



Pennsylvania School
Librarians Association



2019 conference

**BEST OF 2018
GRADES K-12**

**LITERATURE REVIEW COMMITTEE,
SPONSORED BY PSLA TEACHING & LEARNING**

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<http://pslamediaselectionreview.edublogs.org/>

LITERATURE REVIEW

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2018 - 19

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*Not presenting

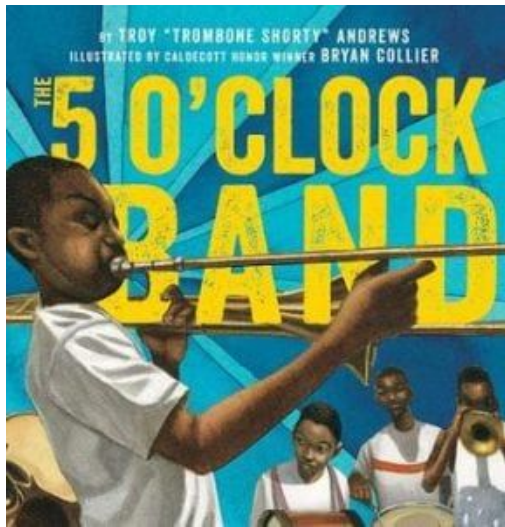
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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

WE READ DIVERSE BOOKS: A LOOK AT THE BEST OF 2018 **#WEREADDIVERSEBOOKS @PSLA_LITREVIEW.**

PSLA's Literature Review committee read and reviewed the best of 2018 in fiction, nonfiction, and graphic novels throughout the year. From diversity in character, settings, and genres, we read it all. Come hear about our favorites from 2018 for grades K-12 and check out all of our reviews at <http://pslamediaselctionreview.edublogs.org/>.



Biography Grades 2-5

CONNECTIONS

- This book is a valuable diverse selection for elementary libraries. The vibrant culture of New Orleans with its strong music and culinary traditions is wonderfully displayed here through both the art and the storyline. Andrews also includes a description of the valuable role the Mardi Gras Indians play in New Orleans history. After reading this book out loud, librarians or teachers might want to include a clip of a performance of the grown-up Trombone Shorty in his NPR Music Tiny Desk Concert for a fun-filled musical storytime. You can put this link in Safe Search.
<https://www.npr.org/2011/09/29/140870607/trombone-shorty-tiny-desk-concert>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*

Andrews, Troy. *The 5 O'Clock Band*.

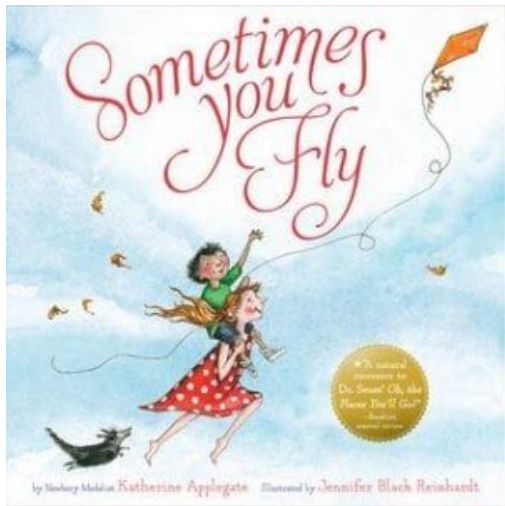
Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2018. Unpaged. 978-1-419-72836-5. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | In this companion book to the Caldecott Honor winning *Trombone Shorty*, Troy Andrews shares more memories of his life as a child in New Orleans. Told in third person, this text focuses on the famous trombonist's hometown and his first band, known as the Five O'Clock Band. Troy, whose nickname is Trombone Shorty, was supposed to meet his band friends, but was caught up playing his trombone and missed them. The young musician laments being late and wonders how he will ever become a bandleader if he lets his friends down like this. As Shorty searches for them, he meets some interesting town residents, who give him advice on how to accomplish his goal. Tuba Tremé says that it is important to understand the tradition of New Orleans music, while chef Queen Lola tells Troy that loving what you do is the key to success. Big Chief of the Mardi Gras Indian tribe explains that it is the dedication to and the practicing of one's craft that makes a leader. Eventually, the band is reunited, and Shorty reports what he has learned. The back matter contains an author's note, where Andrews discusses the musical legends of New Orleans, the musical parades, and Mardi Gras. The author also explains that he formed the Trombone Shorty Foundation to help young musicians in the community. Collier's illustrations are just as appealing in this text as in his Caldecott Honor book. Once again he uses watercolor, pen and ink, and collage to create expressive images that allow the reader to almost hear the music reverberating from each page. There are photographs of individuals discussed in the story, including a special one of the band members themselves.

THOUGHTS | This book is a valuable addition to all elementary libraries. Children will be inspired by this story and may embark on a musical career of their own. After reading this book out loud, librarians may wish to show a video clip of Shorty's "NPR Tiny Desk Concert" to cap off a fun-filled musical storytime.

BOOK TALK | Did you enjoy the Caldecott Honor book *Trombone Shorty*? In Troy Andrews' new book called *5 O'clock Band*, you can read more of the trombonist's memories of his childhood in New Orleans. He and his friends are keen on becoming musicians in New Orleans and have formed a band. One day Trombone Shorty is so busy playing his trombone that he forgets to meet his friends for practice. He laments that he will never become a bandleader if he does not keep his commitments. As he travels around the city looking for his friends, he meets some local residents who give him advice about what it takes to be a bandleader. These characters, who were actual New Orleans residents, advise him to remember the great musical traditions of the city, to keep practicing and to love what you do. Will Troy find his friends and share the important lessons he has learned?

Denise Medwick
West Allegheny School District



Picture Book
Grades K-3

CONNECTIONS

- This book naturally lends itself to character trait lessons since it underscores the idea that making mistakes is okay as long as you learn from them and use the experience to grow and persevere. It highlights the idea that nobody is perfect and celebrates that sometimes life's greatest challenges can also lead to its sweetest moments. This is definitely a story to return to again and again.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*

Applegate, Katherine. *Sometimes You Fly*.

Clarion Books, 2018: ISBN 978-0-547-63390-9. 40 p. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | This text, composed of rhyming couplets, celebrates perseverance and resilience by reminding readers that oftentimes, the thrill of success is preceded by flops and mistakes. Each couplet begins by showing someone struggling with a new or difficult task such as baking a cake, learning to swim, trying to read, learning to drive, or studying for an exam. Page turns are used effectively to show the same person experiencing success with the task on the back side of the page. The idea that mistakes and challenges ultimately make our accomplishments even more memorable is underscored by lively ink and watercolor illustrations depicting a diverse array of children both succeeding and failing at their pursuits.

THOUGHTS | This title naturally lends itself to character trait lessons since it underscores the idea that making mistakes is okay as long as you learn from them and use the experience to grow and persevere. It highlights the idea that nobody is perfect and celebrates that sometimes life's greatest challenges can also lead to its sweetest moments.

BOOK TALK | Life is full of ups and down. Sometimes kites crash and cakes burn. Sometimes you make the team, and other times, you find yourself eating lunch alone. This beautiful book, composed of rhyming couplets, celebrates perseverance and resilience by reminding readers that oftentimes, the thrill of success is preceded by flops and mistakes. Each page begins by showing someone struggling with a new or difficult task such as baking a cake, learning to swim, trying to read, learning to drive, or studying for an exam. Page turns are used effectively to show the same person experiencing success with the task on the back side of the page. The idea that mistakes and challenges ultimately make our accomplishments even more memorable is underscored by lively ink and watercolor illustrations depicting a diverse array of children both succeeding and failing at their pursuits.

Anne Bozievich

Southern York County School District



579 Germs
Grades K-3

CONNECTIONS

- A great read aloud from PreK (why we wash our hands) to the older grades who are studying microbes.
- Great Resources on this Read Across America page:
<https://www.readacrossamerica.org/january/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*

AWARDS

- ★ NPR Best Book of the Year
- ★ Parents Magazine, Best Children's Books of the Year
- ★ Kirkus Reviews Best Books of the Year

Ben-Barak, Idan, and Julian Frost. *Do Not Lick This Book: It's Full of Germs.*

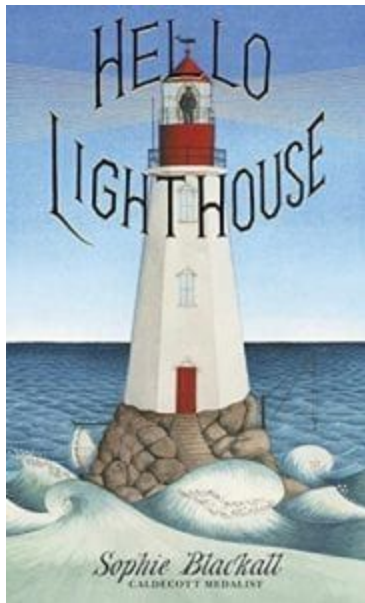
Roaring Book Press, 2018. 978-1-760-29305-5. 32pp. \$16.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Such a fun idea for a book! This book introduces young readers to the ideas of microbes and germs. They go on an adventure (you get to see teeth, clothes, and paper incredibly magnified) ON YOU! The reader follows them around learning about how different microbes live in different places and how they can easily get from one place to another (your finger). The end of the book has what the microbes look like when they are not illustrated, and what their real names are.

THOUGHTS | A fun and funny book that is sure to make kids smile (and possibly gross some kids out), this is a good introduction for numerous things from why it's so important to wash your hands to introducing the concept of microscopes.

BOOK TALK | Doesn't this title make you want to lick it, just a little? Read this book to find out why it might not be such a good idea. Magnification (extreme closeup) and microbes await!

Emily Woodward
The Baldwin School



Picture Book
Grades PreK-3

CONNECTIONS

- After reading this book, students could further explore the history of lighthouses and possibly even tour a lighthouse if one is close by.
- Use the book to spark discussion about how technology has impacted jobs and the economy.
- Have students write their own logbooks.
- Listen to an interview with the author at <https://www.lbyr.com/titles/sophie-blackall/hello-lighthouse/9780316362382/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ Caldecott Winner

Blackall, Sophie. *Hello Lighthouse*.

Little, Brown and Company, 2018. 978-0-316-36238-2. Unpaged. \$18.99.

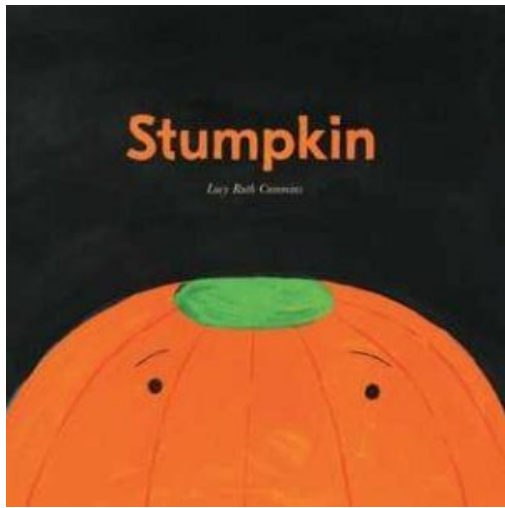
BOOK REVIEW | This book documents the daily routine of a lighthouse keeper from the time he begins his job until technology renders his job obsolete. Readers will be fascinated by all of the lightkeeper's tasks, including polishing the lens, refilling the oil, trimming the wick, winding the clockwork, painting the rooms, writing letters to his wife, making dinner, writing in his logbook, ringing a warning bell when it becomes foggy, and even rescuing shipwrecked sailors. An intriguing look into the history of lighthouses, complete with an extensive author's note that further explains many of the lightkeeper's tasks, this is a must-have for all libraries who serve young readers.

THOUGHTS | This book has so much potential for use in the classroom. Teachers and students could explore the obvious: the history of lighthouses. Teachers could have their students pretend to be lighthouse keepers and write their own letters to loved ones about daily life as a keeper. Depending on where they are located, they could possibly even take a field trip to tour a lighthouse. This book offers so much more, however, in addition to all of that. It is the perfect segue into a discussion about the impacts of technology on jobs and the economy. After reading this book and discussing technological advancements, students could research a specific invention and how it has impacted the world, or they could explore the pros and cons of technology. A fascinating read with plenty of learning potential, elementary school teachers and librarians alike will all want a copy of this title to add to their collections.

