



## **Sketches from a Spy Tree**

by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer  
illustrated by Andrew Glass  
Clarion Books



### **Teacher's Guide**

#### **Pre-Reading Activity:**

Do you know any twins? Do you think it would be fun to be a twin? What would be great about it? What might be hard?

#### **Check out the cover:**

What do you think this story might be about? What do you think she might see from her spy tree?

#### **Comprehension Check:**

1. Who is the narrator of this story? Describe her.
2. Why does Ann Marie say that she's the "one with hate/painting my heart black"?
3. Explain what's going on between Mike and Anne Marie.
4. Retell the main events in the story.
5. Predict what happens after the close of the collection.

## **Poetry Lessons:**

### **Poetic element scavenger hunt.**

After reviewing the poetic elements (Figurative Lesson Low Down: A brief introduction to the poetic elements), then search through SPY TREE to find examples of each.

Have students make a graph of their own, or use this one! Poetic Element Scavenger Hunt

### **Imagery work:**

Using highlighters (or post-it notes) let students tag the imagery in the book. Use a different color for each one of the senses.

### **Line break bonanza:**

Use this copy of the words from "Across the Back Fence" which is missing all the line breaks. Have students work in pairs to decide where they would have ended each line. Compare it to the original.

## **Projects:**

**Spy Journal:** Keep a writer's notebook or sketchbook and go exploring in your own neighborhood for great characters, settings and scenes. Write at least five poems or descriptions about what you see, hear or smell! Choose one of these to revise and share.

**Make a Venn diagram comparing Mary Anne and Anne Marie.** What do they have in common? What are different? Think about not just what they look like, but what they do, think, say and how others view them.

**ART:** Anne Marie explores a wide variety of art techniques throughout the collection. Create three different pictures inspired by your own neighborhood and use a variety of media as well. Be sure to try one as a collage because, well, it is so much fun!

**Character chart:** Make a chart (or print out this one) that explores the characters in Anne Marie's neighborhood. List the characters going down and the following categories across: what they look like, what they say, what they do, what others think of them. Then, fill in the boxes based on your reading of Spy Tree.

**Book Drive:** Anne Marie says in "The Book Lady" that she'd like to buy new books for all the kids who never had one. So, have a book drive for a homeless shelter or

other place for kids. Be sure the books are of high quality (like NO cartoon characters, for example) and in good shape. You might even want to purchase a new one (like your favorite of the year) to share with kids who may not ever get a brand new book.

**Create a map of the neighborhood from Spy Tree.** Make it out of 3D materials and use stuff from around the house- no buying! Try to add as many details as you can from the story.

**Write a letter from Anne Marie to her real dad.** What would she say to him? Write his response.