

## HOPE WAS HERE Teaching Guide by Christine Blair

# hope was here

### SUMMARY:

Hope and her aunt Addie have had to move again, leaving the Blue Box Diner in Brooklyn behind when Gleason Beal steals their money and their dream of owning their own restaurant. Now, they work at the Welcome Stairways, a diner in Mulhoney, Wisconsin where Addie is the cook and Hope is a waitress. Hope expects America's Dairyland to be "basic bovine boredom," but instead she enters into a world of politics as G.T. Stoop, her new boss who has leukemia, declares that he is running for mayor. Hope sees political corruption up close and learns the power that teenagers have when they band together behind a good cause. She also meets Braverman, an extremely cute grill man as G.T. becomes the father she has wanted all her life.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

If you had to move and could only take a small part of what you own, what would you choose?

What are Hope's rules for being a good waitress?

G. T. says, "...we all need to live our lives just a little bit like the hearse is outside ready to cart us away – make the days count." (p. 67) What other principles are important in how we live our lives?

What does Hope learn about dealing with anger?

What do G. T. and Hope do to record memories? Have you ever thought about some action you could do to record yours?

### JOURNAL STARTERS:

I would like to change my name to \_\_\_\_\_ because. . .

If I had to move from where I live now, what I think I would miss most is. . .

The book I can't live without is. . .

When Hope wears the clown nose, discouragement turns into hope for her. I had a similar experience of discouragement turning into hope when. . .

### ACTIVITIES:

Make a dictionary of sayings used in the food service business.

Fix a Keep Hoping sandwich.

Make a recipe book of dishes mentioned in the novel.

Research leukemia.

Interview a waitress and ask for tips on how to do the job well. Compare these tips with the ones that Hope gives.

Draw the Welcome Stairways.

Create a scrapbook about your life.

Draw a map of the United States and locate and label the different places that Hope has lived.

Do an experiment involving grafting.

Find out what you can do to help another person or an organization in your community and do it.

### BOOKTALK:

Imagine having to pull up stakes time after time because the places where you have worked close down. This is what sixteen-year-old Hope and her aunt Addie have faced repeatedly. Now they have moved from Brooklyn to work at the Welcome Stairways, a diner in Mulhoney, Wisconsin, where Addie is the cook and Hope is a waitress. "Basic bovine

boredom” is what Hope expects in America’s Dairyland, but certainly not what she finds. Instead, she meets teenagers who really care about their town, become involved in politics, and a campaign to oust the corrupt mayor. Hope has to wonder, though, will she ever find the father she has always looked for, and what will she do about Braverman, grill man supreme, who rates a 7.4 on the male cuteness scale? A waitress dating a cook violates the number one rule of waitress survival (“DO NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, DATE THE COOK” p. 94), so how could this relationship ever work?

#### TIE-INS:

If Hope could meet Hildy (Peeled), how could they help each other deal with the loss of a father they have loved so much?

How are Hope and Jill (“Pancakes”) similar and different?

Corruption is an important theme in both Hope Was Here and Peeled. How are the two cases similar? How are they different?

How do Addie and Katie’s mother (“Clean Sweep”) sell their business abilities?

#### RELATED MATERIALS:

Bauer, Joan. “Clean Sweep.” Shelf Life: Stories by the Book. Ed. Gary Paulsen. New York, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2003. 151-164.

Bauer, Joan. “Pancakes.” Trapped! Cages of Mind and Body. Ed. Lois Duncan. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1998. 130-148.

Bauer, Joan. Peeled. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 2008.

#### RELATED WEB SITES:

All About Hope Was Here: <http://www.joanbauer.com/abouthope.html>

Keep Hoping Sandwich: <http://www.joanbauer.com/thisthat.html>

MayoClinic.com: Leukemia - <http://mayoclinic.com/health/leukemia/DS00351>

Catch the Spirit! A Student’s Guide to Community Service –  
[http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic\\_text/family/spirit/spirit.htm](http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/family/spirit/spirit.htm)

Waitressing 101 - [http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/33657/waitressing\\_101.html](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/33657/waitressing_101.html)

How to Be a Good Waitress: <http://www.helium.com/items/1088340-tips-for-being-a-waitress>

Christine Blair served as Media Specialist at Nuttall Middle School in Robinson, Illinois, from 1973 until she retired in 2005. She holds a B.A. from Illinois Wesleyan University and an M.S. in Ed. in Instructional Materials from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

She is the author of Let Your Fingers Do the Searching: Using Reference Sources and Their Indexes.

She has been co-editor of Let’s Talk About Books: Suggestions for Use for the Rebecca Caudill Young Readers’ Book Award, 2006 - .