

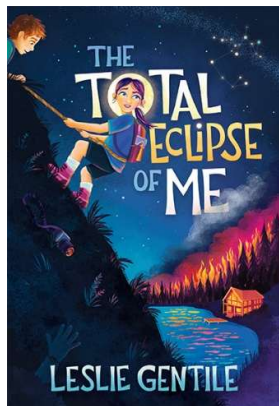


CORMORANT BOOKS DCB YOUNG READERS



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Teacher's Guide



The Total Eclipse of Me

By Leslie Gentile

Including:

- Pre-reading activities
- Discussion Questions
- Classroom Activities

See 'Eclipse One and Done' pdf for some quick UDL curriculum-based activities, including fun mazes and a word search that can be used easily in your classroom.

About the Book

Halley's best friend Fiona has gone bat-crazy, forming the Bat Club with the new student, the ultra popular child-star Elektra Storm. Halley, too ashamed to confess that she's terrified of bats, lashes out and insults everyone in the Bat Club.

Mom, Auntie Lynn & Spider are too busy working overtime to pay for repairs around the farm to have time for Halley, who finds herself alone with nowhere to turn.

When Halley's astronomer dad invites her on a camping trip to view a lunar eclipse, she launches Operation Stargazer: she'll study up on astronomy and convince Dad that she should live with him.

Competition arrives when Dad invites Leo along, the neurodivergent astronomy whiz kid. Halley faces food allergies, and then things take an alarming turn with a hiking accident and looming forest fire. Now Halley and Leo must work together to survive. Can they do it? Will Operation Stargazer succeed?

Leslie Gentile's 3 middle grade novels have been shortlisted for 15 awards, and won The City of Victoria Children's Book Prize, The Jean Little First-Novel Award and The Chocolate Lily Award.

As a musician Leslie performs with two of her adult children in The Leslie Gentile Band. She writes songs to go with her books, which makes for very lively author visits.

Leslie lives on Vancouver Island on the traditional territory of the WSANEC People with her husband and a German Shepherd who is convinced that he's a lapdog.

Though not connected with a specific nation, Leslie is of Indigenous and settler heritage and has Salish, Tuscarora and Scottish ancestry.



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Pre-reading Questions

- 1 **Look carefully at the book cover.** What do you see in the foreground and background? What do you think is going to happen in the story?
- 2 The word eclipse has two meanings:
Eclipse can be used as a noun: An eclipse is when objects in space line up so that one blocks the light from the other. On Earth, we see two kinds: a solar eclipse, when the moon blocks the sun's light from reaching us, and a lunar eclipse, when the Earth blocks sunlight from reaching the moon. **Eclipse can also be used as a verb:** It also means to surpass, outshine, or make something seem less important or smaller by comparison.

Why do you think the author named the book *The Total Eclipse of Me*?

Discussion Questions

Pick and Choose Discussion Questions to use with your class! Feel free to adapt and/or change these to fit your classroom needs.

- 1 A place to belong: At times everyone feels like an outsider and everyone needs a place where they belong — even bats! As you read the book, look for clues that some of the characters feel like an outsider. Here are some examples of how the main character is feeling to get you started:

Halley's terrified of bats and ashamed to admit it. She feels like she no longer fits in with the other kids at school when her best friend Fiona goes bat-crazy.

As you read, can you find other examples of how Halley feels as though she no longer fits in at school? Are there other characters in the book who feel like they don't fit in?

2 Families: When we meet Halley, we learn that her family includes Mom, Auntie Lynn, Spider and a bearded dragon named Geddy Lee.

Every family is different! Write a paragraph or draw a picture to show what makes your family unique and what you love most about your family. Bonus question: who is Geddy Lee named after?

3 Halley begins to feel lonely and invisible: Think about the word eclipse when it's used as a verb or action word. Now Halley finds herself all alone at home, and everything she knows and loves is changing.

What are some other examples that show us Halley is beginning to feel invisible?

4 Halley loses her temper: She manages to insult Fiona, Elektra and the entire Bat Club in one big rant.

Do you think Halley should have tried to apologize for what she said? Why do you think she doesn't try? Can you think of a time you lost your temper and yelled at someone? How did it make you feel afterwards? Did you apologize? Why or why not?

5 **Operation Stargazer:** Dad invites Halley on a camping trip to view a lunar eclipse. Halley creates Operation Stargazer, convinced it will solve all of her problems.

Do you think this is a good solution to solve Halley's problems? Why or why not? Bonus question: Have you ever seen a lunar eclipse?

6 Meeting Leo and Bev: Halley finds Leo annoying, and hard to talk to. When they arrive at the lodge, Halley meets Bev, and discovers that she is hard of hearing.

Halley finds it awkward to speak to Bev at first. Why? Have you ever spoken to a deaf person? Why do you suppose she finds Leo difficult to talk to?

7 Foreshadowing: This is a way for authors to drop hints about what might be coming in the book.

Halley wakes up at the lodge and finds the air is very smoky from a nearby forest fire. When Halley asks Dad what he has planned for their meals in camp, she discovers that he's forgotten all about her dairy allergy.

Do you think that Halley will have an allergic reaction to the food in camp? As you read, see if you can spot any other examples of foreshadowing.

8 Halley is irritated with Leo when takes her literally when she suggests that he ‘be the diving judge’. Leo explains that he has difficulty understanding social cues, and he knows that this confuses people.

Do you think this could be why he appears to be so standoffish? Bonus question: Do you know what social cues are?

9 Teamwork: Leo and Halley set out to find Dad, and even though they are terrified, they come together and begin to work as a team. Halley is now completely relying on Leo to take the lead.

How are they beginning to work as a team? Can you find examples of how both Halley and Leo are pushing themselves out of their ‘comfort zones’? Why do you think Halley climbed back down and uncovered the bat cave?

10 Rich and Jacob arrive to evacuate Dad, Halley and Leo.

Many communities are evacuated during wildfire season, and people are often reminded to have an emergency bag packed and ready to go. **Have you ever been evacuated?**

What would you put in your emergency bag? What would be the most important thing for you to take? What would be hard to leave behind?

11 Halley is changing: She learns that Elektra spent the day on the farm and loved it.

During the concert as Auntie Lynn sings a song about home it hits Halley: she belongs at home with Mom, Auntie Lynn and Spider. She realizes that running away won’t solve her problems.

Then she notices something about Elektra: “I could see something familiar in Elektra’s expression. Something I’d come to know all too well. She looked — lonely. Really, really lonely.” **Why does she understand how Elektra feels? What do you suppose Halley’s weird idea might be?**

12 Final Reflections: As Halley watches the lunar eclipse, she reflects back on how everything has worked out. She and Elektra are becoming friends, and she now considers Leo a good friend as well. All three of them are very different, and yet they are becoming good friends.

What is an important quality in a friend that Halley has discovered in Leo? What do you think are the most important qualities in a friend? Why?