

Village School Book of the Month

"The Worry Week" by Anne

Morrow Lindbergh

**Reviewed by Karen Walton,
Kindergarten Assistant**

My mother's side of the family owns a house on an island off the coast of Maine where I, along with all the rest of the cousins, aunts, and uncles, have vacationed every summer since before I can remember. Anyone who spends extended time on North Haven or Vinalhaven islands, even when separated by many months of the year, knows that there's something distinct about this island culture.

One can feel that he or she is living in a solitary world, disconnected by miles of water from anywhere else and simultaneously more deeply connected within itself. It seems fairies are more likely to appear here, in the granite-lined forests, and stories more likely to spring particularly from these red tide pool rocks. Perhaps everything is more possible, because the island, autonomous as it is both physically and culturally, can be however it likes to be.

Given our deep attachment to Vinalhaven Island, my sister and I were drawn to this story we picked up in a North Haven bookstore, "The Worry Week," by Anne Morrow Lindbergh.

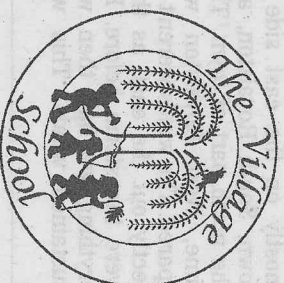
Lindbergh is clearly "in the know" about the challenges and blessings of island life, in

this tale she weaves about three young sisters during their yearly vacation on North Haven island.

Readers are introduced to the ever practical Allegra, poetic (and often confused) Alice, and the youngest of the bunch, playful "Minnow." I have read this book so often, and the place and time to which Lindbergh speaks is so familiar that it is hard to imagine not knowing these girls. But the way the text is written also brings us completely and unashamedly into their world — there's little preamble before we are launched into an adventure that speaks for itself.

Spending only one month a year on North Haven island all three girls (but most profoundly Allegra) are deeply aggrieved when they are told they must leave for a week and stay with their great Aunt Ruth, "who thinks anyone under the age of 21 should go to bed at 6:30. So Allegra secretly cooks up a plan to stay behind alone on the island. The girls' journey, complicated by the fact that the sisters return from their stowaway on the North Haven ferry to a house totally emptied of food, reflects the island life with which my family has become so familiar over the years — sea, solitude, and of course, a dash of magic.

Disconnected from everything around them, both because the walk to town is



seven miles away and because they don't want to be found out, Allegra, Alice and Minnow are forced to scrounge for food, feasting on such delicacies as fried periwinkles, Orach salad, and chanterelles. This all happens alongside a search for a mysterious "treasure" their father tells them is somewhere hidden in their house.

Lindbergh propels the story with her lively characters, very clear and particular in their attributes. The lovelorn Alice quotes Shakespeare the day long, often unwittingly injuring herself wandering through brambles or off bowl-

ders, while Minnow spends most of her time decorating the family's percolator with shells and school glue (which she delights in eating). Allegra's voice of reason narration highlights the hilarity of her sisters antics throughout the book and we are invited to witness her struggle to keep herself and her two sisters safe, warm, and fed until their parents return. But throughout it all, the reader remains wrapped in the cloak of childhood, experiencing the love the three girls have for each other, in spite of their conflicts. And along this humorous journey, too, there is the love the island has for the children, the protection afforded by a well-tended seaside home, as our three protagonists spend a week bumping against the trials and gifts of growing up.

The Worry Week is a great read-aloud to 2nd-6th graders, and 4th graders and older can read it independently. Ages 7 to adult will enjoy this book.