



# Teachers' Notes



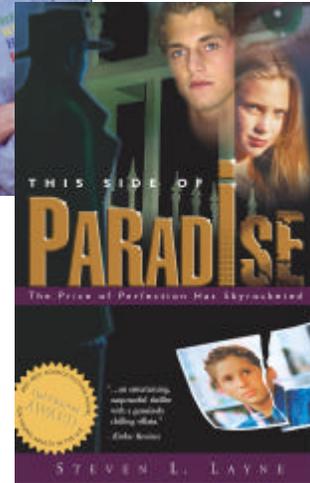
## GENRE CONNECTION

*This Side of Paradise* is considered Science Fiction. What is in the book that can be connected to science? Use resources like the Internet and your library to find information about the science issues brought up in the book.

From the point of view of a scientist, could a community like Paradise exist? Develop a chart that delineates scientific fact and science fiction. What are the controversies involved with the scientific advances described in this book. **Grades 6-10**



Steven L. Layne



**Winner of the  
2001 Hal Clement Award  
For Excellence in Young Adult  
Science Fiction**

## REVIEWS

### **VOYA, February 2002**

"Layne's tale is a heady mix of conspiracies.... Recommend this title to thriller fans who will enjoy the ride."

### **Kirkus Reviews, October 2001**

"... an entertaining, suspenseful thriller with a genuinely chilling villain. Good fun."

### **The Alan Review, October 2001**

"Layne exposes the deficits of a Utopian society with a unique and alarming twist that adolescent readers will particularly enjoy."

*The clearing of his throat startled us. We looked toward the doorway, and there he stood. The blood from his nose was wiped clean, and there were no physical signs that only moments ago his powerful hands had been locked around my brother's throat.*

*"Mr. Eden was worried about us," was all my father said.*

Jack Barrett is a level-headed junior in high school whose romantic troubles pale in comparison to the problems he faces at home. Jack's father has always been a perfectionist -- in every sense of the word. But, since he started working for the Eden Corporation, his desire for perfection has spiraled into a raging obsession that is out of control. When his father forcibly relocates the family to Paradise, a village that is literally owned by Eden's mysterious chief executive officer, Jack uncovers a sinister plot that threatens the existence of his entire family. Delving even further into the secrets of the village, he soon discovers just how high the price of perfection can be . . . and to what lengths some people are willing to go to obtain it.

## THEMATIC CONNECTION

The danger posed by a Utopian society is one of the key themes in many other popular young adult novels. Compare and contrast the treatment of this theme in Steven L. Layne's *This Side of Paradise* with Lois Lowry's *The Giver* or Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*. How does each author address the same theme in a unique way?

# Quotable Quotes

Many of the lines in *This Side of Paradise* are worth some extra thought. Write down your feelings about the following quotes. Have any of these things ever happened to you?

- “It’s puzzling that we sometimes ask questions we don’t really want the answers to.” (p. 9)
- “I didn’t even know exactly what I was afraid of – but I was afraid of something.” (p. 42)
- “It’s interesting that people do those things, avoid what makes them uncomfortable and yet they’re uncomfortable the whole time they’re avoiding it.” (p. 43)
- “It’s funny. When you’re constantly surrounded by beauty you cease to appreciate it rather quickly.” (p. 60)
- “Somewhere, somehow, *someone* always pays the price for perfection.” (p. 203)

There are some bigger issues in *This Side of Paradise* that can be discussed. Use the following idea for a class debate.

On page 203, Jack wonders if it was his father or Mr. Eden who made the decision to “press the button.” What do you think? List and explain evidence to support your opinion.

## COMIC RELIEF

*This Side of Paradise* is a tension-filled thriller, but there are also some parts in the story that make you smile or even laugh out loud. This is called comic relief. The author didn’t want to scare you too much! A book is more enjoyable if there is an occasional break from the tension.

Gram and Troy both provide comic relief in the book. Can you find these passages? Look through the book and find a scene where Gram does something funny, and then find a passage where Troy interjects comic relief into an otherwise serious scene. Write them below and then share them with a group of friends. How many different passages did your group find? Which are the funniest?

Troy

Gram

**Read the scene aloud, leaving the comic relief out. How does this change the mood of the story?**

# The Cliffhanger

One technique an author uses to entice readers to continue reading is the **cliffhanger**. At the end of each chapter, Steven Layne wrote a sentence or two that makes the reader wonder what is going to happen next. Reread the end of each chapter in ***This Side of Paradise*** and choose your favorite cliffhangers. Tell why you think each one is so effective.

(Example) Chapter One – “I could see her hands quivering but her eyes were blazing. She was going to challenge him.”

Reason – Gram is just being introduced in chapter one, but I could already see she was no ordinary grandma-type character. I wondered how she would challenge her son.

1. Chapter \_\_\_\_\_ Quote \_\_\_\_\_

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Reason \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Chapter \_\_\_\_\_ Quote \_\_\_\_\_

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Reason \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Chapter \_\_\_\_\_ Quote \_\_\_\_\_

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Reason \_\_\_\_\_

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# Foreshadowing

An important literary element that authors use is **foreshadowing**. The use of foreshadowing involves “dropping” hints about what will happen later in the book. It’s fun to look back in a story and notice the foreshadowing that the author used. It’s even better to look for foreshadowing as you read and use it to help you think about what might happen next in the story.

Here are some examples of foreshadowing from the first two chapters of ***This Side of Paradise***. Keep a log and record further examples that you notice as you read.

