

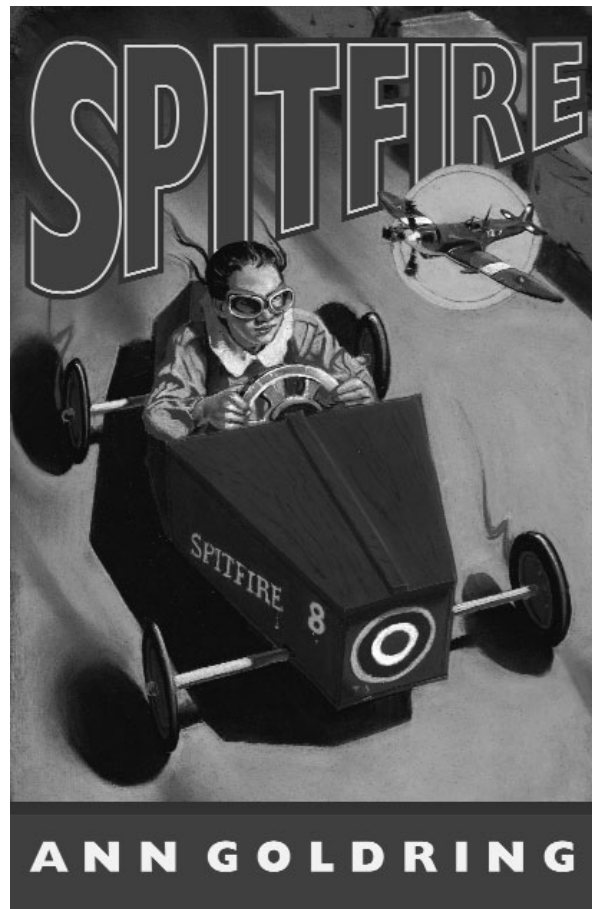
# Spitfire

by Ann Goldring

AGES 8 AND UP • GRADE LEVEL 4 TO 6

## ABOUT THE BOOK

On the home front in 1940s Ontario, fourteen-year-old Kathryn Lockhart wages a war of her own when a gang of bullies threatens April and Avery Flickers, a brother and sister from the wrong side of the tracks. Inspired by April's fiery independence when she joins a boys-only soapbox derby, Kathryn decides to build her own car and enter the race. The cost of being different tests her determination and soon reveals the Lockhart family's own prejudices. With the help of a local sponsor and her best friend Carrie, Kathryn commits to a battle of wills that promises a neck-and-neck finish. When April's racer is sabotaged, Kathryn comes to the rescue. Kathryn and April name their soapbox racer SPITFIRE after the airplane that played a crucial role in repelling the Nazis during the Battle of Britain in 1940.



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YOUNG ADULT FICTION



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ann Goldring has published poetry in anthologies in Canada, the U.S. and Japan. Her story "Old Matt" appeared in *The Blue Jean Collection* (Thistle-down, 1992) and her picture book *Old Goat and the Much-too-tall Tree* will be printed by Red Deer Press in 2003. Her essay "Generation Why" was broadcast on CBC radio. A former high school teacher, she has degrees in Education from York University and the University of Toronto and teaches Writing for Children at George Brown College. She is vice-president of Haiku Canada and is a member of a writing group featured on TVO's Imprint. Ms Goldring lives in Stouffville, Ontario.



## BEFORE THE BOOK • Words You Need to Know

rationed      cloakroom      compass      munitions      decency      enlisted  
compelled      ignore      fiancé      nicked      recruiting      prejudice

### • Activities

1. Have you ever been told you could not participate in something because you were a boy or a girl or you were too young? What happened? How did you feel? Write a paragraph about your experience.
2. This story takes place in 1943. What was happening in the world? Describe what you think life was like in Canada then?
3. The following is a “Sort and Predict” activity. With a partner, write the following words and phrases on slips of paper. Sort the slips into 5 categories, label each category, and then decide what you think the story is going to be about. Be prepared to share your categories and your predictions with the class.

