

## Approved for use in: English I

### Summary of the Work:

“Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated,” a biblical story of a favored twin acts as an analogy for an unhappy twin in this WWII period setting. On a small island in Chesapeake Bay, this story examines how Louise, a thirteen-year-old twin, comes to accept and value herself through struggles with self-image, jealousy, and physical and emotional isolation. For Louise’s sister, Caroline, who is beautiful, talented, confident, fragile and beloved by the island folk, everything seems to come so easily. Louise, in contrast, feeling cheated by her sister’s accomplishments is bitterly determined to be her opposite: using her brains instead of beauty, earning money crabbing, and even leaving school to work with her father. Through a series of disappointments, Louise eventually learns to forgive and accept her sister and others around her. She leaves the island to study medicine and settles in an isolated mountain community where she realizes her dreams by becoming a midwife and finding love and acceptance.

### Rationale:

This novel provides students with a look at another culture and time period where a girl’s dream to be a doctor is traded in for that of a midwife, giving students the opportunity to question Louise’s choice and strengthen their own convictions of feminism. The struggles with an incommunicative family, sibling rivalry and caring for an elderly relative are all fodder for great discussions and writing opportunities. While students hear Louise’s embittered perspective, they have the opportunity to look at the perspectives of other characters—to note the limitations of viewpoint and recognize that people have different feelings and opinions on the same topic.

### Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

The Alan Review, spring 1994--  
<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/spring94/Liddie.html>

### Noted Distinction:

- Newbery Medal/Honor 1981

### Readability:

- Lexile Score: 880
- Readability Level: 5.8

### Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

### Standard Alignment: [\(link\)](#)

### Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption:

### Notes on the Text:

*(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)*

At thirteen, the character is close in age to English I students. They, too, are making choices about who they want to be and what values they will carry into the future. It is also a story of sibling rivalry and finding one’s own identity, themes with which students can relate.

### Connection to the Curriculum:

This novel can be used as one of the two required novels at the freshmen level. It provides a female protagonist and a study of several themes—most importantly, discovery of self. Allusion and symbolism are other literary elements present in the novel.

### Additional Connections:

*(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)*

Film--Jacob Have I Loved, 1988, starring Bridget Fonda, 57 minutes