BOOK TALK | Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live inside a lighthouse? Just imagine: floors of round rooms, a spiral staircase you would ascend and descend throughout the day, an island all to yourself where you could just sit and listen to the waves crash in. Perhaps you could keep a logbook, or read books all day, or write letters to loved ones, stick them in bottles, and drop them into the ocean to be delivered. Doesn't it sound like a wonderfully unique experience? Well, believe it or not, there was a day when lighthouse keepers actually lived this way. They resided in the lighthouse 24/7 and made sure that the light never extinguished. Open *Hello Lighthouse*, step back into time, and see for yourself what life was like for these lighthouse keepers. You will be fascinated!

Julie Ritter

Montoursville Area SD



Picture Book
Grades K-3

CONNECTIONS

- Halloween
- Pumpkins
- Fall
- Science

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Publisher's Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

Cummins, Lucy Ruth. *Stumpkin*.

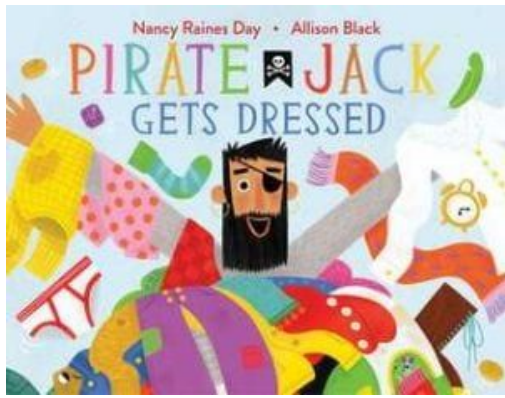
Atheneum Books for Young Readers. 2018. 978-1-534-41362-7. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | A few days before Halloween, a group of pumpkins are placed on a shelf in a store. The pumpkins are scared when they see their one of their friends taken away, but are delightfully surprised to see him reappear across the street in a window as a jack-o-lantern. The pumpkins are all excited to be taken away, except for one who notices he's a little different. Where his stem should be, he has a stump. Stumpkin. He continues to watch all of the other pumpkins be taken away, including a gourd! Stumpkin hopes for his time to come to have a home in the window across the street and wonders if that will ever be.

THOUGHTS | The design and coloring of this book are beautifully done, with simple black and white pictures and a small splash of orange. The story line is a sad one, with a sweet ending of acceptance and understanding of one's place in life. A cute Halloween read!

BOOK TALK | Stumpkin is like all of the other pumpkins, except for one noticeable different - he does not have a stem. As Halloween approaches, he finds that all of the other pumpkins are being sold and being turned into jack-o-lanterns, except for him. Can Stumpkin find a place where he belongs and be special, or will he always be the sad pumpkin who does not have a stem?

Rachel Burkhouse
Otto-Eldred School District



Picture Book
Grades PreK-2

CONNECTIONS

- Clothing
- Lifestyle
- Pirates
- Colors
- Memory

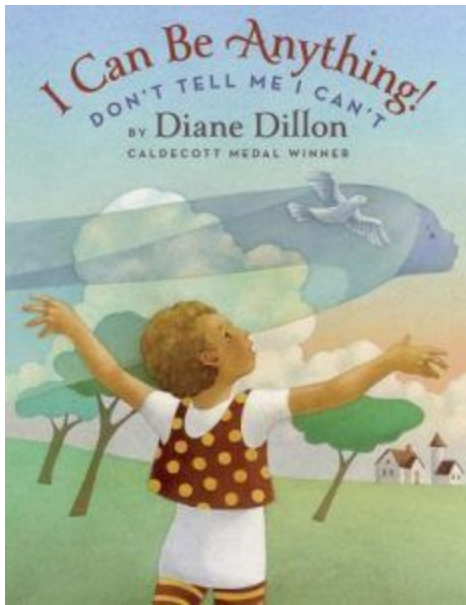
Day, Nancy Raines. *Pirate Jack Gets Dressed*.
Beach Lane Books. 2018. 978-1-4814-7664-5. Unpaged. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Pirate Jack needs to wake up and get dressed! Pirate Jack takes each of his unique articles of clothing and makes sure that the colors are all different, making him look ready for his pirate crew! Each article of clothing is something important he needs, but each needs to be different in order to be colorful and ready for his adventure!

THOUGHTS | This unique pirate color book is a great choice for young children. The book is illustrated in a unique way, allowing children to learn colors and articles of clothing. A story my first graders really enjoyed!

BOOK TALK | Pirate Jack needs to get dressed to meet up with his crew! Help him get dressed in his pirate gear, finding all of the colors that he needs to wear! Can you remember the clothing and the colors that Jack puts on for the day? Try it yourself!

Rachel Burkhouse
Otto-Eldred School District



Picture Book
Grades 1-4

CONNECTIONS

- This book is a good introduction to career awareness units. Counselors and teachers will be able to introduce students to the world of future possibilities and give them some words of encouragement.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*

Dillon, Diane. *I Can Be Anything!: Don't Tell Me I Can't*.

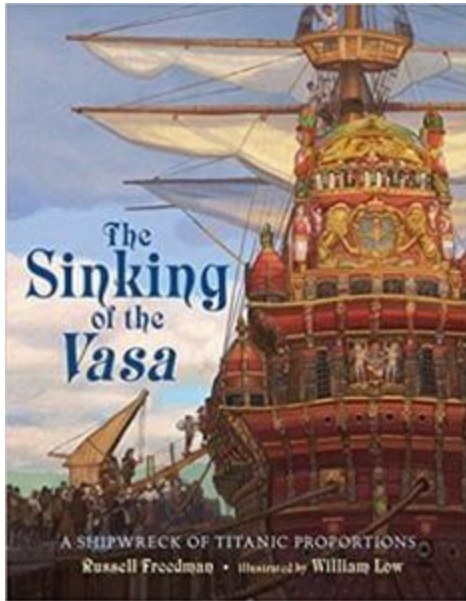
Blue Sky Press, 2018. 32 p. 978-1-338-16680-3. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Zoe is a young girl who dreams of her future and what she will be when she grows up. With each thought, a little voice plants a seed of doubt by pointing out her lack of skills or the risks of that career. The girl acknowledges that she “is not grown up yet” and may not be prepared to be a veterinarian, scientist, artist or a host of other professions right now, but that she will be someday. Zoe explains that she can get ready for the future by reading “about all the things I can be.” In her own strong voice, she challenges the little voice by saying “Don’t tell me I can’t.” This book has a timely message in this era of career awareness initiatives. While the author states that you can have any career, she acknowledges that one must read and learn about that profession. The other important theme is that one should not allow fear or discouraging thoughts to keep you from reaching your goals. Dillon’s illustrations are soft and muted and make for a dreamy atmosphere, which fits well with the story. An illustration appears on each page with the text below. The little voice’s statements are done in italics and in a reddish-brown color, which sets them apart. On the back cover are listed a number of careers. One small quibble is the use of the word “fire girl” rather than firefighter, because this book has value for the universal child, male or female.

THOUGHTS | This book is a valuable addition to elementary collections and should be a first purchase. Counselors or teachers will find this useful for career awareness lessons. Even though the main character appears to be five or six years old, this story could easily be used with all elementary grade levels to introduce students to the world of possibilities and to give them some words of encouragement.

BOOK TALK | What do you want to be when you grow up? Maybe you want to be an artist or a scientist. Or perhaps you want to become a veterinarian or writer. In this book, Zoe, like you, imagines all the careers she might have. But as she talks about each one of them, a little voice speaks up and points out the problems with these jobs and tells her she does not know how to do them. Will Zoe get discouraged or will she figure out a way to quiet this voice and fulfill her dreams when she is old enough?

Denise Medwick
West Allegheny School District



910.9485 Ocean Voyages
Grades 3-6

CONNECTIONS

- History and Journalism.
- Some suggested activities for students from *SLJ* are:
Conducting "You were there" interviews with survivors or observers on the shore
- Compare and Contrast the sinking of the Titanic and the Vasa

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *School Library Journal*

Freedman, Russell. *The Sinking of the Vasa: A Shipwreck of Titanic Proportions.*

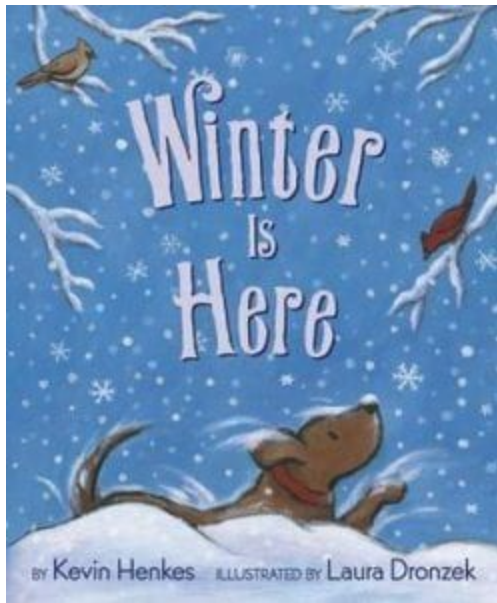
Henry Holt and Company, 2018. 978-1-627-79866-2. Unpaged. \$18.99.

BOOK REVIEW | In one of his last published works, the late Russell Freedman has once again created another work of narrative nonfiction that is sure to interest the reader. The author explores the sinking of the Swedish warship called the *Vasa*, which sunk in 1628 in Stockholm Harbor after sailing only 1300 meters. Its construction was ordered by King Gustav II Adolf, and it took two years to build. He wanted the ship to be so mighty and “fearsome” that the country’s enemies would be frightened at its very sight. Not only was the ship large, it was also a work of art with its many sculptures and carvings. A key element of the ship’s design were the 64 bronze cannons located on the gun decks. Shortly after setting sail, the ship capsized, most likely due to the weight of the cannons. Freedman discusses the investigation of the catastrophe, as well as the salvage operations, the raising of the ship in 1961 and the preservation efforts. The *Vasa* is now housed in a museum in Stockholm. William Low’s digital full bleed illustrations show a lot of detail. The endpapers show sketches of the vessel, but there are no photographs of the ship in its current condition or author note.

THOUGHTS | Another great work by a master storyteller of history, hand this one to those who seek out books about the Titanic and other shipwrecks.

BOOK TALK | Everyone knows about the Titanic and how she sank on her maiden voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. Did you know that there was another mega-ship that sank on her first voyage as well? And this one happened almost 3 centuries earlier. The Sinking of the Vasa, tells the story of the huge Swedish ship that sank in Stockholm Harbor after only sailing for 1300 meters. It was built under the order of the King who wanted a ship that would scare the country’s enemies just by looking at it. There were many heavy cannons on both sides of the ship and some think this is what caused the Vasa to capsize with just a strong gust of wind. The vessel was brought to the surface in 1961 and can be seen in a special museum designed just for the Vasa. If you are interested in reading stories about shipwrecks, then this is the book for you.

Denise Medwick
West Allegheny SD



Picture Book
Grades PreK-2

CONNECTIONS

- This book is a wonderful mentor text for figurative language in English Language Arts classes. Not only does it include personification and similes, but it also presents a series of sensory contrasts.
- In addition, it is a good choice for a winter themed storytime and will be useful as an introduction to units on the seasons.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

Henkes, Kevin. *Winter is Here.*

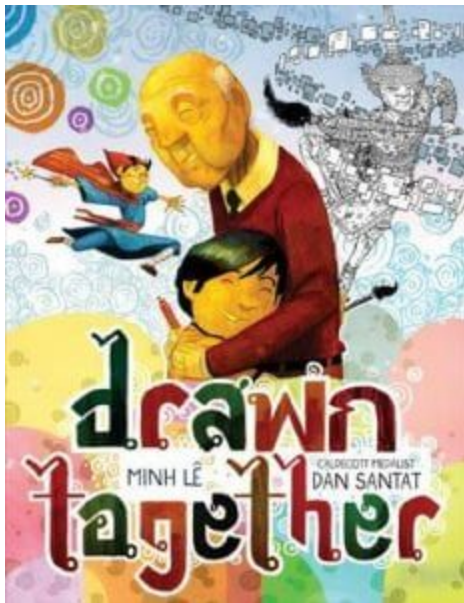
Greenwillow, 2018. 978-0-062-74718-1. Unpaged. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Kevin Henkes and Laura Dronzek have collaborated once again on this latest offering in their series of seasonal titles (*In the Middle of Fall* and *When Spring Comes*). With spare text and full bleed illustrations, the duo explores the wonder and beauty of winter. To begin the story, Henkes describes the snow that can be found on houses and in trees throughout the neighborhood. The author then goes on to create a series of sensory contrasts, such as the soft snow and the hard ice, the quiet of falling snow and the noise of busy snow plows, and the blue versus gray landscape. Henkes packs a lot of figurative language into this short volume, like personification (“Winter is reaching through the branches and crouching in doorways”) and similes (“leaves underneath are like stars in glass”). Dronzek uses acrylic paint to create the charming illustrations, which add a very wintry feel to the story. At the end of the text, the advent of spring approaches and the story segues into *When Spring Comes*.

