

Reading Guide to *The Anybodies* by N. E. Bode

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Once there was a VERY REAL girl named Fern who discovered she'd been switched at birth. This might disturb some people, but it made Fern happy because she'd never felt at home with her tragically dull parents, the Drudgers. Fern finds out about the mix-up when the Bone (er, her father) and his "son," Howard, show up at Fern's front door. Now both families decide to UNSWAP the kids for the summer, and Fern heads off with the Bone on a wild adventure into a world inhabited by the Miser, a sinister fellow; and the Great Realdo, a true hero, to name just two.

The book promises suspense! Mystery! Intrigue! Fairies fall out of books! Birds turn into dogs! Why are you still here? Get reading!!!!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julianna Baggott is the author of four novels -- including national bestseller *Girl Talk*, *The Miss America Family*, *The Madam*, and *Which Brings Me to You*, co-written with Steve Almond, as well as three books of poems, including *This Country of Mothers*, *Lizzie Borden in Love*, and *Compulsions of Silkworms and Bees*. Her fifth novel, *My Husband's Sweethearts*, will be published this August by Random House's Bantam Dell imprint, under the pen name Bridget Asher. She also writes novels for younger readers under the pen name N.E. Bode -- *The Anybodies* trilogy, *The Slippery Map* (fall 2007), the prequel to *Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium* (2007), a movie starring Dustin Hoffman, Natalie Portman, and Jason Bateman; and a Red Sox novel *The Prince of Fenway Park* (March 2009). Bode is a recurring personality on XM Radio - XM Kids. Her work has appeared in dozens of publications, including the Best American Poetry series, *Glamour*, *Ms.*, *Poetry*, *The Southern Review*, *TriQuarterly*, and read on NPR's *Here and Now* and *Talk of the Nation*. She lives in Florida with her husband, writer David G.W. Scott, and their four kids, and teaches at Florida State University's Creative Writing Program. Along with her husband, Baggott is a co-founder of the nonprofit organization Kids in Need - Books in Deed.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In *The Anybodies*, Fern needs to get rid of a spider. She tries to shake *The World of Bats* so a bat will flap out of the book and eat the spider. (Because it's dark, she ends up with a tornado on her hands.) Here are *your* scenarios:

a. You are on a desert island with nothing to eat and no fresh water to drink, but you have one book. What book is it? What items will you shake from that book?

b. You're lonesome and need someone to play with. What book do you choose to help you? Who will you shake from the book to keep yourself company?

c. The key to your house has fallen out of your pocket and into a crack between the boards of your porch. You can see it, but the crack is too small to fit your hand through. What book will you use to help? Who or what will you shake from that book?

2. If you could be Anybody for a day, who would you choose?

3. If you could be Anything for a day, what would you choose?

4. If you could be any animal for a day, what would you choose?

5. Fern is a collector of odd things. What does she collect? Are you a collector? If so, what do you collect? If not, what would you collect if you were?

6. When Fern is a little girl, she notices odd things (the crickets from the book, the words written on snowflakes). Have you ever seen anything that you can't explain, that makes no sense? If so, describe it. If not, can you invent something?

7. Fern sometimes blurts things out when she's nervous. Have you ever blurted nervously? When, how, why?

8. Fern thinks the story behind her name is dull. Where did your name come from? If you don't like that story, make up a new one!