Helping your children choose books they will love

I ♥ reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

---

Opening extract from

Pig City

Written by

Louis Sachar

Published by

Bloomsbury

All text is copyright of the author

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

Bloomsbury Publishing, London, Berlin and New York

First published in Great Britain in 2009 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
36 Soho Square, London, W1D 3QY

First published as *Sixth Grade Secrets* in the United States
by Scholastic Inc.

Copyright © Louis Sachar 1987

The right of Louis Sachar to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

All rights reserved
No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher

A CIP catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 0 7475 9924 1

The paper this book is printed on is certified independently in accordance with the rules of the FSC. It is ancient-forest friendly.
The printer holds chain of custody.



Printed in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, St Ives Plc

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

www.bloomsbury.com

Table of Characters

This is a list of some of the people in Laura's class. Laura has been going to the same school for over six years, so she knows everybody there fairly well. But unless you happen to go to Laura's school, you may have trouble remembering who is who. This list is here to help you if you need it. These aren't all the people in Laura's class, just the ones who are mentioned in the book at least twice.

Laura – Our hero. If you forget who she is, then you'll need more than this list to help you.
Tiffany – Ticklish. Has trouble eating spaghetti.
Allison – Always wears clean underwear.
Gabriel – Has copied more dictionary pages than anyone else in Mr. Doyle's class.
Mr. Doyle – The best teacher in the school. The worst teacher in the school. Take your pick.
Kristin – Small face, big glasses.
Sheila – Frizzy hair. Hates Laura. Sits behind Gabriel.

Debbie – Hangs upside-down before tests.
Howard – Wants everybody to like him. Nobody does.
Karen – Talks all the time. Yolanda's best friend. Nothing bothers her, not even Gabriel.
Yolanda – Very shy. Very pretty. Karen's best friend.
Jonathan – Smartest, fastest, strongest, and most handsome boy in Mr. Doyle's class, and he knows it.
Nathan – Talks funny. Likes to watch turkeys play football.
Aaron – Good singer. His grandmother picks out his clothes for him.
Linzy – Teacher's pet. Has never had to copy a dictionary page.

There are fifteen other kids in Mr. Doyle's class who didn't make this list. I hope they don't feel too bad. I'm sure they are interesting people, too, and maybe someday some other author will write a story about them.

PART ONE

The Treasures of Pig City

1
Laura

It all started with a hat.

Laura was at a garage sale with her friends Tiffany and Allison.

"Euu, don't put that on your head," said Allison. "You don't know where it's been. It might have lice."

Laura hesitated a moment, then put it on her head. She realized Allison might be right, but she also thought it was a tacky thing to say in front of the man who used to wear it. Anyway, the man was bald, so how could he have lice?

"How much?" she asked.

The bald man smiled. He was missing a front tooth. "Well, it was a dollar," he said, "but since you're so pretty, you can have it for fifty cents."

It was a red cap with a blue brim. In silver letters above the brim were the words PIG CITY. It fit snug, but not too tight over her very long brown hair.

"What do you think?" she asked her friends.

Tiffany looked up from a box of records and

laughed. "It's cute," she said.

"Everything looks cute on you, Laura," Allison agreed.

Laura bought the cap, but she insisted on paying the original price, one dollar. She didn't think she should get it any cheaper just because she was pretty.

"What does Pig City mean?" Tiffany asked the man.

He didn't answer. He just winked at her.

Laura knew her parents wouldn't like the cap. They never liked any clothes she bought at garage sales. They couldn't understand why she'd want to wear somebody's old clothes when they'd buy her anything she wanted new.

But where would she be able to find a new cap that said PIG CITY on it? Well, actually, she remembered there was a store at the mall where they sold caps with anything anyone wanted printed on them. Still, it wasn't the same. The thing that made this cap so special was that she didn't buy it at the mall. It was like Allison had said, "You don't know where it's been." That was why she liked it. What was Pig City? It was mysterious.

"How do you know it doesn't have lice?" Allison asked as the three girls walked away.

"He was bald," said Laura.

"So?" asked Allison. "He wasn't *always* bald."

"How do you know?" asked Tiffany. "Maybe he was born bald."

"Everybody's born bald," said Laura.

Tiffany laughed.

"Well, I wouldn't put someone else's hat on my head," said Allison. "What if the man used to be a pig farmer?"

Allison had short brown hair, neatly combed and parted just a little off center. Her face was clean, fresh, and healthy-looking. Her teeth were white, and her fingernails were neatly trimmed. You could tell just by looking at her that she always wore clean underwear.

"Maybe Pig City is the name of a health club," said Tiffany, "where fat people go to lose weight."

