



Bed and Breakfast

Gail Anderson-Dargatz

Reading Level: 3

Interest Level: Adult

Book Summary

Annie runs a bed and breakfast, renting rooms to overnight guests. She has lived alone since her husband died five years ago. Now, she wishes for someone to love. One morning, Annie helps her friend Steve fix the kitchen pipes. She couldn't manage without Steve. But with his old clothes and unshaven face, he's not Mr. Right.

Then Annie hears a man's voice: "Hello?" Surprised, she bumps her head on the bottom of the kitchen sink. Jumping up, Annie welcomes Brent, her guest. Her heart skips a beat as she meets him for the first time. Handsome, charming, well dressed—will Brent turn out to be the man of her dreams?

Author Biography

By the age of eighteen, Gail Anderson-Dargatz knew that she wanted to write about Canadian women in rural settings. Today, Gail is a bestselling author. *A Recipe for Bees* and *The Cure for Death by Lightning* were finalists for the Giller prize. She currently teaches fiction in the creative writing program at the University of British Columbia. Gail lives in the Shuswap region of BC, the landscape found in so much of her writing.

Note to the educator: The following activities are suggestions only. Please choose and adjust the projects and questions according to the specific needs and level of your students as well as their experience with doing novel studies. Students can work individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

THINKING ABOUT THE BOOK**Book Cover and Title**

Read the title to the students. Discuss the meaning of bed and breakfast. Have the students predict the type of story (mystery, romance, true crime), based on the title and cover image.

WORKING WITH THE BOOK**Characters**

Tell students that readers can learn about the characters in a novel in three ways—by (1) what the writer tells us, (2) what the characters say, do, and think, and (3) what others say about the characters. As they read the book, have students note how the writer develops the character of Annie's husband, Joe. Encourage students to make inferences where possible.

How do we make inferences?

Active readers use their experience and knowledge to make an educated guess about the author's hidden messages. Readers who make inferences use clues in the text together with their own experiences to help them figure out the hidden messages.

Character: Joe

What the writer tells us

The man put a hand on his wife's back as he opened the car door for her. Joe, my husband, used to do that for me, before he died.

Inference

Annie misses how Joe used to show his love and respect for her.

What the character says, does, and thinks

Inference

What other characters think and say about the character

Inference

After reading the entire book, have students work in small groups and share their notes. Then have them discuss the following questions:

- (a) What words would you use to describe Annie and Joe's marriage? Give reasons for your choices. Why do you think Annie and Joe had a good relationship?
- (b) Do you think Annie and Joe's marriage was as perfect as Annie remembers? Give reasons for your opinion.
- (c) Steve and Joe were best friends. Do you think Joe would want Annie to fall in love with Steve? Why or why not?

Plot

Ask the students about romance movies they have seen or romance books they have read. Have them describe the storylines. Then review the elements of a romance novel that are listed in the chart below. Explain the terms *hero* and *heroine*. Discuss any other terms or concepts that need clarifying.

Explain that in *Bed and Breakfast*, Annie is the heroine and Steve is the hero. As the students read the book, have them fill in the chart with examples from Annie and Steve's relationship that illustrate each of the elements of a romance novel.

Elements of a romance novel	Examples from Annie and Steve's relationship
The hero and heroine meet early in the novel.	
Early on in the novel, it is clear to the reader that the hero and heroine belong together. This may not be clear to the hero and/or heroine.	
There is a physical and/or emotional barrier that seems to make it impossible that the hero and heroine could ever be together.	
Something happens that brings the hero and heroine together or that forces the hero and heroine to look at each other in a different way	
The hero and/or heroine make a sacrifice for the other or change in some way for the other. The sacrifice or change proves their love and makes possible a future together.	
The hero and heroine admit their love to themselves and to each other. They enter into a romantic relationship.	

After students have read the entire book, have them work in small groups, share their notes, and discuss to what extent *Bed and Breakfast* is a romance novel. Then have the students discuss the following questions:

- (a) Who enjoys romance stories? Why do you think they enjoy romance stories?
- (b) Annie and Steve go out for dinner to a fancy restaurant. Describe your idea of a romantic first date. In your opinion, what makes the date romantic?