THOUGHTS | With older students, this book can serve as a mentor text for figurative language. A fabulous readaloud, it is the perfect choice for a winter-themed story time for the younger crowd. Deceptively simple, this winter tale is a must-have for every elementary collection.

BOOK TALK | Do you like the winter? Do you think it is fun to play in the snow? Then you might enjoy reading this book called *Winter is Here* by Kevin Henkes. He tells us how we can use our senses when it snows. We know what snow looks and feels like, but did you ever think about how it sounds? The author tells us how snow can be blue or gray and how it might be hard or soft or even quiet or loud. Read this book and you might wish it was snowing right now!

Denise Medwick
West Allegheny School District



Picture Book
Grades K and up

CONNECTIONS

- This book is great for talking about communication, point of view, author bias, etc.
- It could also be a wonderful introduction to an art class activity.
- Another way it could be connected it around grandparents day, especially for those who have immigrants in their immediate family.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *New York Times, Editors Choice*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ 2019 Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature - Picture Book Winner
- ★ Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) Notable Children's Books of 2019
- ★ International Literacy Association: 2019 Notable Books for a Global Society
- ★ NPR Best Books of 2019

Lê, Minh. *drawn together*.

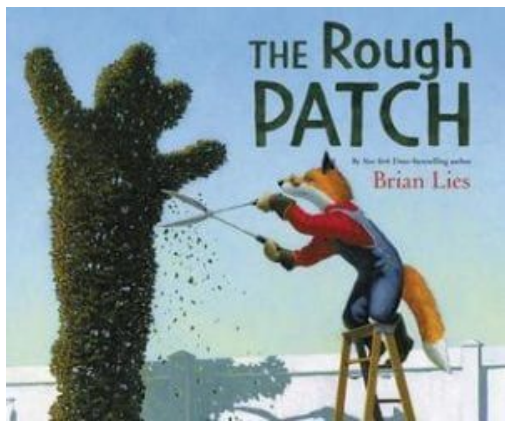
Disney-Hyperion, 2018. 978-1-484-76760-3. 32pp. \$17.90.

BOOK REVIEW | A kid and his grandfather spend time together, but don't speak the same language. Their differences stand out through the food they eat (boy- hotdog; grandfather- asian noodles) and the TV grandfather watches. Their facial features express their feelings of unhappiness and boredom... until the boy gets out his markers and begins drawing. The grandfather's face lights up, and he gets his own drawing utensils, a sketch book, ink, and brushes. The realization that they can communicate with each other is heartwarming. Things go well, and even when they hit a bump in the road, they don't give up. Finally embracing and knowing each other, the story ends with the kid waving goodbye from the car holding one of grandfather's brushes. The grandfather smiles back holding a marker aloft.

THOUGHTS | This is my new favorite book. The progression of the characters from unhappiness to complete communication, all without words, gives me goosebumps. Younger kids enjoy the story for what it is, the older ones point out symbolism, societal differences, and enjoy the comic like panels in the beginning and end.

BOOK TALK | A boy has to spend the day with his grandpa, but they don't speak the same language... but they DO find a way to communicate!

Emily Woodward
The Baldwin School



Picture Book
Grades K-3

CONNECTIONS

- Use to spark discussion about what feelings/emotions are normal following tragedy.
- After reading, have a guest speaker (such as a counselor or funeral director) come in and talk to children about the grief process.
- Pair with Cori Doerrfeld's *The Rabbit Listened* to supplement an emotional intelligence curriculum.
- Read an interview with Brian Lies at <https://www.hbook.com/2018/04/aut-hors-illustrators/publishers-previews/spring-2018-publishers-previews-five-questions-brian-lies/>
- Listen to an interview on Seth J. Gillihan's #ThinkActBe podcast at <http://sethgillihan.com/ep-17-brian-lies-finding-hope-after-loss-and-grief/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ Caldecott Honor Book

Lies, Brian. *The Rough Patch*.

Greenwillow, 2018. 978-0-062-67127-1. Unpaged. \$17.99.

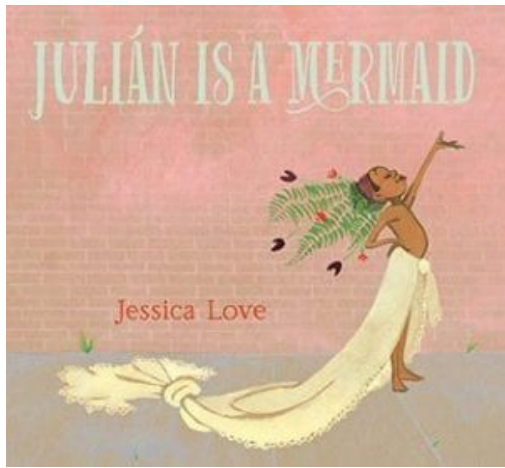
BOOK REVIEW | Evan and his dog are best friends who do everything together. One of their favorite activities is working in Evan's garden. When his best friend suddenly passes away, Evan becomes angry and depressed. He takes his frustration out on his garden, cutting everything to bits. He soon learns, however, that nothing stays empty forever—neither his garden, nor the void he feels inside. When his garden produces a magnificent pumpkin, he carts it off to the fair and ultimately ends up finding hope and healing through a new friendship. A touching story of love, loss, and hope, this is a must-have for elementary collections.

THOUGHTS | Lies has eloquently handled a delicate subject for young readers. Hand this book to students who have experienced a loss or are going through their own rough patches; it will give them hope that there is light at the end of the tunnel. It also shows young readers that it is totally normal to feel a wide array of emotions when something devastating happens. If they want to further explore emotions after tragedy, pair this title with Cori Doerrfeld's *The Rabbit Listened*. This is a beautiful guide to grief for young readers.

BOOK TALK | Have you ever lost a pet? If so, you know just how devastating it can be. Poor Evan is overcome with grief, anger, sadness and many other emotions when his dog dies. Will his heart ever heal? Will this empty feeling ever go away? Is there any hope for happiness in Evan's future? Read *The Rough Patch* to find out, and you may even learn a thing or two about going through rough patches in your own life.

Julie Ritter

Montoursville Area School District



Picture Book
Grades PreK-2

CONNECTIONS

- Any kind of lesson on tolerance, diversity, gender.
- There are some great activities in the Read Across America Page:
<https://www.readacrossamerica.org/julian-is-a-mermaid/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Horn Book*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*
- ★ *Shelf Awareness*

AWARDS

- ★ Stonewall Book Award Winner 2019
- ★ Ezra Jack Keats New Writer/Illustrator Award, Honor 2019

Love, Jessica. *Julián is a Mermaid*.

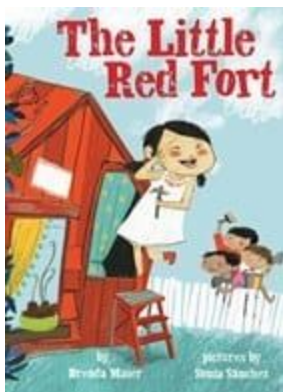
Candlewick Press, 2018. 978-0-763-69045-8. 32 p. \$16.99.

BOOK REVIEW | A young boy, Julián, goes swimming with his *abuela* (grandmother) at the pool. On the ride home they see women dressed like mermaids boarding their bus. Julián is smitten and as soon as his grandmother leaves him alone to take a shower, Julián decides that he too will become a mermaid. Creatively using supplies at hand (ferns from the plant, lacy curtains, lipstick) Julián transforms himself. When discovered by *abuela* there is a tense moment, the reader and Julián wondering how she will react... though the fear is unfounded. *Abuela* embraces who Julián has become and takes him to the Coney Island Mermaid Parade, so he can revel with other mermaids.

THOUGHTS | First of all the message of this book is beautiful, simple, and heartwarming. It discusses the gender spectrum without any preaching adults or taunting children. The message of acceptance and support is an important one for all kids. The illustrations in this book are so true to life it's almost like they are breathing. Julián, *abuela*, the people on the street and in the bus are so real you almost want to talk to them. The details, from the grass growing through the cement, to the knot in *abuela*'s headscarf, add realistic depth to this beautiful tale (and tail) of acceptance.

BOOK TALK | Julián is a boy who loves to daydream. He wants to be a mermaid with lovely long hair and a purple tail. Julián finds a way to make his dream come true, but what will his *abuela* (grandma) say?

Emily Woodward
The Baldwin School



Picture Book
Grades K-3

CONNECTIONS

- This retelling of *The Little Red Hen* will be a good fit for STEM-inspired story times, and it effectively underscores the idea that children, and in particular, girls, can do anything they set their minds to. It will also work well for a compare and contrast folktale unit.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

Maier, Brenda. *The Little Red Fort*.

Scholastic Press, 2018: ISBN 978-0-545-85919-6. 40pp. \$17.99.

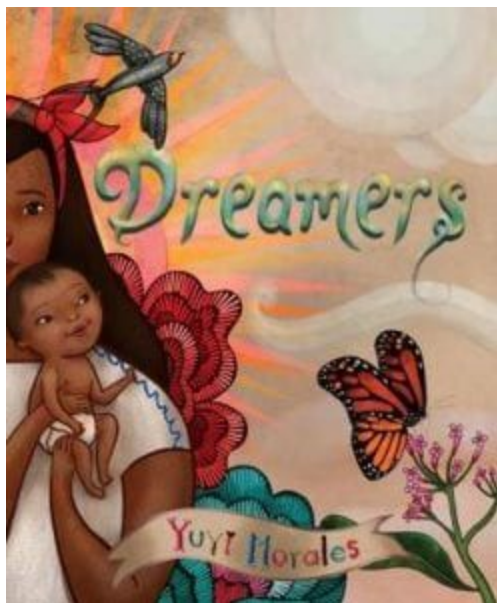
BOOK REVIEW | Inspired by the folktale of *The Little Red Hen*, this is the story of Ruby, a spunky girl with a mind full of big ideas. After discovering a pile of old boards, Ruby sets out to build something. She asks her three brothers for help, but they are too busy with their own activities. They also point out that she has no experience building anything. Ruby is undeterred by her brothers' lack of faith in her. Although they proclaim that she doesn't know how to build, sketch plans, gather supplies, saw, or hammer, Ruby proves them wrong every step of the way. When she finishes building her fort and asks who wants to play, all three boys change their tunes and are eager to join in the fun. But, Ruby turns them away, deciding to play by herself instead. While she's inside the fort, her brothers finally chip in by building a mailbox, planting some flowers, and painting the fort bright red. That night, Ruby invites them all to a fort-warming party, and they all chow down on a plate of freshly-baked cookies. This fresh retelling shines thanks to a cast of diverse characters and bright, splashy illustrations.

THOUGHTS | This retelling will be a good fit for STEM-inspired story times, and it effectively underscores the idea that children, and in particular, girls, can do anything they set their minds to. It would also work well for a compare and contrast folktale unit.

BOOK TALK | Three cheers for girl power! Inspired by the folktale of *The Little Red Hen*, this is the story of Ruby, a spunky girl with a mind full of big ideas. After discovering a pile of old boards, Ruby sets out to build something. She asks her three brothers for help, but they are too busy with their own activities. They also point out that she has no experience building anything. Ruby is undeterred by her brothers' lack of faith in her. Although they proclaim that she doesn't know how to build, sketch plans, gather supplies, saw, or hammer, Ruby proves them wrong every step of the way. When she finishes building her fort and asks who wants to play, all three boys change their tunes and are eager to join in the fun. But, Ruby turns them away, deciding to play by herself instead. While she's inside the fort, her brothers finally chip in by building a mailbox, planting some flowers, and painting the fort bright red. That night, Ruby invites them to a fort-warming party, and they all chow down on a plate of freshly-baked cookies. This fresh retelling shines thanks to a cast of diverse characters and bright, splashy illustrations.

