

*Wash Day* by Barbara Hancock Cole  
Illustrated by Ronald Himler

A young girl describes wash day, her favorite day of the week, when Miss Ett the washerwoman comes with her grandson Sherman and Grandpa tells stories and teaches Sherman to play music.

Learning Engagements:

1. Background Knowledge
2. Music Connections
3. History Connections
4. Imagery
5. Text-to-self Connections
6. Puppetry
7. Text-to-text Connections

### Learning Engagement #1: Building Background Knowledge

Book Prompt: The story is set during the Great Depression. Many technological advances have taken place since that time. For example, in the story Miss Ett washes the family's clothing by boiling items in a large kettle, rubbing them on a scrub board, and hanging them in the line to dry. Today, most people in the United States use electric or gas washing machines. Many people dry their clothing in a dryer rather than hanging them on the line.

Complete a T-chart such as the one below. Conduct research or interview someone in the family or neighborhood who remembers what life was like in the 1930s in the United States.



<b>Great Depression</b>	<b>Today</b>
Boiling clothes and rubbing them on a scrub board to wash them and hanging them on the line to dry – only wealthy people had washing machines	Washing clothes in an electric/gas washing machine; drying them in an electric/gas clothes dryer
Many people still baking bread from scratch	Buying packaged sliced bread
Ice boxes still common	Refrigerator-freezers
Radio	Television

### Learning Engagement #2: Music Connections

Book Prompt: In the story, Grandpa plays three songs on his trumpet that may not be familiar to readers: *Taps*, *Amazing Grace*, and *Yankee Doodle Dandy*.

Find these songs online or on a CD. Read the lyrics. Play the music and sing the songs. Learn about the historical contexts in which they were written and whether or not these songs are still performed today.

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#### Learning Engagement #3: History Connections

Book Prompt: Grandpa reminisces about playing *Taps* at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.



Conduct research to learn more about the monument (and the song if you did not pursue Learning Engagement #2). Complete the following category matrix by answering the five W's: Who? What? Where? When? and Why?

<b>Tomb of the Unknown Soldier</b>	
<b>Who</b> does it honor?	
<b>What</b> does it look like?	
<b>Where</b> is it located?	
<b>When</b> was it built?	
<b>Why</b> is it important to our country?	

#### Learning Engagement #4: Imagery

Book Prompt: Author Barbara Cole uses some beautiful imagery in this story. Here are some examples:

- “As soon as it boiled, she dropped in the dirty clothes and pushed them under the bubbling water with a long stirring stick, worn smooth by many wash days.”
- “Sometimes when I played *Taps* in the army, the fog lay in the valleys in the early morning, and I’d blow so hard I’d blow that fog over the mountains, every wisp of it.”
- “She rubbed the clothes on the scrub board, swinging and swaying to the music.”

Ask readers to close their eyes and imagine scenes from the book. Ask readers to open their eyes and describe what they saw. To extend this experience, ask students to draw the images they see in their mind’s eye.

#### Learning Engagement #5: Text-to-self Connections

Book Prompt: This story is told in the first person. A young girl tells about her special relationships. Sherman, Miss Ett’s grandson, and the narrator, a girl about the same age are fast friends. These two children share the love and the companionship of the girl’s grandpa. In the end, Grandpa, who has become ill, gives his precious trumpet to Sherman so that the boy can carry on their shared love of music.

Ask students to think about the friends and the elders in their lives who encourage and inspire them. Ask them to think about some of the activities they enjoy doing with these special people and their feelings them. Guide students as they compose a first-person narrative about an experience with a best friend or an elder.

Use a matrix to create a brainstorm of possible people, activities, and feelings and the senses that are most prominent when remembering each person and shared activities with them. Ask students to choose one person, one activity, and the associated feelings to write about in a first-person story.

<b>Person</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Feelings and Senses</b>
Best friend – Lauren	Sharing secrets, reading the same books, dancing (during an earthquake)	Feeling special, like sisters, aliveness, dizzy, excited and scared
Best friend – Nick	Rescuing animals (baby quails), owling, building forts and animal cages	Caring, tenderness, touch of animal’s skin, fur, feathers, or shell
Mom	Cooking favorite recipe together (spaghetti sauce)	Warm, hungry, smell of garlic and onions, bubbling sauce, full stomach
Dad	Fishing (from a mountain stream), taking hikes, reading the Sunday comics	Adventurous, fresh air, ice cold water, slippery fish

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### Learning Engagement #6: Puppetry

Book Prompt: At several points in the story, illustrator Ronald Himler places the characters behind the clothes hanging on the line so that the figures create silhouettes. These images create an effect very much like shadow puppetry. Shadow puppeteers use silhouettes of objects, put them on sticks or wires, and while the audience sits in the dark, share the story on a screen that is lit with a light source positioned between the screen and the puppeteer.

Create shadow puppets for the personal narratives students wrote in Learning Engagement #5. Using construction paper, draw and cut out two characters and one object to represent the activity described in the story. Students will work with a partner to dramatize each of their stories and present them to the whole class or a small group.

Students can also create puppets and dramatize folktales, traditional rhymes, and picture books. Stories with two or just a few characters are the best.



### Recommended Books for Shadow Puppetry:

*Borreguita and the Coyote: A Tale from Ayutla, Mexico* retold by Verna Aardema, illustrated by Petra Maters (Random House, 1991)

*Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* retold and illustrated by Eileen Christelow (Clarion, 1989)

*The Napping House* by Audrey Wood, illustrated by Don Wood (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984)

*Swimmy* by Leo Lionni (Random House, 1963)

### Learning Engagement #7: Text-to-text Connections

Book Prompt: This intergenerational story is about friendship and passing on knowledge. Grandpa shared his vivid memory of playing at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This memory is a small story within the story.

Read some other books in which an elder shares his or her memories with a younger person and make text-to-text connections between the stories.

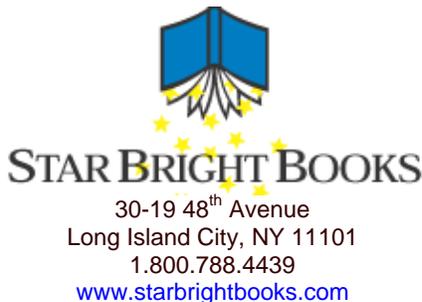
### Other Recommended Intergenerational Books:

*The Gullywasher* by Joyce Rossi (Northland Publishing, 1995)

*May'naise Sandwiches & Sunshine Tea* by Sandra Belton, illustrated by Gail Gordon Carter (Simon & Schuster, 1994)

*One Candle* by Eve Bunting, illustrated by K. Wendy Pop (Harper Collins, 2002)

*The Whispering Cloth: A Refugee's Story* by Pegi Deitz Shea, illustrated by Anita Riggio and stitched by Yoa Yang (Boyd's Mills Press, 1995)



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