trouble at recess	Mary Belle	registration form
missing in action	You want something?	We won't spoil it.
discouraged	Scamper	good riddance
Taxi-Jo	uniform	April
enlisted	steering	wheels
crosspiece	dowelling	Sizzler
I dare you	Bullet	Yellow Hornet
Kathryn	Spitfire	Howard
You can do it.	triumphant	shouting crowd
finish line	a fine race	cotter pin
enlisted	I've quit my job.	one disturbance after another
bicycle		

## EXPLORING THE BOOK • Chapter Questions and Activities

### CHAPTER ONE

1. Make a tin can telephone or draw and label a diagram of one.
2. Kathryn gives four reasons why April is asking for trouble. What are they?
3. Why does Carrie think Kathryn wants to be like April?
4. Why do you think April stopped talking?

### CHAPTER TWO

1. What rules do you have in your family?
2. Use thinking boxes to show what Kathryn was thinking while she was talking to Mr. Toole about the registration form. Draw a series of cartoon boxes. In each box draw two speech bubbles. Use solid lines for Kathryn's outside voice — what she actually said. Use a cloud shape for Kathryn's inside voice — what she was thinking.



#### CHAPTER THREE

1. What does “missing in action” mean?
2. During World War II many items were rationed. What things are mentioned in the story as being rationed? Why were some things rationed?

#### CHAPTER FOUR

1. Why does Kathryn need to find a sponsor?
2. Why would Stephanie Woolly have to stay at home?

#### CHAPTER FIVE

1. What does Kathryn’s mother think about her entering the race?
2. Why has Kathryn’s Dad not gone to fight in the war?
3. Why do you think Kathryn’s father left the hubcap in her room?

#### CHAPTER SIX

1. April is the victim of bullying at school. What sort of things do the bullies do to her? What does Kathryn do?
2. Make a list of the things people did at home to help the soldiers overseas.
3. Why does Margaret want to join the CWACs?

#### CHAPTERS SEVEN AND EIGHT

1. List the parts required to make a soapbox racer.
2. What is the purpose of the Whit Knits?
3. In a group of four create a reader’s theatre presentation of the last part of chapter eight where Margaret tells her parents she has enlisted.

#### CHAPTERS NINE AND TEN

1. What happened to April’s racer?
2. What is Kathryn’s “perfectly crazy idea?”

#### CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. How do Kathryn, April and Avery keep their plans secret?
2. Why is Carrie’s speech on pages 114-115 funny?
3. The racer is almost finished. What do they still need?

#### CHAPTER TWELVE

1. Who is Andy Drummond and why is it special to have his wheels?
2. Why do people say the cemetery lane is jinxed?



## BEYOND THE BOOK • Activities

1. Pretend you are a radio announcer. Make an audiotape describing the race as it happens. Be sure to make it exciting.
2. Draw up a plan and a list of instructions for building a soapbox racer.
3. In the story, there was discrimination against girls and prejudice against those who lived north of the railroad tracks. What is the difference between discrimination and prejudice? Make a list of examples of discrimination and prejudice that happen today.

### • Curriculum Extensions

**SOCIAL STUDIES** *Canada in World War II* • Make a poster showing the kinds of jobs that women did in the armed forces during World War II.

Where did Canadian soldiers fight in World War II? Make a Remembrance Day poster to commemorate their actions.

On a world map show where wars are happening today and indicate who is fighting.

**SCIENCE** *Simple Machines* • Build a model car out of scraps and a ramp to race it on. See if you can make design changes that make the car go further. Have a contest with other students to see whose car will go the furthest.

**CAPP** *Women's Rights* • Write a report on the "Famous Five" women who won the legal challenge known as the "Person's Case" acknowledging women as persons.

*Bullying* • What strategies does your school recommend for dealing with bullies?

*Discrimination* • Create an anti-discrimination poster.



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*Spitfire* Teacher's Guide (1-55192-531-1) and other learning resources for Raincoast titles are also available at [www.raincoast.com](http://www.raincoast.com). Many of these activities are inspired by the Reading 44 document published by the North Vancouver School District. Raincoast Books grants teachers permission to photocopy this guide for classroom use.

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