Setting

Explain to students that the setting provides details of when and where events take place. The details of the setting add to the story in some way. In *Bed and Breakfast*, the beach is the setting for conversations between Annie and Brent, and Annie and Steve. After students read the entire book, have them discuss the following questions:

- (a) Imagine you are on a beach. What thoughts and feeling come to mind? How did Annie feel about the beach near her bed and breakfast? How do you know?
- (b) What did Annie hope for in Chapter Six when she met Brent on the beach? Did Brent fulfil her hopes? Why or why not? Describe the moment when Annie's hopes were fulfilled.
- (c) Annie describes being on the beach with Joe, Brent, and Steve. How does using the beach as a setting add to the story?

TALKING ABOUT THE BOOK

1. “I was lonely, but I wasn’t alone. I had friends.” (page 8)
 - (a) Why was Annie lonely?
 - (b) What is the difference between feeling lonely and being alone?
 - (c) Describe times when it is good to be alone.

2. “In any case, this morning I didn’t have time to feel sorry for myself.” (page 8)
 - (a) Why was Annie feeling sorry for herself? How did she cope with feeling sorry for herself?
 - (b) Describe times when people might feel sorry for themselves. Describe ways to cope with feeling sorry for one’s self.

3. “Steve grinned and held out a handful of lilacs.” (page 9)
 - (a) Why did Steve give Annie lilacs? Why does he lie to Annie about why he gave her lilacs?
 - (b) What other clues tell us how Steve feels about Annie?
 - (c) Why do you think Steve did not tell Annie how he felt about her?

4. “What would such a stylish man think of me?” (page 12)
 - (a) Why is Annie worried about Brent’s opinion of how she looks?
 - (b) Describe times when Annie tries to impress Brent with how she looks. Why do you think Annie tries so hard to impress Brent with how she looks?
 - (c) Do you think Annie should worry about her appearance when she is with Brent? Give a reason for your opinion.
 - (d) Describe times when people should take care with how they look. Why is it important that people take care with how they look at those times?

5. “I just stood there, gazing at Brent like a love-starved teenager.” (page 14)
 - (a) What does love-starved teenager mean?
 - (b) In what ways does Annie act like a love-starved teenager when she is around Brent?
 - (c) At what moment does Annie grow up in terms of what she wants in a relationship with a man? At this moment, what does Annie realize about love and loving someone?

6. “I laughed. ‘No, no,’ I said. ‘Steve is just here to fix the sink.’ “ (page 17)
 - (a) Why does Annie laugh? Do you think she truly believes what she has just said about Steve? Why does she say it? What is your opinion of Annie at this moment? Give a reason for your opinion.
 - (b) In the end, Steve helps Annie in ways much beyond fixing her sink. In what ways does Steve help Annie?
 - (c) Why do people sometimes say unfair things about others?

7. “ ‘Except during tourist season,’ Brent said. He winked at me.” (page 18)
 - (a) When else does Brent flirt with Annie?
 - (b) Do you think Brent was leading Annie on? Do you think he meant to hurt Annie? Give a reason for your opinion.
 - (c) Describe times when flirting is harmless.

8. “He took my hand and squeezed it.” (page 30)
 - (a) Why do you think Brent takes Annie’s hand at this moment?
 - (b) Describe Annie’s reaction when Brent takes her hand. What is your opinion of Annie at this moment? Give a reason for your opinion.
 - (c) The last sentence in the chapter reads, “But he was gazing at the lake as if he was looking into the past.” What does this sentence suggest about Brent’s feelings toward Annie?

9. “As I said, he’s just a friend.” (page 33)

(a) Annie tells Brent that Steve is just a friend. Why does Annie use the word just?

(b) People often use the phrase just a friend. What does that say about people’s attitude toward friendship in comparison with their attitude toward romantic love.

(c) What are the benefits of a close friendship? Of romantic love? Can it be said that one of the relationships is better than the other? Give a reason for your opinion.

10. “That was my Cinderella moment.” (page 34)

(a) What does *Cinderella moment* mean? What moment does Annie describe as her Cinderella moment? How long does that moment last? Why?

(b) Describe Annie’s second Cinderella moment. Do such moments exist in real life? Give examples and reasons to support your opinion.

(c) Describe the kind of love Annie dreamed of finding with Brent. In your opinion, does such love exist in real life?

(d) Does Annie finally find the romantic love that she is looking for? What else does she find?

(e) In the fairy tale *Cinderella*, Cinderella ends up with Prince Charming and they live happily ever after. Annie finds her Prince Charming. What do you think are Annie and Steve’s chances of living happily ever after? Give reasons for your opinion.

WRITING ABOUT THE BOOK

1. Choose a character or event from the novel that you connected with in some way. For example, did the character or event remind you of something in your life? Cause an emotional reaction in you? Teach you something? Describe how and why in a paragraph.
2. Imagine you are Annie. Write an entry in your journal about the day Brent showed up at the bed and breakfast. Think about what events you would include in your journal entry. Include your thoughts and feelings. Start with the following sentence:

Brent Henderson arrived today and he is so gorgeous!

3. Choose an important person in your life. Write a journal entry that describes your last act of love toward this person. Describe what you said or did. How did it make you feel? How did it make the other person feel?
4. Steve was good at fixing things around the bed and breakfast. Write a paragraph describing one thing you are good at. Write a paragraph about how and when you learned to do this thing, the skills you need to do it, and why you are good at it.
5. Joe and Steve were best friends. Who is your best friend? Write a list of what you like about your friend. Write in complete sentences. List at least ten things. Then look at the list and tick the things that are also true about you.
6. Annie spoke of her town with pride. Think about your community. In a paragraph, describe what you like about your community, and why.

PROJECTS and ACTIVITIES

1. Create a movie

Tell students that they are going to make a movie, based on *Bed and Breakfast*.

(a) Be a casting agent

Ask students to name their favourite actors and movies. Ask them to explain why they like certain actors in certain roles. Explain to students that a casting agent decides which actors should play the roles in movies. Tell the students they are going to be Hollywood casting agents. Then put the students in groups and have them discuss the following questions:

- (i) Think about the characters in the book. What do you know about how they look and act? What are their main characteristics? What are their approximate ages?
- (ii) In adapting the novel for the screen, are there any changes you would like to make to any of the characters? Describe the changes you would like to make, and why.
- (iii) Think of Hollywood actors that could play the various parts.

(b) Be a location scout

Explain to students that location scouts seek out the perfect settings for movies. Tell the students that they are going to be location scouts for the movie *Bed and Breakfast*. Show students how to use Google Images. Have them “scout” the perfect places to film the following settings in the book: (a) Annie’s bed and breakfast, (b) the beach, and (c) Annie’s town. Then have students explain how the images they have chosen suit the settings described in the book.

2. Design a travel poster

Have students brainstorm the details they remember about Annie’s town and her bed and breakfast. Have them discuss what details they would include on a travel poster advertising Annie’s bed and breakfast. Then in small groups, have the students discuss their dream vacations and design a poster that advertises one dream vacation.

3. Analyze a fairy tale

Have students share the details they remember about the fairy tale *Cinderella*. Then present the following list of elements that are often seen in fairy tales and have the students relate the elements to *Cinderella*.

A fairy tale includes special phrases like, Once upon a time;
Long, long ago; And they lived happily ever after.

A fairy tale is often set in a romantic or magical place like a castle, forest, or little town.

Fairy tales have at least one good character in them and at least one bad character. Sometimes the characters are animals.

Fairy tales present a problem that has to be solved.

Fairy tales include some sort of magic.

Fairy tales have a happy ending. The good characters are rewarded and the bad characters are punished.

Fairy tales teach a lesson or a moral.

Then have the students discuss to what extent the elements of a fairy tale relate to the novel *Bed and Breakfast*. Finally, in groups, have students write their own fairy tale, using the elements of a fairy tale as a framework.

4. Gaze at the stars

Have students share experiences they have had that involve the night sky (e.g., seeing a shooting star, witnessing an eclipse, watching a lightning storm). Have students become astronomers and keep a night-sky log. Encourage the students to look up at the night sky for two minutes on three consecutive nights. Have them jot down what they see, a few words that describe the sky, and how the sky makes them feel at that moment. Then have the students compare their observations and feelings.

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