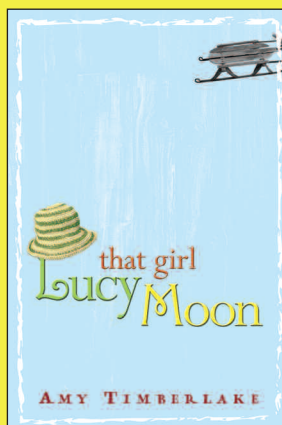
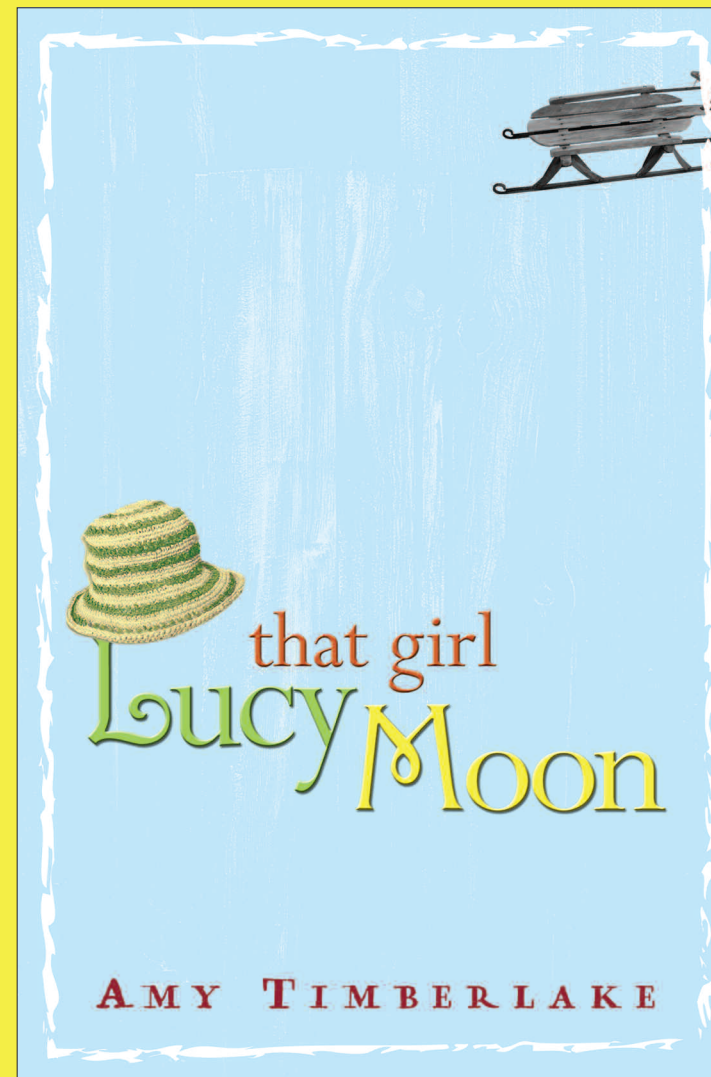


This guide was created by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, a reading specialist and author of the novel *Reaching for Sun*. Visit her Web site, tracievaughnzimmer.com, to find many guides to children's literature.



Tr. ed. 0-7868-5298-4
\$15.99

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DISCUSSION GUIDE
HYPERION BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

About the Book

Lucy Moon is the kind of girl who loudly supports animal rights—during hunting season. She wears a woven hat made of hemp in support of third-world workers. Lucy Moon is the kind of girl who spots injustice and isn't afraid to fight it. So when classmates land a trip to the police station for sledding on Wiggins Hill and the local paper refuses to report it, Lucy takes up the battle. Ms. Wiggins, the town's wealthiest resident, and owner of Wiggins Hill, becomes Lucy's biggest rival. Soon, Lucy is embroiled in a battle for justice that leaves her wondering whether the struggle is worth it, and whether one person really can make a difference.

About the Guide

This guide includes discussion questions and projects intended to extend the use of this novel into classrooms, book clubs, and literature circles. It should promote discussion of the themes in the novel, including friendship, family life, justice, influence, and hope.

