

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: C. Williams/L. Gore    Grade: 8    School: OMS

Book Title: Silent to the Bone            Genre: realistic fiction/mystery

Author: E. L. Konigsburg    Pages: 261

Publisher: Simon & Schuster    Copyright: 2000

*In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.*

**Book Summary and summary citation:** (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

"Connor is sure his best friend Branwell, couldn't have hurt Branwell's baby half sister, Nikki. But Nikki lies in a coma, and Branwell is in a juvenile behavioral center, suspected of a horrible crime and unable to utter the words to tell what really happened.

Connor is the only one who might be able to break through Branwell's wall of silence. But how can he prove Branwell didn't commit the unspeakable act of which he's accused-- when Branwell can't speak for himself?"- back cover

**Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s):** (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

This detective-type mystery, with Connor acting as the amateur sleuth, draws reluctant readers into a compelling story as Connor tries to connect the clues without oral help from Branwell.

10. Examine author's purpose and style.

10RALG

11. Determine purpose for reading and strategies needed for comprehension.

12. Compare and contrast literary elements in similar literary works.

13. Analyze plot, character, theme, point of view and setting in varied genres. 10RALA,B, 12RALA

**Include two professional reviews of this title:** (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

### Review #1

From School Library Journal

"Part detective and suspense story, this multilayered novel is much more, touching on themes of communication, relationships in blended families, being different, friendship, adolescence, and shame." Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

### Review #2

From Booklist

Did the British nanny do it? She says it was 13-year-old Branwell who dropped his baby sister, Nikki, and he's the prime suspect. Why has he been struck dumb? What does he know? Is his silence a weapon? Is it survivor guilt? Shame? Konigsburg gets behind today's tabloid headlines with a compelling mystery that is also a moving story of family, friendship, and seduction. The story is told by Branwell's best friend, Connor, who visits the Juvenile Detention Center and tries to

get Branwell to communicate by blinking his eyes at letters and flash cards. Like Branwell, Connor is also part of a tense stepfamily, where he feels abandoned by a parent's remarriage. And Connor has another link with the accused: he understands his friend's attraction to the sexy babysitter, Vivian, especially when he learns that she has a habit of leaving the bathroom door open when she takes a bath. Everything makes you want to go back and reread the story, not only to think about the clues and suspects you missed the first time around (What exactly does the tape of the 911 call reveal?) but also for the wit and insight, the farce, and the gentleness of the telling. As in Laurie Halse Anderson's Printz Honor Book, *Speak* (1999), the mutism is an eloquent part of the narrative. Like his silent friend, Connor comes to know the power of keeping quiet, that "the cruelest lies are often told in silence." Hazel Rochman  
Copyright © American Library Association.

**What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?**

Title: The Westing Game    Author: Ellen Raskin  
Title: The Face on the Milk Carton    Author: Caroline B. Cooney  
Title:                                    Author:  
Title:                                    Author:  
Title:                                    Author:  
Title:                                    Author:

**Document any potentially controversial content:**

Multiple references to "The Week from Hell." An adolescent boy's first crush on a nanny leads to his silence. It is suggested that the nanny is having sex with the pizza delivery boy when the accident with the baby happens; there is no blatant description of sex.

**Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)**

Gifted/Accelerated     Regular     At Risk

**GRADE LEVEL(S):**            6    7    8    9    10    11    12

**Reading level of this title (if applicable):** 6.2

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:** 10/3/07

**Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:**

- School Library Journal
- Horn Book
- Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books
- VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)
- Library Journal
- Book Links
- Publisher's Weekly
- Booklist
- Kirkus Review
- Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults