

TEACHER GUIDE

The Not So Secret Case Files of Billy Vale, PI

Natasha Deen

Audience Level: Grades 3+

Themes: interdependence, teamwork,
deductive reasoning,
inclusiveness, empathy,
multiculturalism

Pre-session Discussion

Natasha has had to solve many mysteries in her life, like *where did her socks go?* and *Did her puppy steal her socks?* In her novel, *The Not So Secret Case Files of Billy Vale, P.I.*, her friends, Billy, Allison, and Hayden must solve a variety of mysteries. What are some puzzles or mysteries students have had to solve?

Connecting to the World

Billy, Allison, and Hayden tackle and solve mysteries involving lost notes, stolen papers, and missing kids. What are some big mysteries (i.e. Bigfoot, aliens) that students have head of? What do they think the solution to that mystery is?

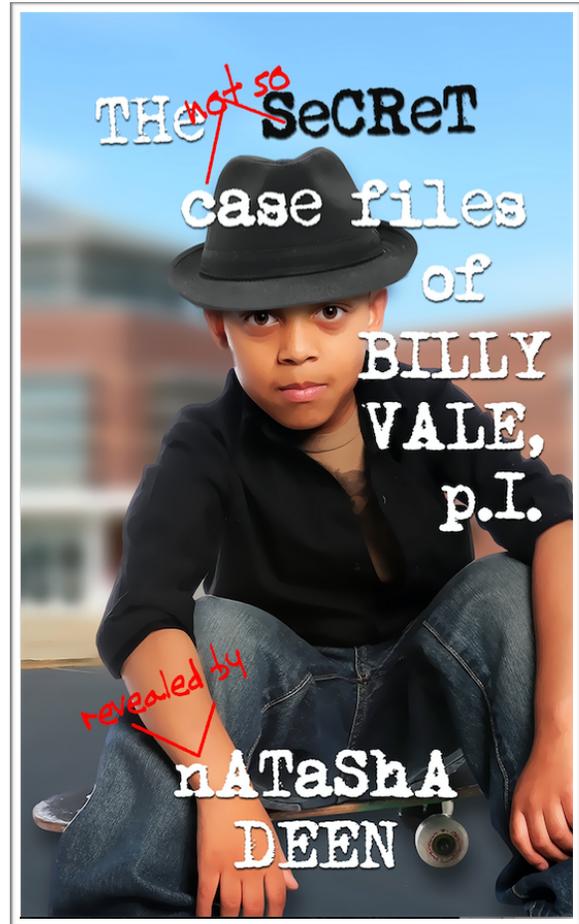
Vocabulary Building

Sentimental Brawn Pilfered Enigmatic

Connecting to the text

Throughout the book, Billy gets help from other students, teachers, and his family, and he learns that being interdependent isn't such a bad thing.

Non fiction/essay prompt: When was a time that you had to ask for help to solve a problem? How did your problem get solved?



Fiction story prompt: Billy, Allison, and Hayden hear strange, creaking sounds in the school. What are the sounds? How do you think they solve that mystery?

Discussion Questions

1. In *The Case of the Clingy Client*, Billy isn't happy about Allison helping him solve the case. By the end of the story, he's changed his mind. Why do you think he changed his mind?
2. In *The Case of the Fidgety Footballer*, what are some of the clues the team uses to solve the case?
3. One of the settings of *The Case of the Pilfered Pocket* is the Game-O-Rama. What are some mysteries that could take place in this setting?
4. Did *The Case of the Enigmatic Envelope* change the way you thought of Mrs. Smith? Why or why not?
5. Do you agree or disagree with the decisions Hayden makes in *The Case of the Missing Man*?

Activity

- Have students work on their memory skills by putting fifteen items on a tray. Give them one minute to memorize the items, then cover the tray. Have students write down as many items as they can remember.
- Have students work on finding information by getting them to write down five questions (i.e. Who has a birthday in May? Who can speak French?). Then have them question other students to see who can do those things.

Biography

Natasha Deen's family moved to Canada to escape the racial violence and political unrest of Guyana, South America. She worked for the provincial government and non-profit agencies before pursuing a career in writing. Her books include *The Promise of Home*, *Sleight of Hand*, and *Guardian*, which was a 2015 CCBC Best Pick for Kids and Teens, nominated for a Sunburst Award, and won a bronze Moonbeam Award. She lives in Edmonton, Alberta where she spends a lot of time arguing with her cats and dogs about who is the boss of the house. Visit her at www.natashadeen.com.