Anne Bozievich

Southern York County School District



818

Autobiographical Literature

Grades 1-4

CONNECTIONS

- Mr. Shu's Interview:
<http://mrschureads.blogspot.com/2018/08/dreamers-sonadores-by-yuyi-morales.html>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Horn Book*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ Pura Belpré Illustrator Award

Morales, Yuyi. *Dreamers*.

Neal Porter Books, 2018. 978-0-823-44055-9. \$18.99. Unpaged.

BOOK REVIEW | “We are stories.... We are dreamers, soñadores of the world.” Yuyi Morales tells the story of a mother and her niño daring to travel across the border and into a foreign land to start this brave adventure (based on her own story). Life as immigrants isn’t easy, especially with language barriers at every turn. Through mistakes and exploration, the travelers seek their home. Finally, a miraculous place full of stories and ideas and dreams draws them in: a public library! “We learn to read, to speak, to write, and to make our voices heard,” she says with the succinct poetic voice that fills the book. The amazing collage artwork with characters, book covers, and colorful memories will bring readers back to dream for generations to come.

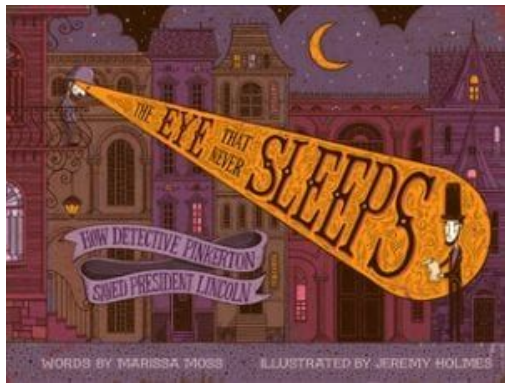
THOUGHTS | *Dreamers* is getting plenty of awards season buzz this year, and justifiably so. A comparison of this to her other award winning work (*Viva Frida; Niño Wrestles the World*) would make for a wonderful Hispanic art class. Of course, looking at the list of inspiring literature that she provides in the end notes would also be a valuable exercise.

BOOK TALK | From the creator’s own words:

“Dreamers/Soñadores tells the story of how one day my baby son, Kelly, and I arrived in the United States and became immigrants. It is the story of how difficult it was at first to come to a place where I didn’t understand the language and I could not be understood, thus made a number of mistakes. And how one day we found a marvelous place called the public library, a discovery that changed our lives forever! It is also a story of how immigrants bring incredible gifts when they come to a new country to live.”

Dustin Brackbill

State College Area School District



973 US History Grades 2-4

CONNECTIONS

- Publisher Information:
https://www.abramsbooks.com/product/eye-that-never-sleeps_9781419730641/
- Library of Congress Pinkerton Info:
<https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/august-25/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Connection*

Moss, Marissa, and Jeremy Holmes. *The Eye that Never Sleeps: How Detective Pinkerton Saved President Lincoln*.

Abrams Books for Young Readers. 2018. 978-1-419-73064-1. \$17.99. 48 p.

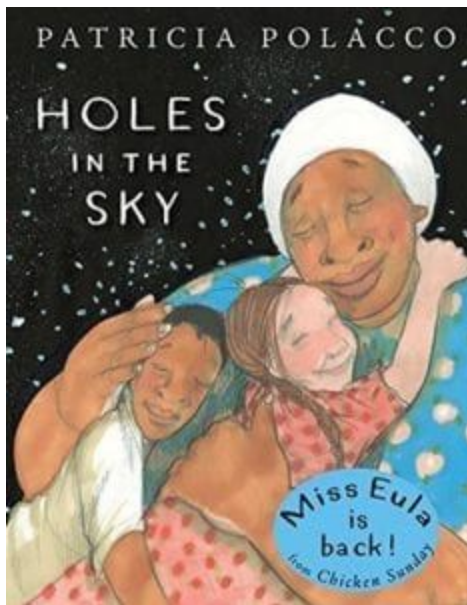
BOOK REVIEW | Today many students understand that the CIA and the Secret Service work tirelessly to protect our country and president from danger; however, less of them are aware of the intelligence agency that started it all. The Pinkerton Detective Agency and its founder Allan Pinkerton rose to prominence in Chicago and spread his “spycraft” skills around the country using his curiosity, keen observations, and search for truth. But the danger of threats to the life of President Lincoln challenged Allan to think above and beyond his usual tactics. This engaging nonfiction text from Marissa Moss keeps a succinct story moving with intrigue and mystery that lets readers follow Allan’s progress and thought process. Jeremy Holmes excels at creating large detailed “digital scratchboard” illustrations of the action which seem both modern and antiquated. Readers follow some pages like a wordless graphic novel, and some with a detective’s eye to solve the problems. One spread includes Morse Code messages to decipher. Altogether, *The Eye That Never Sleeps* brings the skills of Allan Pinkerton – his “sharp eyes, keen mind, and passion for justice” to new light!

THOUGHTS | The history of spies and detectives in the US has always fascinated me. Perhaps this title will get more young readers to discover the Pinkerton method. The end notes explain more about the timeline, art, and life of Allan. Further reading should include Moss’ other work of the time period: a biography of Kate Warne: Pinkerton Detective and Nurse, Soldier, Spy: The Story of Sarah Edmonds, a Civil War Hero.

BOOK TALK | They are watching. They are always on duty and on call and ready. They are the Pinkerton Detective Agency, formed by Allan Pinkerton who learned his craft by using his curiosity, keen observations, and search for truth. But dangerous threats to the life of President Lincoln challenged Allan to think above and beyond his usual tactics. Can he save the president from the assassins? Keep your eyes open and enjoy the true mystery!

Dustin Brackbill

State College Area School District



Picture Book
Grades 2-5

CONNECTIONS

- This book has a strong and relevant message of community and diversity. Polacco has portrayed a neighborhood that is made up of people from a variety of ethnic groups, which is based on her own experiences as a child. This is a great read aloud that can lead to a discussion about the importance of a community and will be useful in primary social studies units.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Best of Titlewave*

Polacco, Patricia. *Holes in the Sky*.

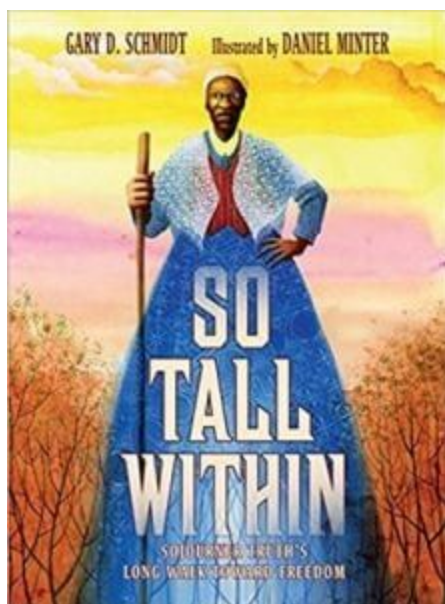
Putnam, 2018. 978-1-524-73948-5. Unpaged. \$18.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Miss Eula returns in this newest book by Polacco. This semi-autobiographical story is about Trisha's move from their farm to California after her beloved Babushka dies. Her grandmother told her that the stars are like "holes in the sky" and that those who pass away give their family a sign that they are watching from the other side. Trisha loves her new neighborhood and finds it very different with its diversity of people. She also meets a new friend named Stewart, whose grandmother, Miss Eula, reminds Trisha of her own grandmother. Even though California is experiencing a drought, Miss Eula maintains a beautiful garden by using the gray water left over from the washing machine to keep it alive. The children, Miss Eula, and the entire neighborhood then work together to rebuild a grieving neighbor's garden. Later Trisha gets her own sign from her Babushka, as she realizes that Miss Eula, who also wears vanilla as perfume, may well fill the void left by her own grandmother. Polacco uses a wonderful metaphor of the gray water creating beauty to show that love can grow even in the midst of grief. Polacco uses markers and pencils to create her signature art.

THOUGHTS | All libraries will want to add this one to their collections. The important and relevant message of community, diversity, and love makes this a great story to read aloud. Polacco fans will enjoy learning how Miss Eula of *Chicken Sunday* fame came to be such an important part of Trisha's life.

BOOK TALK | Moving to a new home can be hard. In *Holes in the Sky*, Trisha knows what that is like. After her grandmother passes away, she moves to California, where she finds that her new neighborhood is much different than her old one. She makes a new friend called Stewart and his grandmother reminds Trisha of her own grandmother. Miss Eula even says some of the same things, like how stars are like holes in the sky. Trisha likes her new home, but is worried about a neighbor who is sad and has not taken care of her house and garden since her son died. Can Trisha and her new neighbors surprise her with a beautiful garden even though there is a water shortage?

Denise Medwick
West Allegheny School District



326
Grades K-3

CONNECTIONS

- This will be a wonderful addition to biography collections. A lengthy biographical note at the end of the book highlights some of Sojourner Truth's accomplishments not included in the text, such as her famous "Ar'n't I a Woman" speech and the publication of her story, "Narrative of Sojourner Truth."

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*

Schmidt, Gary D. *So Tall Within: Sojourner Truth's Long Walk Toward Freedom.*

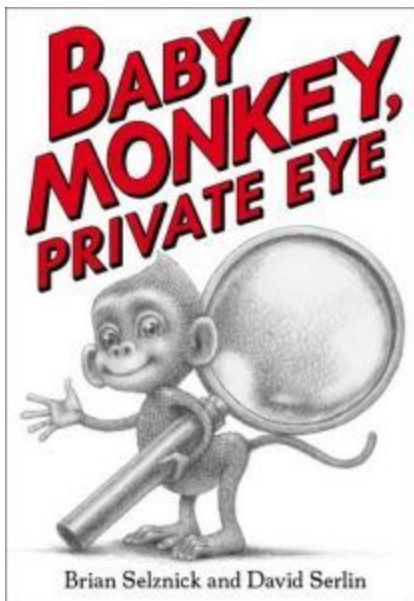
Roaring Brook Press, 2018. 978-1-626-72872-1. 48 p. \$18.99.

BOOK REVIEW | This lyrical recounting of Sojourner Truth's many accomplishments begins when she is a young slave girl named Isabella. Growing up, she watches as her brothers and sisters are sold away, and she too is sold time and time again. As a young mother, she finally runs away and gains her freedom. The book also details how Isabella changed her name, successfully sued her former master for the safe return of her son, and how she was reunited with her brothers and sisters. It also describes her decision to begin walking across the country, sharing the truth about slavery to people everywhere. From meeting with President Lincoln, to collecting food and clothing for freed slaves and soldiers, to teaching former slaves how to live on their own, Sojourner Truth stood tall and spoke of all kinds of freedom. This poetic text is complemented by beautiful paintings accented by recurring motifs, including trees, roots, and shadowy figures.

THOUGHTS | This will be a wonderful addition to biography collections. A lengthy biographical note at the end of the book highlights some of Sojourner Truth's accomplishments not included in the text, such as her famous "Ar'n't I a Woman" speech and the publication of her story, "Narrative of Sojourner Truth."

BOOK TALK | An orator. A teacher. A traveler. These are just a few of the many titles Sojourner Truth assumed during her long and varied life. This lyrical recounting of Sojourner Truth's many accomplishments begins when she is a young slave girl named Isabella. Growing up, she watches as her brothers and sisters are sold away, and she too is sold time and time again. As a young mother, she finally runs away and gains her freedom. The book also details how Isabella changed her name, successfully sued her former master for the safe return of her son, and how she was reunited with her brothers and sisters. It also describes her decision to begin walking across the country, sharing the truth about slavery to people everywhere. From meeting with President Lincoln, to collecting food and clothing for freed slaves and soldiers, to teaching former slaves how to live on their own, Sojourner Truth stood tall and spoke of all kinds of freedom. This poetic text is complemented by beautiful paintings accented by recurring motifs, including trees, roots, and shadowy figures.

Anne Bozievich
Southern York County School District



Fiction, Early Chapter Book
Grades K-3

CONNECTIONS

- Connections: Book Trailer, author letter, and activity sheets:
<https://www.scholastic.com/kids/boook/baby-monkey-private-eye-by-brian-selznick/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Horn Book*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

Selznick, Brian, and David Serlin. *Baby Monkey, Private Eye*.

