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(Cover courtesy of [Amazon](#), Illustrated by Dirk Zimmer)

### ***Seven Spider Spinning***

Written by Gregory Maguire

Published by Clarion Books

### **Introduction**

Written by Gregory Maguire and illustrated by Dirk Zimmer, *Seven Spiders Spinning* was published by Clarion Books in 1994. A *New York Times* bestselling author, Gregory Maguire received his Ph.D. in English and American Literature and has since written fantasy fiction for both children and adults. *Seven Spiders Spinning* is the first of seven books in the series, the Hamlet Chronicles.

## **Summary of *Seven Spiders Spinning***

During the Ice Age, seven baby Siberian snow spiders were frozen and preserved. Thousands of years later, scientists discover the spiders floating in a detached ice shelf and immediately send the never-before-seen spiders to Harvard University to be studied. On the way, the driver crashes the truck while passing through Hamlet, Vermont, defrosting and releasing the spiders from their ancient tomb.

In the small, quiet town of Hamlet, Vermont, Miss Earth's first-grade class is divided into two clubs, with the exception of Pearl Hotchkiss. The seven boys are members of the Copycats, and the remaining seven girls belong to the Tattletales. Each club has decided to put on their own terrifying skit for the Josiah Fawcett Elementary School Halloween Pageant of Horrors. News about the newly discovered spiders makes the perfect material for their plays. After each spider imprints on a member of the Tattletales, the spiders long to sink a deadly bite into the student of their adoration.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. When the driver crashed while transporting the spiders, the spiders thawed and escaped. How would the story be different if a spider bit the driver?
2. At first, the spiders imprinted on and adored the Tattletales. Later, the spiders feel more anger towards the Tattletales. How differently do you think the Tattletales would have acted if they knew what the spiders were thinking?
3. Why do you think Pearl Hotchkiss does not choose to be in a club? Would you rather belong to a club or not associate with clubs, like Pearl?
4. Pearl Hotchkiss wanted to impress her classmates by collecting a Siberian snow spider for show and tell. She collects the spider using a piece of bologna and a

- sandwich bag. If you were Pearl, how would you have collected the spider? Have you ever collected a critter to show friends or family?
5. The two clubs in the story, the Copycats and Tattletales, are very divided. What role did the spiders play in the two clubs finally working together? Do you think they will continue to work together or go back to being in clubs?
  6. The story takes place in the small town of Hamlet, Vermont. How would the story be different if it happened in your town or a big city?
  7. Did your opinion of spiders change while you were reading, and what is your final opinion of spiders? Did the Siberian snow spiders act differently than real spiders?
  8. What human emotions did the spiders experience, and how did those emotions change during the story? Do you think real spiders feel any of these emotions?
  9. How do you think Siberian snow spiders looked (*i.e.*, size, color, etc.)? What clues from the text led you to these conclusions?
  10. *Seven Spiders Spinning* is the first book in a seven-book series. The remaining suspenseful stories are also about wacky things that happen to Ms. Earth's class. After reading this book, are you interested in reading the other books? Why or why not?