

Extension Activities

1. **Become an expert in foodology.** Groovy and her father find inspiration in a breadfruit (pp. 34–35). Get your own wild ingredient from the grocery store and follow a recipe for it—or invent your own recipe! What situation would your new dish be perfect for? Taking inspiration from your wild ingredient, plan a menu for a special occasion.
2. **Follow animal migrations.** Migrations are a symbol in this story. Research the swallows of San Juan Capistrano, humpback whales like the one in the carving in Mama’s salon, or another migratory animal. Reflect on your learning and write about it. Consider taking Miss Johnson’s advice and write a poem or short story “from the heart” rather than creating something factual.
3. **Study superstitions.** Mama’s beliefs sometimes seem strange, as when she puts absolute faith in her horoscope or swears (even when she knows the scientific evidence) that there’s such a thing as earthquake weather. Select one of her beliefs and explore where it might have come from. Do you have any superstitions? Research the origins of your own strange beliefs.
4. **Finish Eleanor’s story.** The original Eleanor Robinson gives Groovy an incredible gift: “a box filled with all her unfinished stories” (p. 83). Give a similar gift to a friend or younger sibling by sharing something you’ve written with him or her. Write a short reflection on what it’s like to give away something as precious and personal as your own words, and consider what it must be like to be a published author whose words have gone out to everyone.
5. **Investigate real world connections.** Author Kathryn Fitzmaurice fills Groovy’s story with real world issues and subjects, including the Fish and Game Commission, green cards, judges and jails, and even earthquakes. Choose one of these real world connections and find out everything you can about it. Then find a creative way to show your classmates what you’ve learned and how the issue you’ve chosen might impact their lives.



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About the Author

Kathryn Fitzmaurice was born in New York City, but grew up in Scottsdale, Arizona. She holds a Master’s Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Chapman University. Her favorite thing to do is walk her dog, Holly, who she says is so smart, she can practically empty the dishwasher. She also likes organizing absolutely anything, including messy garages, closets, and even cluttered junk drawers. If she could, she would eat the same thing for lunch everyday, which would be a ham, Swiss cheese, and tomato Panini, a green apple, and a chocolate soufflé.

Kathryn lives with her family in Monarch Beach, California, where she taught elementary school before becoming a full-time writer.



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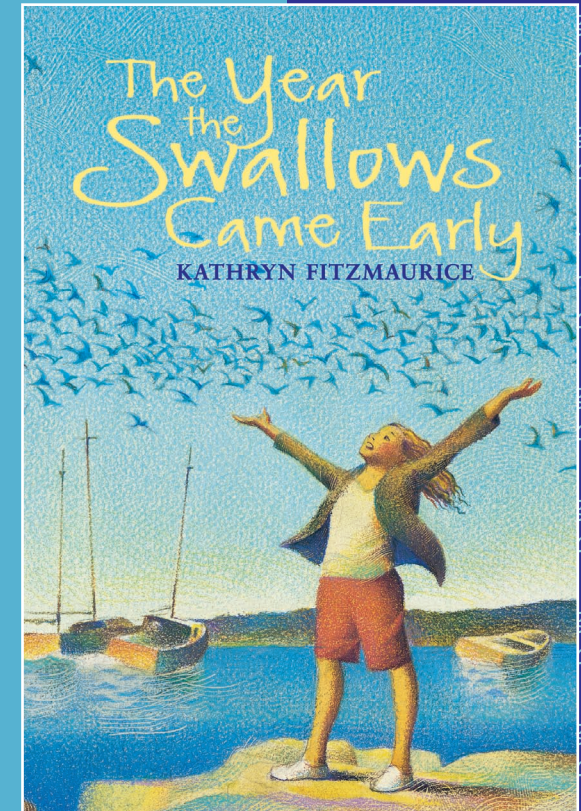
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Reading Group Guide



The Year
the
Swallows
Came Early

By KATHRYN FITZMAURICE

