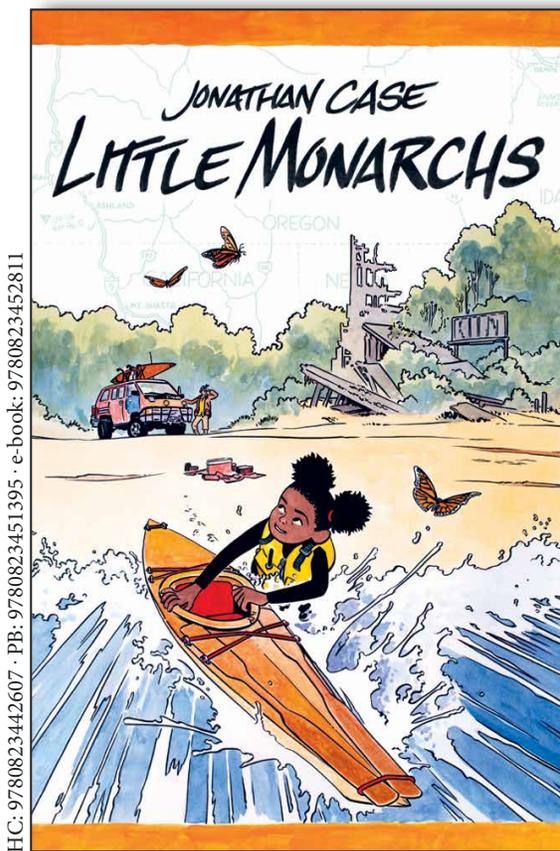


HOLIDAY HOUSE READING GROUP GUIDE



LITTLE MONARCHS

by Jonathan Case

ABOUT THE BOOK

This graphic novel adventure tells the story of ten-year-old Elvie and her crucial mission to save humanity from extinction after a sun shift has changed life on earth as we know it.

It's been fifty years since a sun shift wiped out nearly all mammal life across the earth. Towns and cities are abandoned relics, autonomous machines maintain roadways, and the world is slowly being reclaimed by nature. Isolated pockets of survivors keep to themselves in underground sites, hiding from the lethal sunlight

by day and coming above ground at night. Ten-year-old Elvie and her caretaker, Flora, a biologist, are the only two humans who can survive during daylight because Flora made an incredible discovery—a way to make an antidote to sun sickness using the scales from monarch butterfly wings.

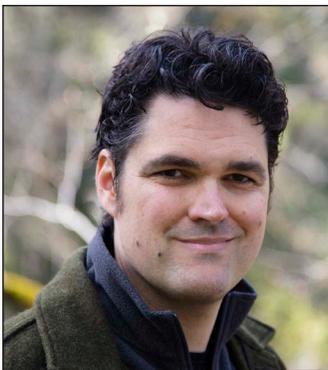
Free to travel during the day, Elvie and Flora follow monarchs as they migrate across the former Western United States, constantly making new medicine for themselves while trying to find a way to make a vaccine they can share with everyone. Will they discover a way to go from a treatment to a cure and preserve what remains of humanity, or will their efforts be thwarted by disaster and the very people they are trying to save?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How is it obvious that the main character is writing in a journal on the first page of chapter one? Study each item on the Backpack Supplies List for Summer 2101. How are they used as the journey unfolds? Which items prove to be necessary for survival?
- Explain how the art reveals action in the novel. How are visual sound effects like “whump” (p. 7) used? Identify other visual sound effects in the novel and discuss how they evoke a reaction from the reader. How do the colors used help establish the mood and tone of the book?
- The panels in a graphic novel range from a full-page, single scene to smaller scenes separated by a gutter—the space between the frames. How do they contribute to the setting? How do the smaller panels advance the plot? There are also panels with no words. What is their role in the story?

- What is the conflict of this novel?
- Look at the chapter titles. How do these titles, along with the single-page illustration, foreshadow the next episode in the story?
- How does Flora become Elvie’s guardian? Note the dialogue between them.
- In what ways is Elvie a typical ten-year-old? How is she sometimes expected to perform grown-up duties? Why is Elvie so eager to hear stories about her parents?
- Discuss the tender moments between Elvie and Flora. How is Flora equally tender toward the little boy they discover near one of the “Deeper” sites?
- Flora, a biologist, studies sun sickness. Why is she so determined to develop a medicine that will make it possible for all people to go out in daylight again? Explain why the people who must live in darkness are called “Deeper.” How did Flora discover that the monarch butterfly is the key to the medicine?
- Describe how Jonathan Case creates suspense and danger in such scenes as the earthquake. Which is the most life-threatening scene in the story? How has Flora prepared for almost any situation?
- Who is Roy McCall? Why does he call Elvie a “little firecracker”? Elvie tells Roy about Flora’s mission. Explain why Flora tells her to stop. Who is Lewis? Describe his behavior.
- How does Elvie apply one of her Desert Survival Tips to take down the two men for a few days? At what point in the novel does Flora really realize that Roy McCall is a bad seed?
- What is the climax, or the turning point in the story?
- Discuss the falling action and how it leads to a satisfying ending.
- What is especially significant about “The Song,” the title of chapter 12? How does Elvie prepare herself for disappointment? Describe her reaction when she hears the song.
- How are real facts about monarch butterflies used in the story? Explain how it is helpful information to know for the story and in real life.

ABOUT THE CREATOR



Jonathan Case is an Eisner Award-winning cartoonist whose works include *Dear Creature*, *Green River Killer: A True Detective Story* by Jeff Jensen, and *The New Deal*, an Amazon Best Book of the Year which was also nominated for Reuben and Harvey Awards. *Little Monarchs* is his first book with Holiday House. Jonathan lives in Silverton, Oregon, with his family. You can visit him at JonathanCase.net.