

## Suggested Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss Shanks' relationship with his father before his father goes off to fight, then after, when he returns home. What do you think happened to each of them? What makes them different with each other?
2. Why does Shanks' mother teach Buck to read? How does this change Buck? How does this change Shanks?
3. What is Shanks' friendship like with Buck? Does it change?
4. Why is Buck so quiet? Why would he stay on? Why not leave?
5. Some readers question McMullan's use of the "n" word. Can you find that word in the book? Can you justify its use?
6. Do you think this book takes sides in the conflict? Do you think it is pro-North or pro-South? Why or why not?
7. Does the author's note at the end change the way you felt about the story? Does it matter that there really was someone named Frank Russell?
8. Throughout the story, Shanks is struggling with God and religion. How and why? Where do you think he stands in the end?
9. Many people stereotype women in the south as steel magnolias. Can you explain this? Discuss how this may or may not be true for the women in the book.
10. Discuss how McMullan uses humor in the book. What is the effect?



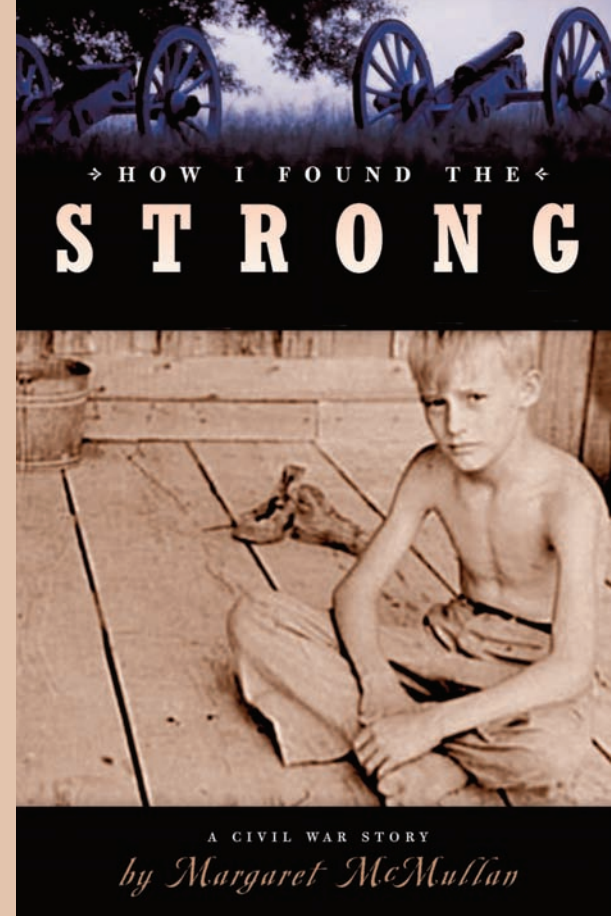
**ONE  
BOOK  
ONE  
COMMUNITY  
YOUTH!**

### One Book/One Community Sponsors

ABC 25  
Barber and Shoulders  
Barnes and Noble  
Borders  
City of Evansville  
Evansville Courier and Press  
Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library  
The Evansville Literacy Coalition  
NAACP  
Old National Bank  
Public Library Friends  
o'connor/creative marketing  
Semisans, Incorporated  
S.I.N.E.  
South Central Communications  
Vanderburgh County Commissioners  
WIKY  
WNIN 88.3



**ONE  
BOOK  
ONE  
COMMUNITY  
YOUTH!**



Find out what happens when all of  
Southwestern Indiana Reads  
**HOW I FOUND THE STRONG**  
by Margaret McMullan



Reading and  
Growing Together  
in Southwestern  
Indiana

## About the Program

One Book/One Community is a grassroots reading program to develop a community built around the shared experience of people reading and talking about the same book. Bringing people together to discuss ideas in books can play an important role in breaking down barriers between people, cultures, and economic and educational backgrounds.

The Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library is joining with the Evansville Media, local schools and universities, bookstores, and businesses to promote a culture of reading in the Evansville community.

## What can I do after I've read the book?

- Visit the One Book/One Community website at [www.evpl.org/onebook](http://www.evpl.org/onebook)
- Join a book discussion group.
- Use "Suggested Questions for Discussion" in the back of this booklet.
- Listen to special "One Book/One Community" programming on WNIN FM 88.3.
- Share the book with others.
- Attend the special author event on Thursday, November 18.

## How can you participate?

Participation is free and open to the public – everyone is encouraged to join. You can call or stop by any Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library to borrow a copy of ***How I Found The Strong***. Or you can purchase the book at 20% off list price at participating bookstores.

By registering for One Book/One Community, you'll receive program updates via email. You can register on the web at [www.evpl.org](http://www.evpl.org) (click on "What's New").

### Participating Libraries and Book Discussion Dates:

Barnes & Noble	624 S. Green River Road Sept. 30 – 6:00 pm
Central	200 SE MLK Jr. Blvd. Nov. 18 – 7:00 pm
East	840 E. Chandler Ave. Nov. 4 – 3:30 pm
McCullough	5115 Washington Ave. Oct. 8 – 2:30 pm
North Park	750 North Park Dr. Nov. 9 – 4:00 pm
Oaklyn	3001 Oaklyn Dr. Nov. 9 – 6:30 pm
Red Bank	120 S. Red Bank Rd. Nov. 17 – 4:00 pm
Stringtown	2100 Stringtown Rd. Oct. 7 – 3:30 pm
West	2000 W. Franklin St. Oct. 21 – 3:30 pm

Check other area libraries & book stores for dates.

## About the Author

Margaret McMullan is a professor and chair of the English department at the University of Evansville. She is the author of the novels *When Warhol Was Still Alive* (Crossing Press, 1994), *In My Mother's House* (St. Martin's Press, 2003) and *How I Found the Strong* (Houghton Mifflin, 2004). Her work has appeared in such publications as *Glamour*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *Southern Accents*, *The Southern California Anthology*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *TriQuarterly*, *Boulevard*, *The Greensboro Review* and in several anthologies. She was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2001 and she has received two individual Artist Fellowships from the Indiana Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts. She received her MFA from the University of Arkansas.

### One Book/One Community Committee

Rev. Gerald Arnold • Patty Avery • Julie Bolton • Tom Egan • John Engelbrecht  
Julia Galbus • Bob Hammonds • Jack Humphrey • Shelley Kirk • Pam Locker  
Linda Negro • Jean Noyes • Glynis Rosendall • Lola Teubert • Matt Wagner  
Evelyn Walker • Rose Young

## About *How I Found The Strong*

It is the spring of 1861 and the serenity of Smith County, Mississippi, has been shattered by Abraham Lincoln's declaration of war on the South. Young and old are taking up arms and marching off to war. But not ten year-old Frank Russell. Although he is eager to enlist in the Confederate army, he is not allowed. He is too young, too skinny, too weak. After all he's just "Shanks," the baby of the Russell family.

War has a way of taking things away from a person, mercilessly. And this war takes from Frank a mighty sum. It's nabbed his Pa and older brother. It's stolen his grandfather, his grandmother. It has robbed Frank of a simpler way of life, food, his boyhood.

## Join Us

Margaret McMullan will come to the New Central Library to discuss her book, ***How I Found The Strong***, answer questions, and autograph books on:

Thursday, November 18  
7:00 PM

The New Central Library  
Admission is free and open  
to the public.