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Title

We grew up reading books of different literary genres such as poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. Everyone has their favorite author that they like the most. We all love them for different reasons. For example, we love the way they write their books and their characters. The author that interests me is Katherine Paterson. I love the way she writes her book. In her book, there is always a lesson behind it that we can apply in the future. For example, *The Great Gilly Hopkin* and *Bridge to Terabithia*. Just like Katherine said that "books give you practice doing difficult things in life. In a way, they prepare you for things that you are going to have to face or someone you know and care about is going through."

As a reader, it is important for us to know about an author's background information. By knowing their background, we can understand how the plots are created. For example, Katherine Paterson's parents were missionaries living in China when she was born. During World War II she fled with her family. They moved back to the United States when Katherine was young. So she "thinks this experience helped her to become a writer because she had to watch other people and wasn't included naturally in groups at school. That helped develop her imagination because she had to make up her own friends." Just like we are influenced by the world around us, and have different experiences that affect our writing. Similar to us, that an author is influenced by his or her past when writing a book. As a writer, their content and writing style is deeply

influenced by their early life. Therefore, the more we know about the author, the more we understand the central idea and message of their works.

Katherine sometimes uses her books to deal with issues in her own life. For example, she wrote *The Great Gilly Hopkins* after she had a foster child for two months that they could not take care of. It is an interesting novel with many themes such as family and prejudice. It is about an eleven year old foster child who looks forward to reunite with her biological mother. Gilly is a selfish and immature girl. She sets up a Cinderella fantasy of an idealized mother who will come to rescue her. However she can't find her and her mother seems never wanted to do anything with her. When she stays with her foster family, she begins to get used to life with them and starts to care about them. But on Thanksgiving weekend, when Gilly is busy taking care of her family members with the flu, her grandmother suddenly appears. She comes to take Gilly to live with her in Virginia. She must go with her grandmother although she doesn't want to leave her foster family. Eventually, she realized how much she loves her foster family, and learns many life lessons. Then Gilly has good news that her biological mother, Courney, is coming to see her. But she finds out that her mother only came because her grandmother paid her which hurts her so much.

In *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, Katherine teaches us that life doesn't always have a happy ending and life is tough. No matter how hard we try and how much we want it, some stories just don't have a happy ending. Just like in real life, everything won't go smoothly and the way you want it to be. This book is realistic in that it includes real life problems. For example, in this novel, Katherine shows how difficult the life of a foster parent and child could be, being that she was only able to handle her foster child for only a couple of months. This book can relate to many foster children who are disappointed with their life and portrays a foster child's emotional problems. Foster parents will also be able to relate to Trotter as they had to deal with kids like Gilly. This story will help children who have difficulties with family.

Katherine also wrote *Bridge to Terabithia* based on her son's childhood friend who was hit and killed by lightning. The novel tells the story of Jess Aron and his friend, Leslie Burke. Jess has been practicing so hard during summer to be the fastest runner in school. But there is a girl, Leslie, who is better and faster than him. Instead of being jealous of Leslie, he admires her and becomes close friends. Together they created a magical land called Terabithia and spent hours in the kingdom. In this magical kingdom they are able to escape from reality. They do not need to worry about school and are able to forget problems that they suffer in real life. One morning, Leslie goes to Terabithia without Jess. Unfortunately, a terrible accident happens. Leslie drowned in the stream when the rope broke and she hit herself on the rock. Jess is heartbroken about her death. He is completely depressed and goes through the stage of grief. At first he doesn't want to believe she has died, but he realizes the power of their friendship gives him the strength to solve his problems and overcome his weaknesses.

In *Bridge to Terabithia*, Katherine shows us that friendship plays an important role in children's lives. For example, Jess and Leslie both teach each other, encourage each other, and trust in each other. They are able to help and support each other when they face difficulties at school and home. We learned that friendship is necessary for every person since we are not always self-sufficient. Sometimes we are not able to overcome difficulties in our life, therefore we need friends to help us when we encounter challenges and problems in our life. Every friend is important when we face different situations. In that specific situation, only a real friend can help us. We also learned a lesson of life. For example, Leslie's death teaches Jess that people around him can be taken any time which is similar to Katherine's son's friend who was suddenly killed by lightning. Therefore, we must cherish every moment with our friends and family. This is an important lesson that *Bridge to Terabithia* taught us.







