



# Secrets of the Cicada Summer

by

**Andrea Beaty**

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Lily has read every Nancy Drew book in the library. She's good at spying and keeping secrets. She has to be. She has secrets of her own that no one can ever find out.

When summer brings lying, stealing Tinny Bridges to town, Lily must depend on her wits to keep ahead of this sly newcomer. Tinny takes candy from the general store and blames Lily. She tries to steal Lily's friends and even her father's affection. Worst of all, she seems to know Lily's secrets.

When Tinny goes missing, only Lily has any idea what happened to her. But for Lily, finding Tinny means confronting her hidden past. In one unusual summer, Lily Mathis will have a chance to solve a mystery, make a friend, and most important, find forgiveness.

## About the author:

Andrea Beaty was raised in a small southern Illinois town, where her family ran a tiny grocery store. When she wasn't roaming the nearby fields with her brothers and sisters, she was reading Nancy Drew mysteries up in the branches of a maple tree. Andrea now lives outside Chicago with her family.

Andrea is the author of *Iggy Peck, Architect* and *Rosie Revere, Engineer* (Sept. 2013) both are illustrated by David Roberts.

Andrea's other novels include *Dorko the Magnificent* (April 2013) and the hybrid novel/graphic novel *Attack of the Fluffy Bunnies* illustrated by Dan Santat.

Learn more about her at [www.AndreaBeaty.com](http://www.AndreaBeaty.com)

## Projects:

### Language Arts:

Write one of the following letters:

From Tinny to her father after the close of the book

From Lily to Pete

From Miss Opal to Lily

From Lily to her Dad

### Mentor Text:

Andrea Beaty's writing is full of delicious descriptive details. An example:

"The women's stories are full of details, like who is related to who and where people live and what their houses are like. Their stories are all connected to each other and to the things that happened in the past.

Sometimes, when the store is crowded, there are four or five stories going at the same time, and the women's voices swirl around in the air and bubble up and splash like water on the rocks. The sound is smooth and sweet." (p. 44-45)

Describe the way the cafeteria or other place sounds where there are many children talking inspired by Andrea Beaty's example.

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## Pre-reading:

Lily (the main character) has secrets.

What do you think are her secrets?

Do you think everyone has secrets?

Do you think her secrets will be revealed?

## Reading:

Good readers always make predictions as they read. They base these predictions on several things: evidence in the story, what they know about how stories work (like mysteries always have clues that don't help solve the riddle), and based on the actions of the characters and how they are likely to respond. As you read Cicada Summer write a question at the end of each chapter about what might happen next. An example from Ch. 1: Will Lily ever talk again?

-or-

Just like Lily keeps a log about everything she learns about Tinny by eavesdropping, keep a list of facts you learn about the following characters as you read the novel.

Lily	Pete	Tinny

## Art:

Create two pieces of art. One should be about Lily and the other Tinny. You can create your pieces in any media you prefer (paint, sculpture, collage, etc.) but explain your choices in color, media and form in a brief artist's statement which you turn in with the projects.

## Science:

Create a pamphlet, poster or powerpoint presentation about the life of the cicada or other summer creature. Research if cicadas exist where you live. If so, what kind and when will you have a cicada summer.

Some people eat cicadas. Learn more: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/05/070522-cicadas-eat.html>

Research other "strange" foods do people eat? Discuss why they might do so. What foods do you eat that others might consider strange?

## *Secrets of the Cicada Summer* by Andrea Beaty

### **Discussion guide:**

How has Lily become invisible? Have you ever felt invisible? Why is reading one of Lily's secrets?

Who is Fern? How do various characters in the story react to Lily's self-imposed muteness? How would you?

Describe the town of Olena. Is it a place you would like to spend a summer or not? What is the best thing about where you live? What is the worst?

How does the new girl (Tinny Bridges) change everything for Lily? Describe Tinny. Does she also hold secrets?

What do Tinny and Lily think of each other? How do you know? Are first impressions about people usually right or wrong?

How is there a mystery in Olena? What are the clues that Lily is given? Is Lily seeing a mystery because she loves Nancy Drew or does one really exist?

Are you more like Miss Pearl (who must see something to believe it) or can you take things on faith like Miss Opal. Can you know something about a person without them ever saying it aloud? What could someone know about you?

Does Tinny ever seem to regret her penchant for pilfering? Why do you think she developed this habit? How did she come to stay with Miss Fern? Why do you think Fern believes Lily is taking from her?

What happens when the stranger comes to town? As a reader did you suspect that he had a connection to Tinny? What does she know that he wants? How can information be dangerous?

Why doesn't Lily ever plan on using words again? What happened that she gave them up? Why does she feel responsible?

When is Lily forced to use words again? Do you think that Tinny was actually good for Lily after all? How does she help her friend and herself?

In the end, what happens to Tinny and Lily? Do you think they will remain friends? Whose situation do you feel more sorry for- Lily or Tinny's? What is the right thing for her Tinny to say?

**This guide was created by [Tracie Vaughn Zimmer](http://www.tracievaughnzimmer.com), a reading specialist and children's author, visit her website to find hundreds of guides to children's literature. [www.tracievaughnzimmer.com](http://www.tracievaughnzimmer.com)**