Scholastic Press. 2018. 978-1-338-18061-9. \$16.99. 192 pp.

BOOK REVIEW | The premise is as simple and adorable as the title and introduction: “He is a baby. He is a monkey. He has a job...” What follows are 5 chapters, each with a case to solve and a predictable pattern for beginning readers. Selznick brings his usual amazingly detailed pencil crosshatch drawings, enhanced by red for specific details. Every chapter has a theme with several classic references shown, such as great Italian works in the “Case of the Missing Pizza” or moon landing images connected to the “Case of the Missing Spaceship.” Each chapter also brings the humor, both subtly from the looks of the characters, and overtly when the Private Eye needs to get his pants on! This hybrid format beginning reader and comic chapter book will disappear from shelves constantly.

THOUGHTS | Did I mention how ADORABLE that baby monkey is?! The predictable pattern makes it successful for early readers and builds confidence for struggling readers. The length and format also make this a quick pleasurable fit for all ages. Obviously, for older readers it would be a great gateway into the longer narratives of Selznick’s collection.

BOOK TALK | Say no more than what the publisher says:

Who is Baby Monkey?

He is a baby.

He is a monkey.

He has a job.

He is Baby Monkey, Private Eye!

Lost jewels?

Missing pizza?

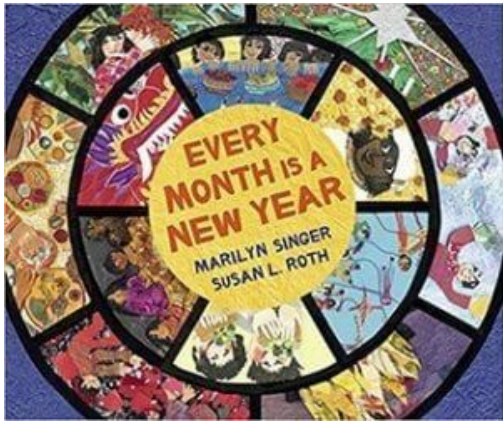
Stolen spaceship?

Baby Monkey can help...

if he can put on his pants!

Dustin Brackbill

State College Area School District



811 Poetry
Grades 2-5

CONNECTIONS

- Teachers Guide and author info:
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/every-month-is-a-new-year>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*

Singer, Marilyn, and Susan Roth. *Every Month Is a New Year*.

Lee & Low Books. 2018. 978-1-630-14162-5. Unpaged. \$20.95.

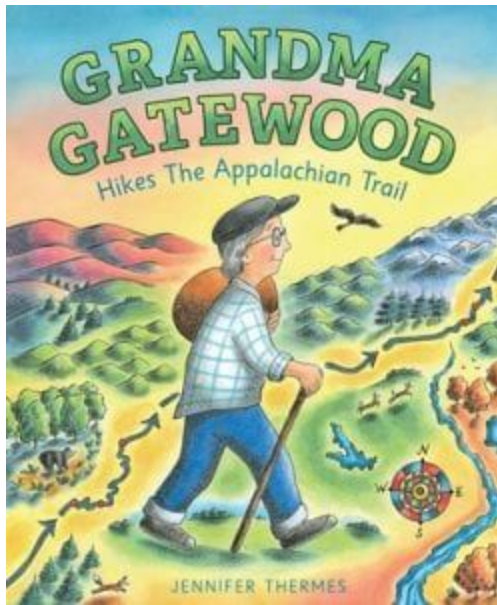
BOOK REVIEW | New years start all the time, not just on January 1st. Whether school years or sports seasons, we have traditions that go with our calendars. The informative poetry book *Every Month Is a New Year* takes readers around the world as the months turn to show how people celebrate their new year traditions. Singer's short poems capture the essence of the holiday through a child's first person viewpoint. The traditions range from water battles to fire cleansing, from food celebrations to dancing, and several ways to cleanse their souls and start anew. The detailed fabric collage that Roth weaves adds color and imagination to the mix, and the format of a full calendar that reads like it should be hung on your wall helps set the book apart. Informative text about the calendar systems through history and further descriptions, pronunciation, and sources for each new year are included toward the end. And since every end is a new beginning, readers may just want to turn the calendar and start anew!

THOUGHTS | This book would be an excellent addition to a poetry collection, and the diversity of people and places helps open the eyes of readers to unfamiliar traditions. They may be left with more questions after reading the poem and the description, so further inquiry should be expected.

BOOK TALK | Our calendar is full of new years! What are a few that come to mind for you? Now, think about other parts of the world! Do they celebrate the New Year on January 1st? Why or why not? *Every Month Is a New Year* will turn the calendar into a lesson in art, culture, and geography. Let's begin this new year today!

Dustin Brackbill

State College Area School District



796.51 Hiking
Grades K-3

CONNECTIONS

- Detailed maps may be used in Social Studies classes.

AWARDS

- ★ 2019-2020 PA Young Reader's Choice Nominated Title K-3

Thermes, Jennifer. *Grandma Gatewood Hikes the Appalachian Trail*.

Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2018. 978-1-419-72839-6. 42 p. \$17.99.

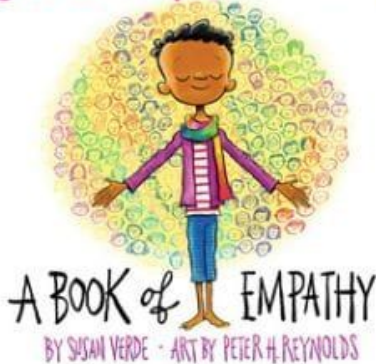
BOOK REVIEW | This book shares the story of Emma “Grandma” Gatewood, the first woman to hike the entire 2,160-mile Appalachian Trail alone. Gatewood began her five-month hike in Georgia in May of 1955 at the age of 67 and ended at the top of a mountain in Maine in September. Along the way, she braved bears, hiked through a hurricane, and wore through five pairs of canvas shoes. The text is sprinkled with quotes from Gatewood herself, so her down-to-earth personality shines through. Several double-page spreads also describe the history of the Appalachian Trail and some of its notable landmarks.

THOUGHTS | Since part of the Appalachian Trail passes through Pennsylvania, this will be a nice addition to nonfiction collections. Fourth grade teachers studying regions of the United States will also find the detailed maps useful.

BOOK TALK | Imagine walking between twelve and sixteen miles a day. Wearing through five pairs of sneakers. Hiking through hurricanes and over flooded creeks. Facing bears and rattlesnakes. And, doing it all alone, at the age of 67. This book shares the story of Emma “Grandma” Gatewood, the first woman to hike the entire 2,160-mile Appalachian Trail alone. Gatewood began her five-month hike in Georgia in May of 1955 at the age of 67 and ended at the top of a mountain in Maine in September. Along the way she forded creeks, scaled mountain peaks, and made friends with everyone she met. The text is sprinkled with quotes from Gatewood herself, so her down-to-earth personality shines through. Several double-page spreads also describe the history of the Appalachian Trail and some of its notable landmarks. Join Emma for the hike of a lifetime in this unforgettable story.

Anne Bozievich
Southern York County School District

I AM HUMAN



Picture Book
Grades K-3

CONNECTIONS

- This is a must-have for guidance counselors, and it will also work well as a read-aloud during classroom morning meeting times. Although the text is simple and brief, there are many jumping off-points for discussion, and there are opportunities for students to share where they could apply some of these ideas in their own school or in their personal lives. An Author's Note at the back of the book also includes kindness meditations readers can use to encourage positive feelings for themselves and for others.

Verde, Susan. *I am Human: A Book of Empathy.*

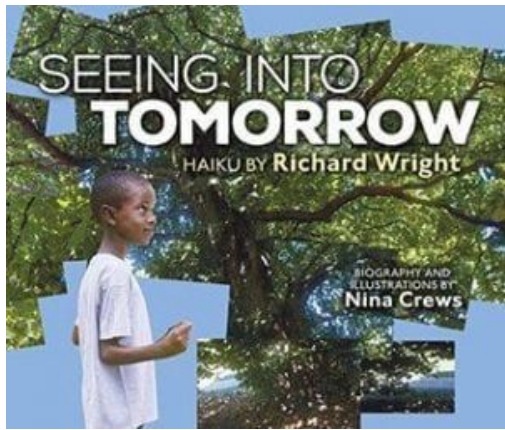
Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2018: 978-1-419-73165-5. 32 p. \$14.99.

BOOK REVIEW | This third title in Susan Verde and Peter Reynolds' Wellness series is the companion to *I am Yoga* and *I am Peace*. Each title in this series stands alone, but each also empowers young readers to choose kindness and compassion towards others. *I am Human* celebrates some of the many traits that make each of us human: our hopes, our dreams, our curiosity, our ability to learn and to feel amazement and wonder. The book also acknowledges that humans are not perfect. We make mistakes, we hurt others, we are fearful, and we feel sadness. But, we also make choices, and our choices help us move forward and turn our negative feelings around. Thoughtfulness, kindness, compassion, equality, peacefulness, and forgiveness help us connect to our fellow humans. This book encourages readers to be the best version of themselves and to look for the "human-ness" in all of us. Peter Reynolds' vibrant ink and watercolor illustrations shine against their white backgrounds, perfectly complementing the concise text.

THOUGHTS | This is a must-have for guidance counselors, and it will also work well as a read-aloud during classroom morning meeting times. Although the text is simple and brief, there are many jumping off-points for discussion, and there are opportunities for students to share where they could apply some of these ideas in their own school or in their personal lives. An Author's Note at the back of the book also includes kindness meditations readers can use to encourage positive feelings for themselves and for others.

BOOK TALK | Being human can be complicated. Humans have hopes and dreams. Humans are curious, and we also have feelings of amazement and feelings of wonder. Humans are not perfect. We make mistakes, we hurt others, we are fearful, and we feel sadness. But, we also make choices, and our choices help us move forward and turn our negative feelings around. Our choices also help us connect to our fellow humans as does our thoughtfulness, kindness, compassion, equality, peacefulness, and forgiveness. This book encourages readers to be the best version of themselves and to look for the "human-ness" in all of us. Peter Reynolds' vibrant ink and watercolor illustrations feature characters who are diverse in background, gender, and age, and the spirited illustrations perfectly match the tone of the text.

Anne Bozievich
Southern York County SD



811 Poetry
Grades K-3

CONNECTIONS

- Book Trailer:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2HukQaFpP_U
- Three Tips for Sharing this book:
<https://lernerbooks.blog/2018/07/3-gr-eat-tips-for-sharing-seeing-into-tomorrow.html>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

Wright, Richard, and Nina Crews. *Seeing into Tomorrow*.

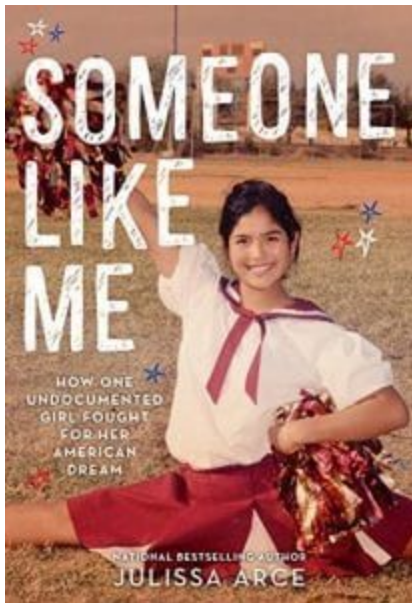
Millbrook Press. 2018. 978-1-512-41865-1. Unpaged. \$19.99.

BOOK REVIEW | A haiku poem is both simple and often profound, capturing a moment and a thought in three short lines. This collection takes a dozen of the more than four thousand written by Richard Wright and makes them visually accessible to children. Traditional topics such as seasons, nature, and relationships come into sparkling reality with the photo collage craft of Nina Crews. She focuses the art on African American boys to represent Wright's youth, and the introduction and end notes provide excellent background into his life. *Seeing Into Tomorrow* offers promise and reflection between its pages, making it a worthwhile addition to your poetry collection.

THOUGHTS | The selections in this poetry book are geared toward younger readers, but could be reread differently for older youth as well as adults, which could be an interesting exercise. Also, interpreting the relationship between the photos Crews chose and the words allow for discussion and perhaps an extension project to capture more haikus through pictures.

BOOK TALK | Haiku is an accessible poetry form for young authors and readers. It opens up the world of nature, emotion, and senses to connect with children in just three short lines. Author Richard Wright created thousands of haikus during the final years of his life, and photographer Nina Crews selected a dozen to capture through her lens in this book. Join these African American boys in sensing, in feeling, in exploring the poetry of Richard Wright.

Dustin Brackbill
State College Area School District



305.48 Memoir
Grades 5 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Current events
- Research immigration policies

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*

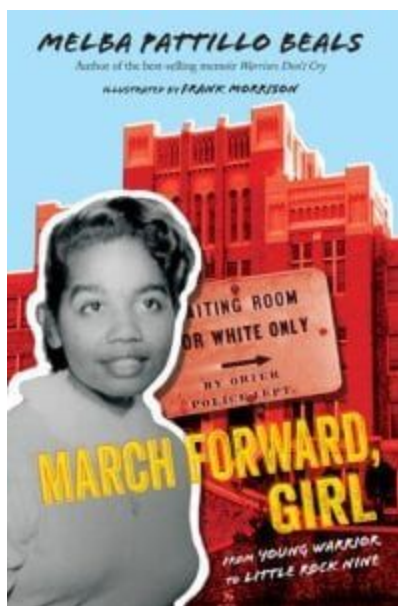
Arce, Julissa. *Someone Like Me: How One Undocumented Girl Fought for Her American Dream*. Little, Brown and Company, 2018. 978-0-316-48174-8. 223 p. \$16.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Having been born in Mexico in a bathroom stall two months early, Julissa's indomitable spirit carries her throughout her life. She begins telling her story on her presentacion de los tres años, the day she turned three years old. Throughout her childhood, Julissa's parents travel to festivals all over Mexico, selling cantaritos. In the close knit town of Taxco, Julissa and her two older sisters have many relatives to help watch after them; though, they primarily are cared for by their beloved nanny Cande. Eventually, Julissa's parents gain work visas and begin traveling to the States to sell their Taxco's sterling silver. While Julissa's parents spend most of their year in America, Julissa and her sisters visit for summers on tourist visas. When Julissa's sisters return to Mexico at the end of the summer before she enters middle school, her mom informs Julissa that she'll be staying in Texas with them. Thrilled to be with her parents and her baby brother Julio (born in America), Julissa is enrolled in a Catholic school, though there is no ESL program. With an understanding teacher and one classmate who speaks Spanish, Julissa begins her American education. Met with many challenges and frustrations over the next several years, Julissa perseveres with hopes of eventually achieving her American Dream.

THOUGHTS | Through descriptions of her life in Mexico and America, Julissa's story helps readers understand why families want to achieve an American Dream, even when they're not born in America. This "own voices" story is an excellent addition for middle or high school libraries where heartfelt memoirs are popular.

BOOK TALK | Often left in the care of her beloved nanny and close family members, Julissa spends her childhood desperate to be with her parents who travel to festivals around Mexico and America. Once her parents have a more "permanent" situation in the States, Julissa and her older sisters are able to spend summers in America. The summer before she begins middle school Julissa's parents make a life-altering decision: Julissa will not return to Mexico with her sisters and will be enrolled in a local Catholic school. Initially elated to be with her parents at last, Julissa quickly realizes the life she always imagined will not be so easy to obtain. With no ELL program in her school, a teacher who doesn't speak Spanish, and only one classmate who does, Julissa is determined to overcome these obstacles as well as the many more she encounters throughout her life. Julissa perseveres in order to achieve her American dream. In a time where empathy is key to understanding, this authentic memoir gives a unique perspective into what life can be like as an undocumented immigrant in America.

Maryalice Bond
South Middleton School District



Biography Grades 5 and up

CONNECTIONS

- 2004 Interview with Beals
<https://wqed.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/iml04.soc.ush.civil.beals/melba-pattillo-beals/>
- 2018 NPR Interview, “They Didn’t Want Me There”: Remembering the Terror of School Integration.”
<https://www.npr.org/2018/01/15/577371750/they-didn-t-want-me-there-remembering-the-terror-of-school-integration>
- Share famous photos of segregated facilities as well as anti-integration protests in the wake of Brown v. the Board of Education:
<http://www.learner.org/courses/lens/collections/change-resistance/activity/school-integration-equal-education/>
- Pair with Beals’ autobiography *Warriors Don’t Cry* (1995, 2007).
- Pair with *Freedom’s Children: Young Civil Rights Activists Tell Their Own Stories* (2000) by Ellen Levine.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Connection*

Beals, Melba Pattillo. *March Forward, Girl: From Young Warrior to Little Rock Nine.*

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018. 214 p. 978-1-328-88212-7. \$16.99.

BOOK REVIEW | In *Warriors Don’t Cry* (1995), Melba Pattillo Beals wrote movingly about her difficult and life-changing experience as a 15-year-old teenager, one of the nine African-American teenagers chosen to integrate the all-white Little Rock High School in 1957. In this book, she details her growing up years until the year she attended Little Rock High School, and shows readers a picture of a precocious girl understanding far more than she was given credit for, and constantly questioning why treatment of African-Americans was so unfair, where did the rules come from (were they in a rule book issued from heaven?) and why didn’t God put an end to it *now*? If we’re all supposed to share, why don’t the white people share anything? Melba was also prone to anxiety, especially as she overheard stories of the Ku Klux Klan in her neighborhood, or worse yet, witnessed them herself (as she did at age five, when four Klansmen entered their church and hanged a man from the rafters); she felt safe only in her home and church, and after the hanging, only at home. Her own abduction and escape, at age 11, by Klansmen, is appropriately frightening without detailing the sexual threat which she herself did not understand at the time. She knew that “unless things changed a lot—unless we had a big, big Little Rock miracle, I had to get out of that city if I ever wanted to be somebody and be free” (147). Her grandmother (whom she calls her best friend, and who homeschooled Melba through asthma episodes) exhibited a strong Christian faith when she counseled Melba with her questions, and Melba relied on that faith to make it through her questions and her amazing experience in fighting segregation. From her grandmother she learned strength and faith: “There is no crying, no whining, no complaining. There is just march forward, girl. You have to make sure that you are contributing to our journey forward, not sitting on the side of the road whimpering” (155).

THOUGHTS | This is a powerful depiction of Southern life under Jim Crow, from an insightful young girl who lived it. Melba has simultaneously published an adult version of this title, entitled *I Will Not Fear* (2018). Any of her works is worth putting into the hands of students; this title is well-suited for middle schoolers.

BOOK TALK | Melba Patillo Beals was one of the “Little Rock Nine”—nine students who integrated Little Rock High School in 1957 after the segregation of schools was lifted by the Supreme Court. Those nine students endured relentless verbal and physical abuse, as well as tacit or overt intimidation tactics. Melba endured it, and Melba survived it. She has told her story of that year of integration in her book *Warriors Don’t Cry*. But how did she become strong enough to know she was ready? To know she was meant to be one of those students? To raise her hand without hesitation when a teacher asked the class who would like to attend Little Rock High School as one of its first black students?

In *March Forward, Girl*, Melba tells the story of her growing-up years in Little Rock, and how she chafed under segregation, constantly asking questions, like “why do the white people have it better than us? Is it written somewhere in a rulebook from God? Why doesn’t God change the rule book?” The answers she received from her family, from her community, and even from God, made her more determined to fight for change. Read about how her strength grew—and how she persevered.

Melissa Scott
Shenango Area School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 4-6

CONNECTIONS

- Summer
- Cruise
- Hurricane
- Science

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

Beasley, Kate. *Lions & Liars*.

Farrar Straus Giroux. 2018. 978-0-374-30263-4. 288 p. \$16.99.

BOOK REVIEW | The theory of life, according to Frederick's friends is that some people are the lions, other gazelles, followed by meerkats. But the lowest of the lows are the fleas that live on the butts of the meerkats. Frederick is tired of being the flea of life; all he wants to be is a lion, or at least be a gazelle. This thought takes him away on an accidental journey to a camp – a disciplinary camp. Between the exercises, activities, and escape plots, Frederick begins to fit in with the other boys in Group Thirteen – Nosebleed, the Professor, Ant Bite, and Specs. As a Category 5 hurricane makes its way toward the camp, Frederick will have to learn to become a lion – or at least part of the oddball group of fleas – in order to survive.

THOUGHTS | A great adventure story that makes you think about who you are in life and how you fit in within the world. Boys and girls will feel connected to the struggles of Frederick and realize that sometimes in life, you are both the lion and the flea, but what matters is friendship and the adventure you take in life.

BOOK TALK | Frederick has had it. He was finally ready to go on a cruise and forget about how terrible it is to be a flea in the theory of life. When a hurricane interrupts his plan, Frederick has really had it - his friends were not really acting like his friends, his family life was terrible, school was terrible... it was time to leave. Boarding a boat that his "friends" set up as a prank, Frederick took to the river, only to be casted downstream. When he finally lands, he is pleasantly surprised to be at a camp. The counselor's believe he is the lost kid who never showed up, so why not take that role? Until Frederick realizes that this is a disciplinary camp... and that he is now stuck! This hysterical book will have you laughing at the unfortunate events in Frederick's life, all the while wanting him to grow and make new friends with this strange crew of campers.

Rachel Burkhouse
Otto-Eldred School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 4-7

CONNECTIONS

- Character Education; lessons about acceptance
- Science of tornadoes
- Relief project of victims of natural disasters
- Art projects/art journals
- <http://www.ashleyherringblake.com/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ Stonewall Honor Book

Blake, Ashley Herring. *Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World*.

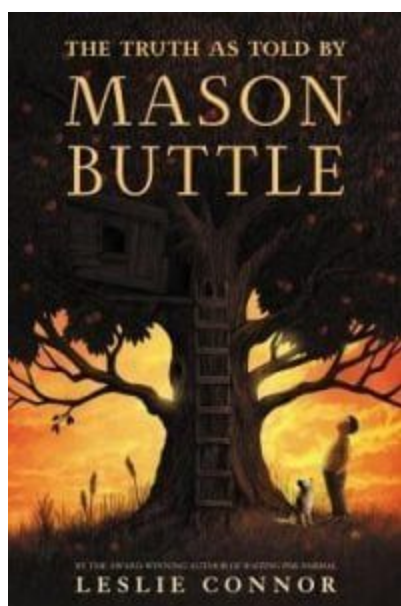
Little, Brown and Company, 2018. 978-0-316-51546-7. 307 p. \$16.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Ivy Aberdeen lost everything weeks before her thirteenth birthday. She lost her house to a tornado; she lost her mom to her twin baby brothers; she lost her family (they sent her to live at her best friend's house); and she lost her notebook – her precious notebook full of her own drawings, drawings that share her family, friends, and inner-most thoughts. Ivy is confused by her feelings, feelings she's had but hadn't thought about until she met June Somerset. Now Ivy doesn't know how to share her feelings; she doesn't know how to verbalize the emotions within her. All Ivy can do is draw, but she's afraid that her drawings will end up in the wrong hands and be confused or judged. With help from a friend, Ivy works through her confusion and finds her voice.

THOUGHTS | Ivy Aberdeen is what middle grades fiction needs. She is a strong protagonist who is confused by her emotions and feelings for others. She always knew something was different, but it wasn't until she met June that she got "that feeling," the feeling of a crush. Ivy is beautiful, innocent, smart, confused, and talented. She is exactly what readers need and should be on all middle grade shelves.

BOOK TALK | "A storm was coming, which was perfect" (1). That's how I felt the night the tornado hit, but the storm coming wasn't just the one that destroyed my house. A storm had been brewing in me. Since the twins were born, I can't talk to my mother; she's too busy. Layla, my sister, just doesn't understand; I heard her arguing with her best friend the night she told her her secret. Dad is busy figuring out what happens now with our house. On top of it all I lost (or someone stole) my notebook. The notebook that had all of my private thoughts drawn out. Thoughts I don't fully understand. All I know is until I met June Somerset, they were just questions. Now everytime I see her my stomach does flip flops. I've never felt this way before, and I don't know what to do about it, especially because June is my friend. I don't know how to say what I'm feeling; all I can do is draw my feelings and hide them away. Emily Dickinson once wrote, "This is my letter to the world, that never wrote to me..." (64). Well world, this is *Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World* by Ashley Herring Blake.

