

## While Reading

*Loon Summer* is a realistic and hopeful story of a child adjusting to the reality of her parents' divorce and the changes it brings about in their lives. 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. While reading, think about your own mother and father and the ways they let you know that they love you. Think about how the words and pictures come together to show the beauty of nature and the emotions of a child trying to make sense of her world, trying to understand why things don't always stay the same.

## Discussion Topics

- Caring** If Rainie was your friend and she was sad, what would you say to make her feel better?
- Curiosity** Are there any questions you would like to ask Rainie that weren't answered in this story?
- Change** If your parents are divorced, what things are still the same and what things are different?
- Concern** Do you think your parents love you any more or any less if they are divorced?
- Confusion** Does the family of loons make Rainie feel happy or sad or both?
- Capability** 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?
- Concern** What types of things did Rainie and her father do to show respect for the safety of the loon family?
- Compassion** What are some things we can do to protect all the animals who live amongst us?
- Comfort** 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? Can you remember a difficult situation in your life when the passage of time helped you to feel better about what happened?

## Activity Suggestions

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. Make a collage. Use yarn, fabric, buttons, and any other bric-a-brac you can find. Use your imagination.
3. 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, blocking everything out but the sky, focusing on your star. Pretend you are floating up to it. As you get closer, imagine its colors, and how the air feels on 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. Great for sharpening your imagination and just think—now you have your very own star, a bright, sparkly world designed exclusively by you, a place you can go to whenever you please.
4. 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.