Allison laughed. "Or where slobs go to learn good manners," she added.

Laura laughed.

"What if it really is a city?" asked Tiffany. "And the only people who live there are fat slobs with bad manners!"

They all laughed.

"Maybe it's a beautiful city," said Laura, "with flowers everywhere, and trees and beaches. They just call it Pig City to keep the tourists away."

"Wouldn't that be great?" said Allison. "And not too many people would want to live in a city named Pig City, either, so it's not crowded or polluted."

"It's the most wonderful place in the world," said Tiffany, "just like the Garden of Eden. And nobody wears clothes, just fig leaves."

Tiffany probably changed her underwear every day, too, only you couldn't tell just by looking at her. Something about her was always messy. Her clothes never fit right. The more she tried to comb her hair, the worse it got.

"I'm going to be a pig farmer when I grow up," Laura declared.

Tiffany laughed.

"I thought you wanted to be President," said Allison.

"I can do both," said Laura. "You're only allowed to be President for eight years."

Laura's goal was to be the first woman President of the United States. That was why it bothered her when people told her she was pretty. Nobody ever told George Washington he was pretty!

Laura had little doubt that she would someday be President. It was just a question of whether or not she'd be the first woman. She was afraid another woman might beat her to it.

Just as George Washington is known as the Father of our Country, someday she wanted to be known as the Mother of our Country.

"If you're a pig farmer, you'll have to kill pigs,"

Tiffany pointed out.

"Oh, I could never do that," said Laura.

"That's how they make their money," said Tiffany. "They raise pigs until they're big and fat, then they butcher them! Just so people can eat bacon. It's disgusting."

"What about the farmers who just have dairy cows?" asked Allison. "They don't kill their cows. They just milk them and make money by selling the milk."

"But Laura wants to be a pig farmer, not a cow farmer," said Tiffany.

"Oh," said Allison. "So?" she asked. "Why can't she milk pigs? Pigs are mammals! They have milk, too."

They had been studying mammals in Mr. Doyle's class.

"Pig milk?" questioned Tiffany.

"Yes!" exclaimed Laura. She liked that idea. "You've heard of goat milk. Why not pig milk? It will be a new product! And pig cheese! I'll be the only one selling it, so I'll make lots of money."

"How about pig yogurt?" suggested Allison. "Yogurt already tastes like it comes from pigs, anyway."

"And pig butter," said Laura.

"And pig cottage cheese," said Allison.

"And pig ice cream," Tiffany joined in.

When Laura was four years old her father told her

about George Washington. It was the day before her first day of kindergarten. She was supposed to get her hair cut. She threw a temper tantrum.

"No!" she screamed and cried. "I don't want to get my hair cut! No! No! No! No! No!" She stomped angrily around the house, kicking things. When she kicked a table in the living room, the lamp on top of it fell and broke.

She instantly stopped crying.

Her father rushed in when he heard the crash. He looked at Laura, then at the broken lamp. "How did this happen?" he demanded.

"I don't know, Daddy," Laura said innocently. "I was just standing here, when suddenly the lamp broke."

He didn't get angry or accuse her of lying. Instead, he told her the story of George Washington and the cherry tree, and how George later grew up to be the first President of the United States, the Father of our Country!

When he finished, Laura stared bravely into her father's eyes and said, "I cannot tell a lie. I broke the lamp."

Just as George Washington didn't get in trouble for chopping down the cherry tree, Laura Sibbie didn't get in trouble for breaking the lamp. She didn't have to get her hair cut, either. Her parents promised she'd never

have to get her hair cut, as long as she never told another lie.

She was now in the sixth grade. There was only a month and a half left of school. Her hair was long and thick and reached down below her waist. She hadn't lied yet.

"Pig ice cream?" questioned Allison. "Yuck-ola!"

2
Pig City

Laura wore the cap every day for a week. Her parents got used to it. Everybody in school made some dumb comment about it, but soon they got used to it, too. By the end of the week, it had become a part of her. She would have looked strange without it.

"We'll be in the Dog House!" Laura shouted, then slammed the door behind her.

Tiffany and Allison were waiting in the backyard, sucking on grape popsicles. They liked coming to Laura's because there was always good food to eat.

The Dog House was big enough for a dog the size of an elephant. It was built by Laura's father and her oldest brother over fifteen years ago. Laura had two brothers and one sister, but they were much older than she was. None of them lived at home.

It was called the Dog House because from the outside it looked like a giant doghouse with a door. Also, the name of the first club to use it was The Dogs.

Since then, it had been home to The Paul

McCartney Fan Club, The Spiders, The Cowgirls, The Destroyers, The Erasers, The Devils, and now a new club: Pig City.