Pre-reading Guide

When someone uses the phrase “that girl” or “that boy,” do you think it is a positive connotation or a negative one? Do people misjudge others? Why?

Read the description of the book on the inside flap or back cover. What do you think will happen in the story? Knowing that all main characters change in a story, how do you think Lucy will change? How about the other characters?



Discussion Guide

- 1 Describe Lucy Moon. What does she look like? How does she act, think, and speak? Who are her friends? How do other kids feel about her? Why? Where does she fit in at school? In her community?
- 2 How did Lucy end up handling the bra-check boys? What do you think Mr. Skoglund should have done? Do boys behave this badly in your school? Why do they sometimes get away with this type of behavior?
- 3 What is the *Turtle Rock Times Shuts Its Eyes*? Why is it important to the story? What does it show us about Lucy and Zoë?
- 4 Describe Lucy's mom. What is her job? When she leaves Lucy and her husband, where does she go? How does this make Lucy feel? How do Lucy's feelings vacillate over her mom's choices and behavior? What is the breaking point for Lucy?
- 5 Discuss Lucy's relationship with her father. How does it change over the course of the novel? If her mother had stayed home, do you think Lucy's relationship with her father would have evolved in the same way?
- 6 Describe the course of the relationship between Lucy and Sam Shipman throughout the novel. Which events do you think are the most important? Why do you think Sam likes Lucy?
- 7 Describe the postcard plan to save Wiggins Hill. How do you think Lucy's mom would have reacted to the idea? How did it end up getting Lucy into bigger trouble than just being put in detention? Is it true that one student can become a scapegoat for a larger population in a school? Support your argument.
- 8 What happens at the Moon house at Christmastime? How would you feel if you were Lucy? What gift does she receive that makes her question her mother's motives? What excuses does her mother use?

- 9 Lucy says, “I can’t get *caught* in the middle. I *am* in the middle. I’m the kid. I’m half you and half her. And she didn’t say anything about not wanting to be a ‘wife.’ She said ‘mom.’ She said she couldn’t be a ‘mom’ this Christmas.” (p. 150) How would you feel if your mom or dad said they just couldn’t be a parent for Christmas? How do kids find themselves in the crossfire of their parents’ relationship? Do you think a lot of kids feel this way?
- 10 How does Lucy end up in Youth Action? How does Mrs. Mudd treat Lucy as they work together at the VFW? Do some adults seem to take glee in punishment? Why do you think so?
- 11 Discuss the growing pains of Zoë and Lucy’s longtime friendship. How do Lucy and Zoë resolve their differences? What do both of them do wrong in the friendship? What do they do right? How do friendships survive big changes and stress?
- 12 What does Lucy discover in the papers of Amos Zebulon at the Grundhoffer House? Why is it important that Lucy has never given up on Wiggins Hill? In the end, what does Miss Wiggins do with the information?
- 13 What role does the setting play in the novel? Can a place seem like an actual character in a novel? How? Describe how Turtle Rock could be a “character” in *That Girl Lucy Moon*.
- 14 In the novel, Lucy’s mother “had driven wherever whims and clouds took a person. What was that like? Lucy couldn’t fathom it.” (p.244) How would you feel if a parent left you to follow his or her whims? To whom was it most unfair, Lucy or her dad? Why?
- 15 Lucy tells her mom, “Well, I don’t need you anymore. . . . If you’re not a mom, I’m not a daughter.” (p. 290) Is this true? Can you ever really deny who you are? What happens after this scene? Predict what you think will happen the following year between Lucy and her parents.

Projects

Language Arts

Pretend that you opened some of Lucy’s mom’s letters. What might one say? What would Lucy’s response have been?

-or-

Keep a journal as if you are Lucy as you read the novel.

Art

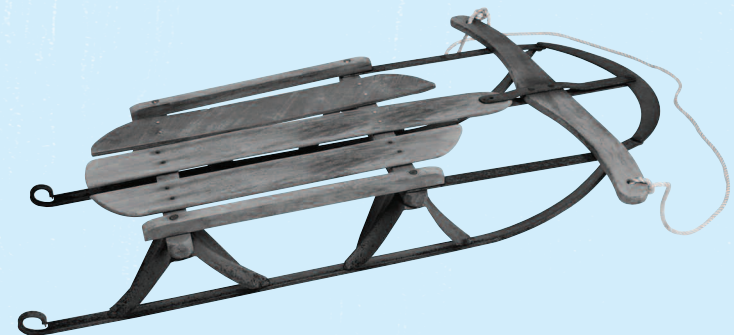
Create posters for a protest that would make Lucy Moon proud. Be sure to follow the decency guidelines in your school!

