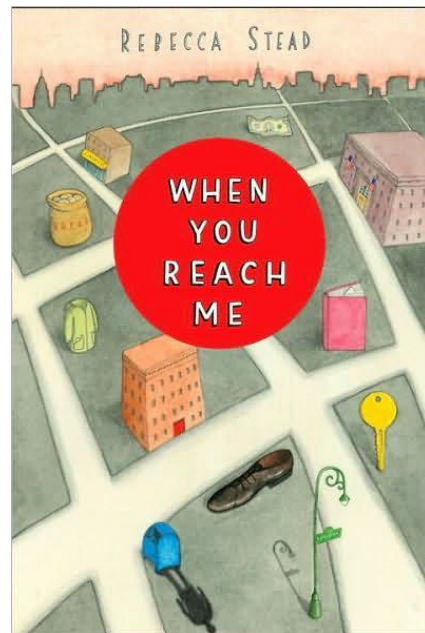


***When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead**  
**(Random House/Wendy Lamb Books, 2009)**

*6<sup>th</sup> graders Miranda and her best friend Sal know how to navigate their New York City neighborhood. They know where it is safe to go and who to avoid. But things start to unravel. Sal gets punched by a new kid for what seems like no reason, Miranda's apartment key is stolen and then she begins to receive mysterious notes. Each message brings her closer to believing that only she can prevent a tragic death. Until the final note makes her think she's too late.*



**Discussion Questions**

1. The kids in this book have very different types of families – What kind of a family does Miranda have? Is she ashamed about the way she and her mother live? P.64, 120 What about Sal, Annemarie, Julia? Why does Annemarie think Miranda's mother is neat when she comes to stay over? Are there other ways they each envy the other's families? Why does Julia's bragging about how rich she is bother Miranda? Miranda doesn't have a father, but she says you can't miss what you don't have. How is Richard, her mother's boyfriend, a father figure to her? Why is Miranda's mother reluctant to marry Richard?
2. Friendships. There are lots of friendships won and lost in the story. After Sal is punched by Marcus why does he drop Miranda as a friend? Why do you think Colon befriended Miranda and Annemarie?
3. Miranda's mother brings office supplies home from the office, Louisa – Sal's mother – bring home unopened packages from the nursing home, Colin steals rolls from Sammy's, but he says it is not stealing P. 131 – not like the piggy bank. Do you agree with him?
4. Was it right for the laughing man/Marcus to steal Sammy's piggy bank?
5. Why does Miranda decide to help Alice Evans? (p.144) Why does she write TRUCE on a note of paper and give it to Julia?
6. Throughout our reading, safety emerges as an important concept - Mother's rules (p.25). Miranda has the freedom to walk to school and to work at Jimmy's at lunch. Why does her mother have such a strong reaction when Miranda gives the Laughing Man the sandwich?

7. The author uses a metaphor of the veil p. 71. Which characters begin to lift the veil between them and the rest of the world?
8. How do the chapter titles mirror the categories in the \$20,000 dollar Pyramid? How do they serve as clues?
9. Within a few chapters, Miranda informs the reader that she only reads one book: *A Wrinkle in Time*. Why was this book so important to Miranda? (p. 7-9)
10. How does *A Wrinkle in Time* help us create an understanding for the premise of *When you Reach Me*?
11. The Letters: Miranda receives four mysterious letters. The first note gives her the creepy feeling that someone is watching her, and that the person knows something about her life that hasn't yet happened. P.60, 2<sup>nd</sup> – p.67, 3<sup>rd</sup> – p.98, 4<sup>th</sup> p.162.
12. Stead chooses to detail the most traumatic part of the plotline in a list (p.157). Why do you think she choose this device?

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