

LOON SUMMER

Written by Barbara Santucci

Illustrated by Andrea Shine

*My first morning on the lake I hear the loons.
“Oh-OOOO—oooo.” Their sad songs remind me
Mom isn't coming to the cottage this summer.*

Rainie knows that this summer will be different. As she and her dad spend time together at the cottage, Rainie is painfully aware of her mom's absence. Throughout the summer, Rainie watches a pair of loons on the lake—watches them lay eggs, hatch babies, and be together as a loon family. “You told me loons stay together for life. Why can't you and Mom?” she asks her dad.



“Unwavering parental love is the lesson of *Loon Summer*.”

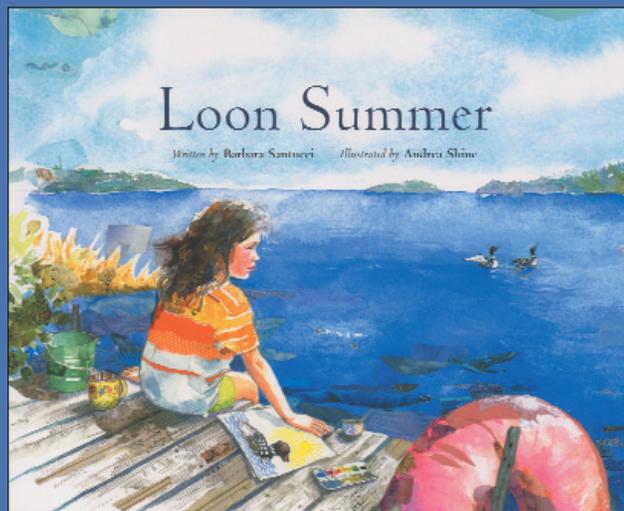
—*Booklist*

“This story perfectly captures a child's pain at her parents' separation.... The father-daughter relationship is beautifully and thoughtfully depicted, so the ending is a hopeful one.”

—*School Library Journal*

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

- ◆ Family Issues
- ◆ Divorce
- ◆ Change
- ◆ Animals
- ◆ Compassion
- ◆ Comfort



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Full-color illustrations throughout

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VOCABULARY

In an encyclopedia or on the Internet, research loons. What kinds of birds are they? Where are they found? What do they eat?



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE READING THE BOOK

Loon Summer is a realistic and hopeful story of adjusting to the reality of divorce and the changes it brings about in a family's life.

By the end of summer, Rainie learns to trust and understand how her mother and father, even though they don't live together anymore, will always love her—no matter what.

1. How do your mother and father let you know that they love you?
2. When you are upset, is there a special place in nature where you feel at peace?
3. How does your family deal with difficult issues within the family?



QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON AFTER READING THE BOOK

1. If Rainie was your friend and she was sad, what would you say to make her feel better?
2. Are there any questions you would like to ask Rainie that weren't answered in this story?
3. If your parents are divorced, what things are still the same and what things are different?
4. Do you think your parents love you any more or any less if they are divorced?
5. Does the family of loons make Rainie feel happy or sad or both? Think about different kinds of animals and how they care for their young and help them to

grow. Do your parents care for you in similar ways?

6. What types of things did Rainie and her father do to show respect for the safety of the loon family? What are some things we can do to protect all the animals who live amongst us?

7. Rainie spent the summer at the lake with her father. In what ways do you feel the weeks spent with him helped Rainie to adjust and accept her parents' divorce?

8. Can you remember a difficult situation in your life when the passage of time helped you to feel better about what happened?



ACTIVITIES

1. Write a letter to your mom or dad—or one for each—and tell them what you love about them. Address it, stamp it, and send it. You'll be surprised how happy they'll be to get "old-fashioned" mail.
2. Paint a picture of a lake on poster board. Be creative. Sprinkle glitter. Cut pictures of birds, fish, boats, and people from magazines.
3. Make a collage. Use yarn, fabric, buttons, and any other bric-a-brac you can find. Use your imagination.
4. Go outside on a clear night and look at the stars. Lie on your back and pick out your favorite one. Cup your hands around your eyes, focus on your star, and pretend you are floating up to it. Name your star. Ask your mom or dad to join you, if you wish, and take turns telling each other what life is like on your star.
5. Write down as many words as you can to describe a lake. Then write down how it feels to swim, to be buried up to your neck in the sand, to tip over a canoe in chilly waters, to feel the power of the mighty wind as it fills the sail of your boat. Then take all these words and arrange them into a poem. Remember: poetry does not have to rhyme.

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ABOUT

the Author & Illustrator

Barbara Santucci is a writer and artist. For the past several years she has taught creative writing and art work-



shops to both children and adults. In addition to *Loon Summer*, Barbara has written two other books for children: *Anna's Corn* and *Abby's Chairs* (both Eerdmans). Barbara and her

family live in Rockford, Illinois.

Andrea Shine has illustrated many children's books, including *The Summer My Father Was Ten* (Boyd Mills Press), winner of the Christopher Award, ABA Pick of the Lists, and other awards. She also illustrated *Family Reunion* (Eerdmans), a book of poetry for young readers. Andrea and her family live in Southampton, New York.

If you have any other suggestions for using *Loon Summer* with young readers, we would be happy to hear from you.

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