

Books by the Stack



Stargirl by Jeff Spinelli

Stargirl. From the day she arrives at quiet Mica High in a burst of color and sound, the hallways hum with the murmur of “Stargirl, Stargirl.” She captures Leo Borlock’s heart with just one smile. She sparks a school-spirit revolution with just one cheer. The students of Mica High are enchanted. At first. Then they turn on her. Stargirl is suddenly shunned for everything that makes her different, and Leo, panicked and desperate with love, urges her to become the very thing that can destroy her: normal.

Why you’ll like it: Emotional. Tense. Thrilling & Inspirational. First Love.

About the Author: Jerry Spinelli was born on February 1, 1941 in Norristown, Pennsylvania. In high school a poem of his about football was published in the local newspaper. This made him start to think he wanted to be a writer. He went to college to learn about being a writer. After college, he had several jobs while trying to write novels on the side. Over the next fifteen years, Spinelli wrote four novels that weren’t published, until finally his fifth novel, *Space Station Seventh Grade*, was published as a children’s book. It took Jerry a lot of work and many years to reach his goal, but now he has had over 25 books published and is a successful author. Also, as Jerry points out on his online biography, he’s an accomplished grandfather and star-gazer.

Questions for Discussion

1. When Stargirl arrives at Mica High School, people notice her. Name three ways in which her appearance or behavior differs from that of other students.
2. By December 1 of the year, Stargirl has become the most popular person in school. Describe what other students do to show admiration for her.
3. Think about the setting of the story, which takes place in an Arizona desert community. Identify passages that help you “see” the plants, animals, terrain, and climate in Leo’s town.
4. Archie is a mentor and friend to Leo and other kids in the neighborhoods. Cite examples from the book that show how Archie helps one of the main characters.
5. Identify a character in the story who shows courage. Explain how the character is brave.
6. What does Archie mean when he says, “When Stargirl cries, she does not shed tears, but light”?

7. What questions would you ask Leo if you interviewed him as an adult?
8. Stargirl notices and cares about bad things that happen to other people but often seems to be unaware of bad things that happen to herself. If she were to visit your school today, what would she notice? What would she ignore? Give reasons for your answers.
9. Over the course of the book, Leo changes. Compare and contrast Leo's appreciation of "little things" in life at the beginning of the novel and at the end.
10. Do you think Leo's life is improved for having been involved with Stargirl? What makes you say that?

(Questions issued by Scholastic.com)