Erin Bechdel
Beaver Area School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 5-8

CONNECTIONS

- Teacher's Guide available at:
<https://harperstacks.harpercollins.com/blog/resource-the-truth-as-told-by-mason-buttle/>
- 2018 BookPage Interview with Leslie Connor:
<https://bookpage.com/interviews/22275-leslie-connor-childrens#.XHxKo0jYrnE>
- StopBullying.gov
<https://www.stopbullying.gov/>
- Grief Counseling Resource Guide, A Field Manual:
<https://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/grief/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ National Book Award Finalist
- ★ Schneider Family Book Award

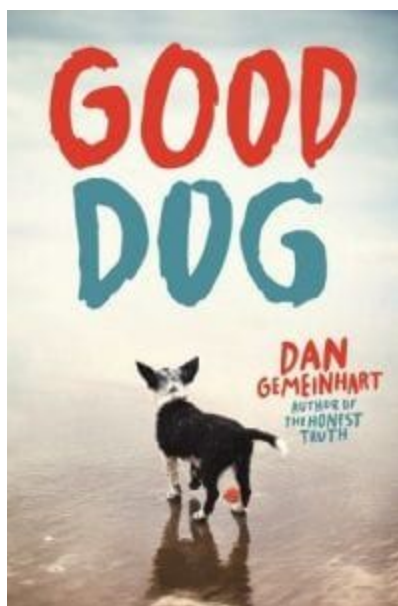
Connor, Leslie. *The Truth as Told By Mason Buttle*.
Katherine Tegen Books, 2018. 328 p. 978-0-062-49143-5. \$16.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Twelve-year-old seventh grader Mason Buttle stands out in his school—for his severe dyslexia, his overactive sweat glands, and his large size and height. These trouble him, but his internal struggles trouble him more. Since his mother died in a car accident, Mason lives in “the crumbledown” house with his grandmother and uncle Drum on their family’s disused apple grove, parts of which his uncle has sold to developers. Both grandma and Uncle Drum have loads of experience and common sense which have been flattened by depression in the face of loss. School provides endless bullying, especially from neighbor Matt Drinker and friends, who daily pelt Mason with lacrosse balls and/or mushy apples. And, fifteen months ago, his best friend Benny Kilmartin died when he fell from the treehouse he and Mason enjoyed so much. Lieutenant Baird “of the Pee Dee,” continues to question Mason about the accident, certain that Mason (who is as honest and loyal as the day is long) isn’t telling the complete story. With the help of school social worker Mrs. Blinny and her speech-to-write software, Mason is slowly writing more for the Lieutenant. Mason makes a new friend in a completely opposite kind of boy, the tiny, curious, indoor-loving Calvin Chumsky (another bully target). The two create a new, secret hideout from the Buttle’s abandoned root cellar, decorating it to resemble the caves of Lascaux complete with wall paintings. Then Calvin goes missing, and Mason is again suspected. More than anything, he wants to know what happened to Benny and to Calvin. How the positive parts of his life overcome the darkness is the subject of this insightful book, where friends and family do make all the difference.

THOUGHTS | Connor expertly crafts a unique menagerie of characters who impact Mason’s life and finally pull together in the aftermath of tragedy. Despite the heaviness of Mason’s reality, this is ultimately an uplifting tale of how truth and loyalty win the day.

BOOK TALK | Seventh grader Mason Buttle stands out in his school—for his severe dyslexia, his overactive sweat glands, and his large size and height. These trouble him, but his internal struggles trouble him more. Since his mother died in a car accident, Mason lives in “the crumbledown” house with his grandmother and uncle Drum on their family’s disused apple grove, parts of which his uncle has sold to developers. Both grandma and Uncle Drum have loads of experience and common sense, but Mason can’t get them to act on it. School provides endless bullying, especially from neighbor Matt Drinker and friends, the last people you’d want to know, thanks to their meanness. And, fifteen months ago, his best friend Benny Kilmartin died when he fell from the treehouse he and Mason enjoyed so much. Lieutenant Baird “of the Pee Dee,” continues to question Mason about the accident, certain that Mason isn’t telling the complete story. Mason dreads the lieutenant’s visits almost as much as he dreads making the daily walk from the school bus to home. Thankfully, Mason makes a new friend in Calvin Chumsky. Then Calvin disappears, and the lieutenant again strongly suspects Mason. What is the full story of Benny’s death? What about Calvin? Is there something Mason needs to remember? Is there something he’s hiding?

Melissa Scott
Shenango Area School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 5-8

CONNECTIONS

- This book has strong themes of human-animal connections; love; abuse; forgiveness and sacrifice.
- 2018 Interview with Dan Gemeinhart: <http://readwonder.blogspot.com/2018/04/an-inside-look-50-author-interview.html>
- Pair with nonfiction books celebrating the work of dogs and the human-dog connection: *Stubby the War Dog* (2014) by Ann Bausum; *No Better Friend*, Young Readers' Edition (2016) by Robert Weintraub; *My Life in Dog Years* (1994) by Gary Paulsen; *Inside of a Dog: What Dogs See, Smell and Know* (2016) by Alexandra Horowitz; *Shelter Dogs: Amazing Stories of Adopted Strays* (1999) by Peg Kehret.
- Pair with fiction of human-animal connection, or starring dog/animal as narrator of events: *Ranger in Time* series; *G.I. Dogs* series; *Cages* (2001) by Peg Kehret; titles by Kate DiCamillo, etc.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*

Gemeinhart, Dan. *Good Dog*.

Scholastic, 2018. 290 p. 978-1-338-05388-3. \$16.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Brodie was a good dog. And now he's in dog heaven.

Memories of earthly life take a while to re-form, and while Brodie loves this new place of dogs, energy, running, and peace, something is bothering him. He quickly comes to realize that his boy, Aiden, is in trouble, and Brodie has to help him. The Monster (Aiden's dad)—the shouter, the hitter, the drinker, the kicker (144)—is still determined to hurt Aiden. The other dogs say returning to earth can't be done ("you're done with the world, and it's done with you")—but they take him to Tuck, the oldest dog there, who says that while it can be done, it never ends well for boy or dog. But Brodie is a good dog. And Brodie is determined. And when he goes, Tuck accompanies him, for Tuck, also, has something left undone. When they arrive, Brodie and Tuck are quickly tracked by hellhounds (bad dogs desperate for any bit of soul of a dog, and Brodie and Tuck are literally shining examples, glowing with new soul). They also attract a street-smart, sarcastic cat named Patsy, who teaches them only *some* things they need to learn. Brodie knows his time is limited, and the suspense rings true as he tries to find Aiden and determine how to help, while still outrunning the hellhounds and continuing to be a good dog.

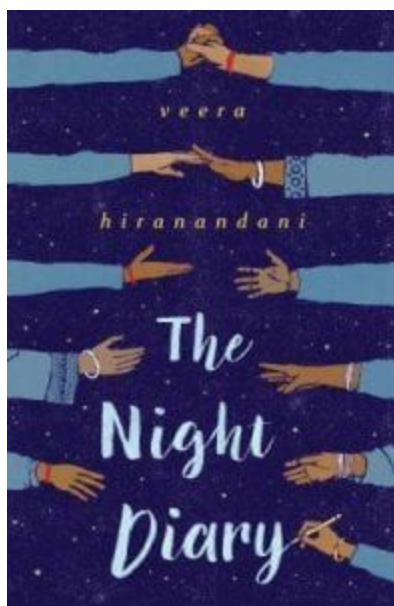
THOUGHTS | A fantastic fantasy tale with a strong focus on heroism, devotion, sacrifice, and forgiveness. Can a good dog make a difference? The answer is a resounding yes. Are angels real? You decide. Gemeinhart does a fine job exposing the good and the bad in many of the animal psyches (Brodie, Tuck, Patsy, Darkly), but misses a chance at showing the same in the human characters, who are all good or all bad. Brodie is the kind of friend every kid wants by his or her side. Share with readers who love fantasy, or dogs, or a good cry. The violence and threat of violence is strong, so recommend to older readers who are ready to handle it.

BOOK TALK | Brodie was a good dog. And now he's in dog heaven.

Memories of earthly life take a while to re-form, and while Brodie loves this new place of dogs, energy, running, and peace, something is bothering him. He quickly comes to realize that his boy, Aiden, is in trouble, and Brodie has to help him. The Monster (Aiden's dad)—the shouter, the hitter, the drinker, the kicker (144)—is still determined to hurt Aiden. The other dogs say returning to earth can't be done ("you're done with the world, and it's done with you")—but they take him to Tuck, the oldest dog there, who says that while it can be done, it never ends well for boy or dog. But Brodie is a good dog. And Brodie is determined. And when he goes, Tuck accompanies him, for Tuck, also, has something left undone. When they arrive, Brodie and Tuck are quickly tracked by hellhounds (bad dogs desperate for any bit of soul of a dog, and Brodie and Tuck are literally shining examples, glowing with new soul). They also attract a street-smart, sarcastic cat named Patsy, who teaches them only *some* things they need to learn. Brodie knows his time is limited. How can he outrun the hellhounds? Most importantly, can he save his boy?

Melissa Scott

Shenango Area School District



Historical Fiction
Grades 5-8

CONNECTIONS

- <http://www.theclassroombookshelf.com/2018/06/the-night-diary/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ Newbery Honor Book

Hiranandani, Veera. *The Night Diary*.

Dial, 2018. 978-0-735-22851-1. 272 p. \$16.99.

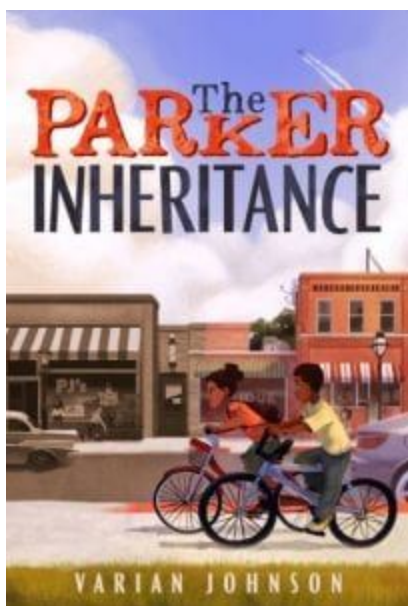
BOOK REVIEW | It is 1947, India is splitting into two countries, and 12-year-old Nisha and her family find themselves on the wrong side of the divide. Shy, smart, Nisha and her twin brother are half-Muslim, half-Hindu. Because they are being raised by their Hindu father, they are no longer safe in what has now become the Muslim country of Pakistan. Nisha is inconsolable at the thought of leaving Kazi, her family's Muslim cook, and the only person she truly feels comfortable talking with. Through letters she writes to her deceased mother, Nisha tells the story of her family's dangerous journey to their new home.

THOUGHTS | Gorgeous writing and realistic, relatable characters make this story about the Indian partition and the horror of the mass migration that resulted from it a must-buy for middle school libraries.

BOOK TALK | It is 1947, and India is splitting into two countries: Muslim Pakistan, and Hindu India. 12-year-old Nisha and her family are half Muslim, half Hindu, but they are being raised by their Hindu father and are no longer safe in Pakistan. Nisha is inconsolable at the thought of leaving Kazi, her family's Muslim cook, and the only person she truly feels comfortable talking with. Through letters she writes to the mother she lost years ago, Nisha tells the story of her family's dangerous journey to their new home in India.

Maggie Bokelman

Cumberland Valley School District



Mystery
Grades 5-8

CONNECTIONS

- This book is a natural fit for a social justice curriculum for middle school.
- Activities for students related to the book:
<http://www.circulatingknowledge.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/TheParkerInheritanceMenu.pdf>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Horn Book*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ Coretta Scott King Author Award, Honor Book

Johnson, Varian. *The Parker Inheritance*.

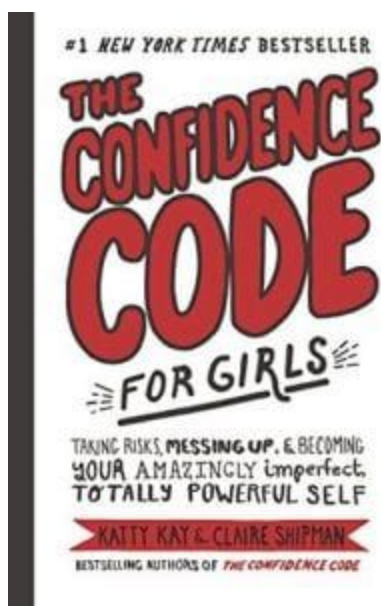
Arthur A. Levine Books, 2018. 978-0-545-94617-9. 352 p. \$16.99.

