

## 1998

**Park, Barbara. *Mick Harte Was Here*. Knopf, 1995.**

### **SUMMARY:**

After the death of her younger brother, Mick, thirteen-year-old Phoebe recounts his life and the times they shared. She especially remembers the day of his death and realizes that if Mick had been wearing his bicycle helmet, he probably would have survived the accident. Guilt, anger, and frustration with family and friends besiege her as she tries to cope with Mick's death, knowing that she has lost not only a brother but also a close friend.

### **QUESTIONS:**

How do you feel about learning at the beginning of the story that Mick has died?  
How would you describe Mick and his relationship with Phoebe?  
How do Phoebe, her family, friends, and people at school react to Mick's death?  
Why do you think Phoebe dreams about Mick after he has died? Do the dreams help her?  
How do Phoebe and her family change through the course of the novel?  
Phoebe speaks at a school assembly about the importance of bike helmets. What do you think about her speech, and do you think her classmates would have listened to her?  
At the end, what does Phoebe do to remember Mick? Would that have pleased him?  
Discuss the difficulty of talking with someone who is grieving. What can you say to that person to express your sympathy?  
How do you think people will remember you?  
Do you wear a helmet when you ride a bike? If not, why should you?

### **JOURNAL STARTERS:**

When riding my bike, I try to ride safely by. . .  
I can express my love and appreciation to someone else by. . .  
I remember when \_\_\_\_\_ died, and the hardest part for me was...  
If someone were to describe me, I hope the person could say. . .

### **ACTIVITIES:**

Invite a police officer to hold a bicycle safety discussion.  
Ask your local police to sponsor a bike rodeo.  
Make a poster about bicycle safety.  
Write your own epitaph or obituary.  
Make some rubbings of cemetery headstones.

With parental permission, request a funeral director to present a program for children.  
Research the stages of grief. When Wocket died, did Mick follow those stages of grief? Did his family when he died?  
Learn about how and where young people have died in traffic accidents in your county.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 4-7

**BOOK TALK:**

Read from the beginning through: “I just thought that would be fair.” (p.4)  
Phoebe is surrounded by the memories of her brother and no one from her family, friends, or school knows how to help her deal with the loss of Mick, who not only was her brother, but also a close friend. What can Phoebe do with the sadness dominating every part of her existence, and how will she ever move on with her life?

**READ-ALIKES:**

Park, Barbara. *The Graduation of Jake Moon*. Atheneum, 2000.  
Cooney, Caroline B. *The Terrorist*. Scholastic, 1998.  
Deans, Sis. *Racing the Past*. Henry Holt, 2001.  
Dogar, Sharon. *Waves*. Scholastic, 2007.  
Dreyer, Ann L. *After Elaine*. Cricket, 2002.  
Johnson, Angela. *Looking for Red*. Simon & Schuster, 2002.  
Parkinson, Siobhan. *Something Invisible*. Roaring Brook, 2006.

**RELATED WEB SITES:**

**About Barbara Park:** <http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/junieeb/author/author.html>  
**Teachers at Random – Spotlight on Barbara Park:**  
<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/authors/results.pperl?authorid=23194>  
**Teacher’s Guide for *Mick Harte Was Here*:**  
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/injviosaf/traffic/Documents/MickHarteTeachersGuide-VOSP.pdf>  
**William Allen White Book Award:** <http://waw.emporia.edu/winners/winner97-98.htm>

**OTHER RECOGNITION:**

Winner of a Children’s Choice Award in each of the following states:  
Alabama, 1997; Arizona, 1997; Connecticut, 1999; Georgia, 1997; Indiana, 1998;  
Iowa, 1998; Kansas, 1998; Minnesota, 1998; New York, 1998; North Dakota, 1997;  
Rhode Island, 1997; South Carolina, 1998; Vermont, 1997; Washington, 1998.