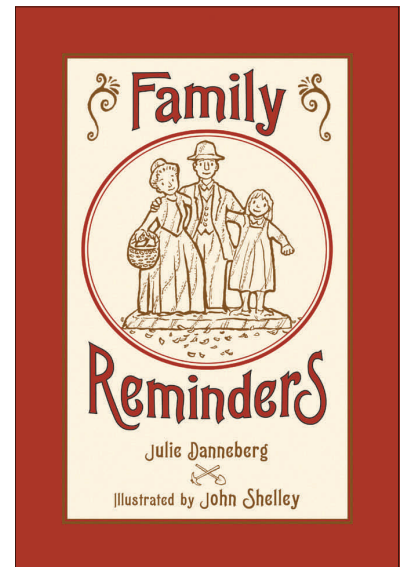


# Family Reminders

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

Ten-year-old Mary McHugh's world is shattered when her father is injured in a mining accident. After losing his leg, Mary's father falls into a deep depression. He no longer plays the piano or has interest in carving the intricate wooden "Reminders" that he has always made to remind the family of the milestones they shared together. To make matters worse, the family may need to leave their home in late 1800s Cripple Creek, Colorado, in order to make ends meet.

Mary's love for her father and her desire to get life back to "normal" push her to take a chance that restores her father's spirit and brings her family a new life, strengthened by the hardships they have endured.



ISBN: 978-1-58089-320-6  
HC • \$14.95

### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. When Mary's father loses his leg in a mining accident, he is overcome with sadness. In what ways can you tell that he is no longer his old self?
2. How do Mary and her mother try to make him feel happy again? Do their attempts at cheering him up work?
3. How does Mary try to help the family earn money? Why does she feel impatient to help?
4. Discuss the ways in which Mary shows courage during hard times in the book. Do you think you would have reacted in similar ways?
5. Why are the wood carvings of Mary's father so important to her? What do they represent?
6. Why does the manager of the mine refuse to allow Mary's father to work in the mine office? How was Mary able to predict this would happen, even before her father went to talk to the manager?
7. Why does Mary's father not want her mother to take in extra laundry? How is this problem resolved?
8. What does Mary's father mean when he says, "I guess I feel like there isn't any music left inside of me"?





9. Why doesn't Mary's family sit in the parlor after dinner anymore? What do they do instead?

10. Why does Mary say her father has a "deeper kind of happiness," than he had when he worked at the mine? What has changed in his life to lead to this happiness?

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## ACTIVITIES

1. Mary's father creates "Reminders" by making scenes from the family's past from wood carvings. Have students write a paragraph about how their family remembers happy times from the past. Then have them draw, paint, or color their favorite family memory.

2. *Family Reminders* alternates between the present and the past, using flashbacks. Flashbacks interrupt an action that occurs in the present to show a scene that happened earlier. Ask your students to write a short story in which they must include a flashback. Connect this to the previous activity by having students use their favorite family memory as their flashback.

3. *Family Reminders* takes place in the late 1800s in Cripple Creek, Colorado, just as gold mining in the area became very prosperous. Divide students into three groups and have each group research one of the topics listed below. When they are finished researching, have each group present their findings to the class:

- Gold mining: techniques, dangers, and a brief history
- Home life: technology, the role of women, hardships of the frontier
- Cultural background: U.S. politics, major events, the economy

4. Each character in the book must endure some sort of hardship, whether it is losing a leg, taking on extra work to help with money, or worrying about the happiness of a family member. Ask students to choose a character and write a journal entry from his or her point of view, expressing their emotions and opinions about events in the book.

5. The McHugh family "Reminders" not only preserve memories from the family's past, but also chart the milestones they have shared together. Ask students to create a time line of their own lives, charting milestones they or their family as a whole have reached. They can also make an illustrated time line by drawing, painting, or coloring these milestones.



# Julie Danneberg

*“As a kid, when I daydreamed or played at being grown-up, I never imagined myself as a writer. Instead I dreamed of being a famous girl reporter, a secret agent, and a teacher.”*

With an imagination like that, it’s hard to believe that Colorado native Julie Danneberg never considered a career as a writer.