Social Studies

Research an issue that you think is important enough to get involved with. Create a poster, pamphlet, or Web site informing others on the facts and how they can help. Create a journal and write about whether you’d be willing to organize a protest to support your ideas and whether it would be worth it to face the same consequences as Lucy did just to be heard.

Music

Create an iPod playlist for Lucy. What songs do you think she would pick? Why? If you could only choose one song as her anthem, what would it be? Share the lyrics and explain your choice.





About the Author

Amy Timberlake won the Golden Kite Award for her picture book *The Dirty Cowboy*. She has worked as a book reviewer and columnist, a children's bookseller, a book event coordinator, and as the public information officer at the Virginia Commission for the Arts. *That Girl Lucy Moon* is her first novel. Amy lives with her husband in Chicago, Illinois. You can reach her via her Web site—www.amytimberlake.com.

Another big cut happened in my musings about the town of Turtle Rock—I wrote a lot of side stories about people in the town. The book always had Lucy Moon's name in the title, so I think I knew subconsciously that this cutting was inevitable. And, hey, maybe I'll get to tell more Turtle Rock stories in another book!

So what did I learn? A lot. I'd say I'm somewhere in a long process of learning how to write a novel, and how a story fits into what we call a "novel." Writing *That Girl Lucy Moon* was a huge challenge for me, and that's actually what makes trying to write novels so much fun!

2 Do you ever get stuck while writing? What do you do about it?

Yes—all the time. Sometimes I just sit and work at where I'm stuck. Sometimes I'll work at the stuck scene from a different point of view, or from the end of the scene. If there's a part of the scene I know, I'll write that part first. Sometimes I'll just make a note in all caps in the middle of the manuscript—usually something like "FIX THIS" and then keep going forward. Or if I'm feeling really disheartened, I'll work on something I want to work on—I'll polish some sentences or something. Sentence polishing always makes me happy.

3 What made you choose northern Minnesota as your setting for this novel?

Well, I'm from northern Wisconsin, but when I began writing this book I was living in Richmond, Virginia, and I was missing winter. In Richmond, winter means a lot of rain—a damp cold that chills you to your bones. I was craving snow, a cold that's both sharp and dry, and most especially, the blue that a snowy landscape turns at dusk. So when I started writing, I went back to a childhood memory of sledding on a hill that stood near our house in Wisconsin. To give me some distance from my own past, I set the story across the border, in Minnesota.

4 Would you like to be friends with Lucy Moon?

I would love to be Lucy's friend! She inspires me. I wish I were more like her.

5 What can your fans look forward to next?

I'm writing another novel for Hyperion Books for Children, and that's all I'll say because I don't want to jinx it. But feel free to check my Web site, www.amytimberlake.com, for updates!

Author Interview

1 Did you plot out Lucy's story or did you follow where it led? What did you learn along the way?

I tried to plot this book—I really did! So yes, I made a couple of outlines, but for me, they were only moderately helpful. Overall, I'd describe my process as one of writing full drafts. In each draft I'd rework scenes that didn't work (a lot of times discovering new scenes in the process), and I'd craft the sentences (mostly because I love crafting sentences). According to my files, I wrote sixteen complete drafts of this novel.

One thing that I did do was cut the text. The image that comes to mind is sculpting from a block of marble—I had this huge block of text and I knew the story was in it. (I have always believed it's easier to cut text than to create it.) So this was a long book. At one point, Ilene Viola Wiggins was a major character. I wrote pages and pages from Ilene Viola Wiggins's perspective. In the end, a whopping one hundred pages of Ilene Viola's sections were cut from the book. I loved that woman, too! But as I was working on the book, it became clear that the story belonged to Lucy, and so it was right to focus there.