

What's Really in Our Bread?

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For educators and reviewers — sample extract (full companion guide available upon request)

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Introduction

This book was written to help young readers learn about the food we eat, especially bread and to spark curiosity about where food comes from and how it affects our bodies. Bread is something many of us eat every day, so it makes a great place to start asking questions: How does wheat grow? What happens on farms? What do farmers use to protect crops — and why might that matter to us?

We'll explore one common example, a weed killer called glyphosate, which is also used to speed up crop drying times. This information is not to frighten you, but to show how chemicals used in farming can sometimes end up in soil, water, and food. Scientists are still learning exactly what long-term, small amounts of these chemicals do to our bodies. That's why asking questions, reading carefully, and learning how food is grown are important skills. Knowledge is power: the more we understand the better choices we can make for our health.

Chapter 1 — The Golden Wheat Field



Illustration — Chapter 1: The children explore the golden wheat field

Mary, Ana, and Ben ran through the wheat like it was their own secret kingdom. The tall stalks brushed their shoulders and tickled their legs. Sun warmed the tops of the fields until the whole place looked like a rolling ocean of gold.

Mary loved to learn. She was ten and asked a lot of questions, especially about how things were made. Today she held a wheat stalk in her hand and turned it over, examining the tiny grains as if they were treasures.

"Grandma says this wheat becomes flour, and flour becomes bread!" Mary announced, her brown hair dancing with every step.

Ben, who was nine and always ready for a joke, pretended to be a pirate. "A treasure of bread! Arrr!" He laughed and took a long, dramatic sniff. "It smells like warm cookies." His grin was wide and trusting.

Ana listened more quietly. She stood still and closed her eyes, breathing in the breeze. "I like how it sounds," she said. "When I run a hand through it, it whispers."

Chapter 2 — The Boom Sprayer Arrives



Illustration — Chapter 2: The boom sprayer arrives and sprays the wheat

The first sound was a low, mechanical rumble that didn't belong in a field.

The three kids stopped and looked toward the road where dust was rising. A large machine rolled up between the rows—a tractor with long metal arms stretching out like airplane wings.

"It's huge," Ben whispered, stepping closer.

Mary squinted at the letters on the side. "Boom Sprayer," she read aloud. The machine began spraying a fine mist over all the beautiful wheat. The mist settled on every plant, every grain, covering everything in the field.

Ben wrinkled his nose as the mist passed by. It smelled faintly of chemicals, sharp and unfamiliar. "It stings my nose," he said.

Mary, Ana and Ben looked at each other with confused faces. Something didn't feel right.

Chapter 3 — The Wheat Changes (excerpt)



Illustration — Chapter 3: The field looks different after spraying

When the children returned a few days later, the field looked different. The waves of gold were patchy and dry. Stalks leaned sideways.

"Mary!" Ben gasped. "The wheat looks different somehow!" The wheat had dried out much faster than normal and looked withered.

"Mary, it looks tired," Ben said.

Mary ran a hand along a stalk and imagined it purple in her mind—a color she used to picture things she couldn't see, like a way to make invisible things visible. "It's like the wheat is sick," Ana said quietly, touching a dried stalk.

Discussion Questions (excerpt)

- Why did the children want to learn more about how wheat is grown?
- What steps did Mary, Ben, and Ana take to learn the truth? Were they helpful?
- What small actions can families take to learn more about their food?

Author's Note (excerpt)

This story introduces children to the reality of glyphosate used in commercial wheat production in an age-appropriate way. It explains how this chemical is used as a desiccant to speed harvesting for increased profits, and how this practice affects the food supply.

The story encourages critical thinking: reading labels, asking questions, and taking small, evidence-informed actions. For a detailed discussion of the research, balanced sources, and classroom activities, please see the separate educator and parent guide available as a companion for this book.