: 970-335-5578-3

The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary Tel: 970-935-0246 x5

Curriculum Connections (continued)


Write a letter to Steven Pisciotta who wrote to June commending her for her courage and bravery in defending students’ right to read.

June discovers a Little Free Library on her walk to school. Yet The Crucible is taught in Ms. Gohbom’s seventh-grade home economics class. What is the irony in this? How does the message in the novel mirror what is happening at Dogwood Middle School?

• June’s parents remove all books from her bedroom until they can determine if they are “quality reading material.” How might they define “quality”? When they return the books, there are words covered up and pages ripped out. What message does this send?

• Explain the prison metaphor (p. 28). How do June’s parents and the Dogwood Middle School community “jail” books? Debate how students are able to get underground with their rebellion.

• What is the attitude of the teachers at Dogwood Middle School toward the book banning? How does June deal with the book banning themselves?

• Cite times that June experiences both anger and despair. Explain how her anger and her passion for books give her the courage to keep the school board.

Pre-Reading Activity

Read the First Amendment of the United States Constitution to your students. Then have them write a one-page paper that discusses how the freedom to read is protected by the First Amendment.

June Harper, the rebel librarian, is placed on administrative leave until her case comes before the school board. How does June find an advocate for students and reading cause her to lose her job? Debate whether it was necessary for security to escort her out of the school. How does Ms. Bradshaw continue to advocate for students’ right to read after she is placed on leave?

Classroom Discussion

• The first chapter is titled “Ripple Effects.” What is a ripple effect? How does the ripple effect in the novel begin? Discuss Principal Beeler’s role in the ripple effect.

• Remind students that irony is the way to convey a meaning that is opposite of the literal meaning. Explain the irony in June’s mother crossing the picket line prior to winning her strike and then working at the exact same company. Discuss how irony is illustrated in the novel.

• The Making of a Witch is the novel that June’s parents want banned from the Dogwood Middle School library. Yet The Crucible is taught in Ms. Gohbom’s seventh-grade home economics class. What is the irony in this? How does the message in the novel mirror what is happening at Dogwood Middle School?

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June learns from Ms. Bradshaw that a “heart book” is one that touches your heart. Select an appropriate heart book that June might give to her parents at the end of the novel. Share the book in class and explain why you chose it.

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