“It hurts me to say it, but my son has always wanted to look the best, be the best, and have the best. . . and he made it clear from the time he was a teenager that he’d do whatever was necessary to get there. No matter who it hurt.” (p. 3)

## Foreshadowing cont'd

“In fact, he told us, Eden was a family in and of itself. I’ll admit I thought that sounded a little strange at the time. Looking back, I should have paid more attention to just how strange it was.” (p. 4)

“Mother, the house has sold, and we’ll be moving in a few days.”  
“Sold? Already? But it’s only been on the market for two days!” (p. 14)

“This *yearning* you have for power, for . . . perfection - that’s what is unnatural.” (p. 15)

## Trivia

While trivia may not be important to the story line of a novel, it can help you to get to know the author and boost your enjoyment of the book. Here are some interesting trivia items about ***This Side of Paradise***.

The author has a friend named Katy who was the inspiration for the grandmother in ***This Side of Paradise***.

The original hardcover dust jacket released by North Star Books (difficult to find now because it has been replaced) pictured a boy in captivity. The boy was actually a student of the author’s!

There was an alternate ending to the skydiving scene that wasn’t used. The kids were all going to a dance in a limousine, and the boys were discussing how overprotective Gram had become after all the events in Paradise. They were relieved that she had let them out of her sight for the evening. As they left the limo and headed inside, the driver’s side window rolled down and a rose petal escaped.

Write your own trivia questions for ***This Side of Paradise***. Use information from the book and see if your fellow ***Paradise*** readers can find the answers. Turn around is fair—can you answer their questions?

(Example) What was the name of the old people’s home where Chip wanted to place Gram?

## Check out the Web site

Grab a friend and explore Steve’s Web site at [www.stevelayne.com](http://www.stevelayne.com).

Write down five interesting pieces of information that you find. Share them with the class or write them in a quiz format and see if a friend can answer the questions.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

After exploring Steve’s Web site, find the Web site of another author. Draw a Venn diagram and compare the features in each author’s Web site.

Other titles by  
**Steven L. Layne**  
from **Pelican Publishing Co.**

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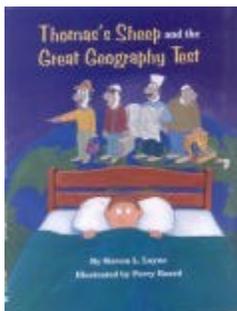
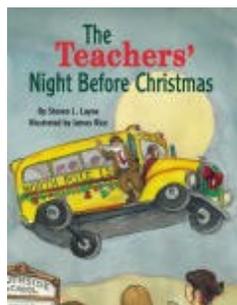
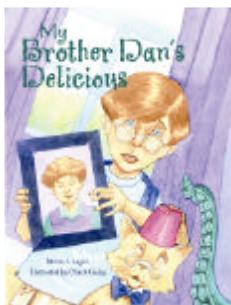
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# About the Author

Dr. Steven L. Layne has taught at both the elementary and jr. high levels for more than a decade as well as instructing at various colleges and universities in the Northern Illinois area. Currently, Dr. Layne teaches children's and adolescent literature at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, and serves as a national literacy consultant, keynote speaker, and featured author across the country. His published writings – including dramatic monologues, prose, poetry, feature articles, textbook chapters, and children's book reviews – have appeared in journals such as The Reading Teacher, The Middle School Journal, Contemporary Education and many more.

His picture books include the popular ABC book, **Thomas's Sheep and the Great Geography Test**, the bestselling **Teachers' Night Before Christmas**, which was recently named an IRA/CBC Children's Choice Title for 2002, and his newest title **My Brother Dan's Delicious** which will be released in the spring of 2003. Drawing on his considerable experience working with teenagers, Steve penned his first thriller, the young adult novel **This Side of Paradise**, with reluctant readers in mind. This cautionary tale about the dangers of Utopian societies received the Hal Clement Award for Best Science Fiction Novel for Young Adults published in the U.S. in 2001.

The International Reading Association released a book of Dr. Layne's popular literacy poems – **Life's Literacy Lessons: Poems for Teachers** in July of 2001. The book has been named a bestseller and has garnered high praise from influential literacy leaders including read-a-loud author Jim Trelease who says "I defy anyone to breeze through this small collection of poems that peers into the soul of childhood and literacy. . . The collection bursts with insight, tenderness, accusation, humor and the common sense of what learning and literacy are all about." This book will be released in a special hardcover edition featuring two brand new poems in December of 2002 at the request of literacy leaders and teachers from around the country.

In October of 2001, Steve was surprised at an all-school assembly where he was honored with a National Milken Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. He was also named to the 2001 All-Teacher Team by **USA Today** newspaper and was chosen as the Edwin A. Hoey Award winner for U.S. Outstanding Teacher at the junior high level by NCTE in 2001. Steve was the 2000 ICARE for Reading Award winner based on his efforts in fostering the love of reading in children. He was also the 1999 Junior High Level Reading Teacher of the Year in Illinois.

Steve serves on several state-level literacy committees throughout Illinois. He is past president of the Northern Illinois Reading Council and is an active member of the DuPage Literacy Leadership Roundtable. He has served on the Board of Directors of Literacy Volunteers of America for the Fox Valley Region of Illinois and had read for the Rebecca Caudill Young Readers Award Committee. Steve resides in St. Charles, Illinois, with his wife Debbie and his children Grayson and Victoria. He can be contacted through [www.stevelayne.com](http://www.stevelayne.com)

## About our study guide developer, Dr. Jill Cole

Dr. Jill Cole taught at Henry-Senachwine Grade School in Henry, IL, for 22 years. She has taught 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade literacy. In 2002, she moved to Dover, DE, to teach at Wesley College in the Education Department. Her passion is motivating students of all ages to read and enjoy great literature.

To date, Dr. Cole has developed three study guides for Pelican, **Thomas's Sheep and the Great Geography Test**, **The Teachers' Night Before Christmas** and **This Side of Paradise**.

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