After graduating from the University of Colorado, Boulder, Julie became a teacher. In her classroom she read many children’s books and witnessed the profound impact a good book can have on a child. “I was motivated to try and write books like the ones I enjoy reading.”

When Julie became a mother, she began to seriously consider a career in writing. During weekly trips to the library with her children, she found herself enjoying the picture books as much as they did. “The funny thing is that my kids eventually graduated from the children’s section of the library and I never did!”

Writing children’s books was the perfect medium for blending Julie’s many interests—working with kids, being home with her family,

being creative, and being her own boss. She even fulfilled her childhood dreams of becoming the intrepid reporter and world-class secret agent through her research, writing, and character development in her books.

Julie earned great success with *First Day Jitters*—the funny and engaging story of Sarah Jane Hartwell’s first day at a new school. The surprise ending charms and delights readers time and again. Teachers and students alike love these stories and they are perennial favorites for back-to-school.

Julie lives with her husband and two children in Denver. She teaches at a local middle school, where she garners ideas for her books. When she’s not writing, Julie enjoys reading, quilting, gardening, and spending time with her family.

Visit Julie at [www.juliedanneberg.com](http://www.juliedanneberg.com).

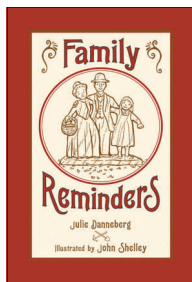
## A Visit with Julie Danneberg

Being a writer gives Julie the chance to learn new things, go to new places, and meet new people. During a typical visit, Julie reads one of her books, shares pages from her writing journal, and talks about the writing process.

To arrange a visit, contact Julie at (303) 793-9945, or call Charlesbridge at (800) 225-3214, ext. 122.

## Books by Julie Danneberg

New!

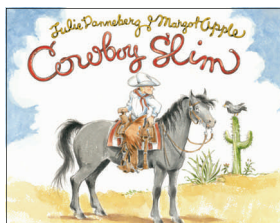


### *Family Reminders*

Illustrated by John Shelley

Mary's love for her father and her desire to get life back to "normal" push her to take a chance that restores her father's spirit and brings her family a new life, strengthened by the hardships they have endured.

\$15.95, Hardcover, 978-1-58089-320-6

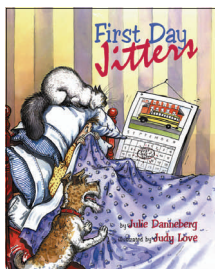


### *Cowboy Slim*

Illustrated by Margot Apple

A cowboy poet who can't rope, whip, or ride? Who ever heard of that? Slim knows he could be a real cowboy if the ranch hands would just give him a chance. Action-filled drawings capture the excitement of a cattle run to Dodge City.

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### *First Day Jitters*

Illustrated by Judy Love

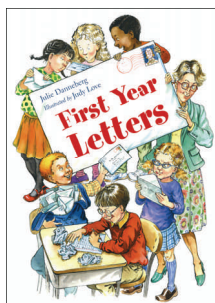
- *Publishers Weekly* Children's Bestsellers September 2002–2005, 2008
- New Jersey State Library Pick of the Decade 1995-2005
- Storytelling World Award

"Students will be delighted with the surprise ending when Sarah's true identity is revealed, proving that just about everyone has first-day jitters when it comes to starting school."

—*School Library Journal*

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### *First Year Letters*

Illustrated by Judy Love

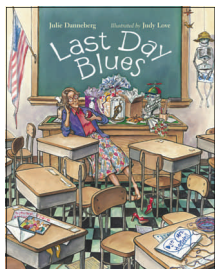
- 2004 *Learning Teacher's Choice Award*

"Veteran teachers should purchase multiple copies of this book to distribute to rookies before the first day of school each year."

—*Journal of Children's Literature*

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### *Last Day Blues*

Illustrated by Judy Love

It's the last week of school and Mrs. Hartwell's class is excited to leave for summer vacation. The only problem is that the kids don't want their teacher to miss them while they're gone.

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### *¡Qué nervios! El primer día de escuela*

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