Laura was the president of Pig City. Allison said she should be mayor and not president because it was a city and not a country, but she was outvoted. Tiffany was vice-president and Allison was secretary. So far, they were the only members.

They entered the Dog House. Tiffany plopped down on a purple bean bag chair. Allison sat on a bed covered by a black-and-white checked bedspread. Laura sat in a swinging bamboo chair that hung from the ceiling.

There was also a bookcase, a television, two lamps, a coffee table, and various other odds and ends, mostly odds. Nearly everything came from garage sales.

Nothing electrical worked, which didn't matter since there were no electrical outlets. They had a battery-operated cassette tape recorder if they wanted to listen to music.

Laura made a fist with her right hand, then raised it and held it lengthwise against her nose, like a pig's snout. Allison and Tiffany did the same. Then they all solemnly lowered their fists. It was the secret Pig City salute.

Pig City was a secret club. It had to be. Clubs were no longer allowed at Laura's school. Earlier in the year there were several clubs, but a parent complained because her child couldn't join one. After that, clubs were no longer allowed.

"You're first, Allison," said Laura.

Allison blushed.

"What'd you bring, Allison?" asked Tiffany.

Allison removed a photograph from her jacket pocket and set it on the coffee table. "You don't have to stare at it!" she exclaimed.

It was a picture of her when she was three years old, naked in the bathtub.

"I got it out of my parents' album," she said. "Can you believe it? They used to show it to everyone who came over! I'd be sitting right there in the room with them, and they'd show the album to their friends, with that picture in it. 'How adorable,' they'd say. 'How precious.' Every one of my parents' friends has seen my butt!"

Tiffany laughed.

"Aw, how adorable," said Laura.

"It's not funny!" said Allison. She turned the picture over.

Laura had a jewelry box that looked just like an old-time pirate's treasure chest. She opened it and placed Allison's picture facedown on the torn red felt.

"Your turn, Tiffany," said Allison. "And it better be something good."

"It's better than yours," said Tiffany. "I mean worse."

Tiffany's lips were purple from the grape popsicle. She unfolded what looked like the front page of a newspaper. A huge banner headline proclaimed:

TIFFANY'S TICKLISH!

Allison and Laura laughed. Laura moved to the bed next to Allison, and they read it together.

Tiffany, the world-famous spaghetti eater, is ticklish. That's right, ticklish! It has been conclusively established by our team of expert ticklers that she is ticklish all over.

A finger under her chin will cause her to giggle for hours. Squeeze her sides and she will jump six feet in the air. Touch a feather to her toes and watch her writhe on the floor in a fit of uncontrollable laughter. Tickle her armpits at your own risk!

Caution: Do not tickle her while she is eating spaghetti, or she will dump her plate on your head.

"It's not funny!" said Tiffany. "Everybody who reads that stupid thing tries to tickle me."

"Where'd it come from?" Allison asked.

"Oh, my uncle had it made at a carnival we all went to. He wrote it himself, of course; it's so stupid."

"Did you really dump a plate of spaghetti on his head?" asked Laura.

"No!" Tiffany scowled. "That's another one of his so-called jokes that he thinks is funny. He always makes fun of me because of *one time* when we went to an Italian restaurant I got spaghetti sauce on my clothes. Of course, he thought it was hilarious."

Laura got a peacock feather out of a blue vase on top of the bookcase. She held it menacingly over Tiffany, who was somewhat trapped in the bean bag chair.

Just the sight of the feather made Tiffany giggle. "Get away," she squealed.

Allison reached over and squeezed Tiffany's side. She jumped out of the chair.

Laura put the feather back in the vase and placed Tiffany's newspaper article in the treasure chest.

"Your turn, Laura," said Tiffany.

Laura took a folded piece of notebook paper out of the back pocket of her blue jeans and dropped it onto the coffee table. She returned to her swinging bamboo chair.

Allison unfolded Laura's paper. "Wow," she said, then handed it to Tiffany.

Declaration of Love

I, Laura Sibbie, declare, now and forever, that I'm in love with my teacher, Mr. Doyle. I dream about him all the time, and if I was older, I'd like to marry him.

With all my heart,
Laura Sibbie

Tiffany gasped.

"Mr. Doyle?" asked Allison. "You're kidding!"

"I never lie," said Laura.

"I guess he's all right for a teacher," said Tiffany.

Laura placed her Declaration of Love in the treasure chest. She raised her fist to her nose. Tiffany and Allison did the same. Laura spoke. "If any one of us ever tells anybody anything about Pig City, the other two will show her secret to the whole school!"

They lowered their fists.