BOOK REVIEW | When Candice's parents divorce, she has to leave Atlanta to spend what she assumes will be a boring and lonely summer in her mother's tiny hometown of Lambert, South Carolina. Instead, Candice meets Brandon, a bookish boy who lives across the street, and the two are soon caught up in a *Westing Game*-inspired puzzle that's launched by a letter Candice finds in her grandmother's attic. The mystery leads the preteens, who are both African-American, deep into the history of Lambert's racially segregated past. As they uncover clues, the point of view shifts back and forth from the present to the past, following the story of another African-American Lambert family, the Washingtons. In addition to trying to solve the puzzle, Candice struggles with her family's changing dynamics, and Brandon deals with bullying issues stemming from his unwillingness to conform to traditional models of male behavior.

THOUGHTS | *The Parker Inheritance* is a well-written and entertaining mystery that includes a lot of historical background. Johnson shines a light on racism, enabling readers to see for themselves that while great strides have been made, the battle for social justice is far from over. LGBTQ issues are also woven naturally into the story in a completely age-appropriate way.

BOOK TALK | After her parents' divorce, Candice finds out she'll be spending the summer in her mother's tiny hometown of Lambert, South Carolina. Without her friends to hang out with, Candice expects to be miserable and bored. Instead, she meets Brandon, a bookish boy who lives across the street, and the two are soon caught up in a mystery that's launched by a letter Candice finds in her grandmother's attic. The preteens, who are both African-American, find themselves digging deep into the history of Lambert's racially segregated past. As they uncover clues, the point of view shifts back and forth from the present to the past, following the story of another African-American family. Will Candice and Brandon be able to unravel the clues and find the treasure that everyone before them has missed?

Maggie Bokelman
Cumberland Valley School District



305.2352 Social Groups
Grades 3-8

CONNECTIONS

- Should be required reading for Health Class for Girls in Middle School!
- <https://www.confidencecodegirls.com>

AWARDS

- ★ *New York Times* Bestseller
- ★ *USA Today* Bestseller
- ★ *Wall Street Journal* Bestseller

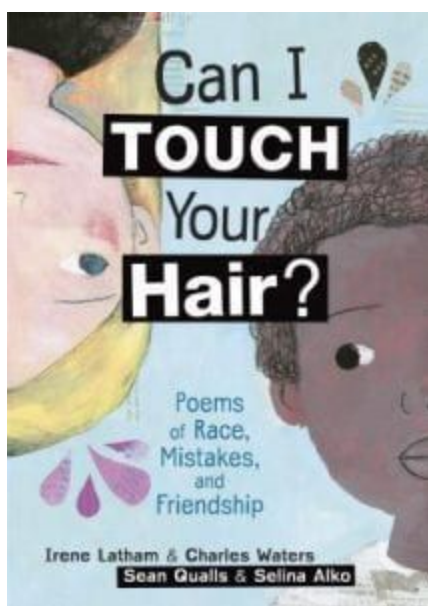
Kay, Katty, and Claire Shipman. *The Confidence Code for Girls: Taking Risks, Messing Up, & Becoming Your Amazingly Imperfect, Totally Powerful Self*.
Harper, 2018. 978-0-062-79698-1. 308 p. \$14.99.

BOOK REVIEW | This non-fiction, self-help book is research based, but incredibly readable. All the information gathered (and there's a LOT) is explained in a way that makes sense without sounding demeaning. The book is divided into three different sections: "Risk More!" "Think Less!" and "Be Yourself!" The authors give concrete real-life examples, and reach readers through a variety of different styles of text and images, including cartoon panels throughout that provide examples. The Confidence Code for Girls can be read as a workbook – there are a lot of ways to interact with the text, from creating a "Confidence Notebook" to taking quizzes, deciding what path might be the most confident to take in a scenario, to creating your own confidence code.

THOUGHTS | I wish this book had been around when I was starting middle school. It is incredibly well researched and referenced with a full section of endnotes.

BOOK TALK | Do you want to be sure of yourself? To know that you're the best you possible? This book is an awesome guide/workbook to getting there!

Emily Woodward
The Baldwin School



Poetry
Grades 4-7

CONNECTIONS

- Poetry month
- Black Lives Matter (for older elementary)
- A VERY detailed curriculum guide: https://www.irenelatham.com/pdf/hair_Curriculum_Guide_2017.pdf

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*

AWARDS

- ★ Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction Honor Book, Runner-up 2019
- ★ NCTE Notable Poetry Books, Winner 2019
- ★ Kirkus Best Middle-Grade Books of the Year, Winner 2018
- ★ Cybils Finalist, short-listed 2018

Latham, Irene, and Charles Waters. *Can I Touch Your Hair? Poems of Race, Mistakes, and Friendship*. Carolrhoda Books, 2018. 978-1-512-40442-5. 39 p. \$17.99.

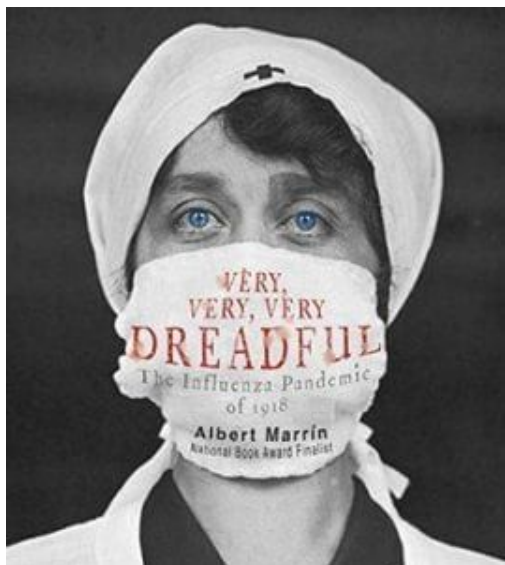
BOOK REVIEW | I'd like to start with a quote from Elizabeth Bird from her review of this book for *School Library Journal*, "For a long time... there has been an unspoken understanding amongst white parents that when it comes to race, the less said to children the better... This belief persists, flying in the face of studies that have shown that kids aren't blind... And if you don't offer guidance of any sort to them as they age, then you're allowing the world with all its messages and lessons to do the teaching for you. So children's books... can actually try their hand at confronting race head on in a format for the young" (Feb. 21, 2018).

This book by two authors and two illustrators takes place in a 5th grade classroom. Two students, who the authors based on themselves, are partnered for a poetry project. They make an unlikely pair – one is shy, and the other can't stop talking. In the beginning they decide to each write a poem about shoes, hair, and church. Each voice shares their different views on mistakes that children make when they assume or don't understand, on racial inequality, and on how larger social issues affect their interactions with other children. As a reader, it is an often sad or uncomfortable experience, seeing racial tension through the eyes of children so young. There is subject matter here that should be discussed in school and at home, and "Can I Touch Your Hair?" is a good way to get these conversations started.

THOUGHTS | I think individually, some of these poems would be good for much younger grades. For example, the title poem would be very fitting for 1st-2nd grades. However, the book addresses other heavy topics, such as the "n- word" and police brutality toward African-Americans. Unfortunately, some 7th graders may be deterred by the style of the pictures, which make it look like it may be intended for younger grades, but the subject matter is right on target.

BOOK TALK | This is a great book about two very different people who have to write poetry as a class assignment. The more they write to each other, the more they find out about each other. Some deep topics are covered here, but they are things that need to be talked about, even if it makes you feel uncomfortable.

Emily Woodward
The Baldwin School



614.5 Disease; Influenza Grades 5-12

CONNECTIONS

- Consider using with Gail Jarrow's disease trilogy: *Red Madness* (2014); *Fatal Fever* (2015); *Bubonic Panic* (2016).
- Excellent for health or history classes, or vaccination debate
- Albert Marrin: <https://www.teenreads.com/authors/albert-marrin>
- 2008 National Endowment for the Humanities: <https://www.neh.gov/about/awards/national-humanities-medals/albert-marrin>
- "Influenza (Flu)." Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. 8 Mar. 2019. www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm.
- Publishers Weekly List of "Books by Albert Marrin and Complete Book Reviews": www.publishersweekly.com/pw/authorpage/albert-marrin.html.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*

AWARDS

- ★ Chicago Public Library, Best Book of the Year

Marrin, Albert. *Very, Very, Very Dreadful: The Influenza Pandemic of 1918*.

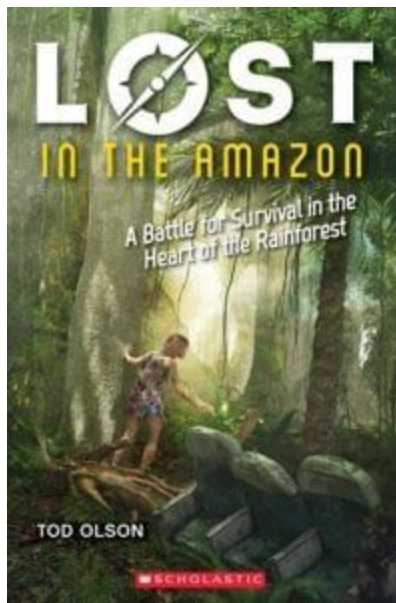
Alfred A. Knopf, 2018. 198 p. 978-1-101-93146-2. \$21.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Marrin expertly, if slowly, leads readers through the horror- and death-laden story of the 1918 influenza pandemic. "You can't ignore the 1918 flu—it's the great-granddaddy of them all," a specialist notes (1). You can't ignore it, but you can be sobered by it; be prepared for a truly depressing look at war's impact on the spread of disease; the hazardous conditions set in place by World War I—for soldiers, health personnel, and civilians—paved an easy street for the 1918 flu to take the lives of an estimated 50-100 million worldwide, after infecting about 500 million. A 1994 World Health Organization report declared that the 1918 pandemic "killed more people in less time than any other disease before or since" (3). Marrin himself admits this is not "a happy story or a pretty one" but we owe it to those who lived and died to use what knowledge we can glean to prevent pandemics that pathologists state *will* surely happen. Marrin uses a multitude of primary sources, including statistics, soldiers' and civilian survivors' memories, songs, literature, advertisements, maps, and numerous black and white photos. Two factors led to the rapid spread of the three waves of influenza that struck over an 18-month period in 1918-19: the "Great War" in combination with the limited research and understanding of the disease (and medicine) of the time. Research since the 1930s has revealed insight into the virus, and Marrin explains attempts of numerous scientists—some attempts that have actually encouraged the disease. The first five chapters are heavy with real-life horror: trenches filled with water, rats and "trench-foot;" Germans so starved by the food shortages that they fought over the remains of dead horses in the streets; the ubiquitous face masks; bodies piled upon bodies as hospitals, then even the mortuaries, filled beyond capacity. A survivor later recalled that as a child, "we were afraid...to have contact of any kind...I remember I was actually afraid to breathe. People were afraid to talk to each other...because you might have the germs that will kill me" (106-7). The sixth and final chapter turns to look at the resulting research—cause, spread, ending, future. The answers have taken years, and the reality is stark: it will happen again. This final chapter is just as riveting and sobering as the earlier chapters.

THOUGHTS | Well-researched, well-written, and a must-have for middle and high school collections.

BOOK TALK | Influenza. The flu. It's not something you want, but it's hard to imagine that in 1918-1919, it took the lives of 50-100 million people worldwide. It's hard to imagine that the 1918 pandemic "killed more people in less time than any other disease before or since." It's hard to imagine that the pandemic reduced the average life expectancy in the United States by 12 years. It's hard to imagine the horror of such much death occurred in just 18 months. And it's hard to imagine it happening again. It's no big deal, right? We know how to treat it. Well, sort of. Experts say it's not a matter of if such a pandemic occurs again, it's just a matter of when. So find out how it starts, how it spreads, and what could happen next.

Melissa Scott
Shenango Area School District



363 Survival Grades 4-8

CONNECTIONS

- 2012 BBC Radio Interview with Julia Koepecke-<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p03vxssn>
- 2010 Print interview with Julia Koepecke-https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/8gmgmz/the-woman-who-fell-to-earth-508-v17n9

Olson, Tod. *Lost in the Amazon: A Battle for Survival in the Heart of the Rainforest.*

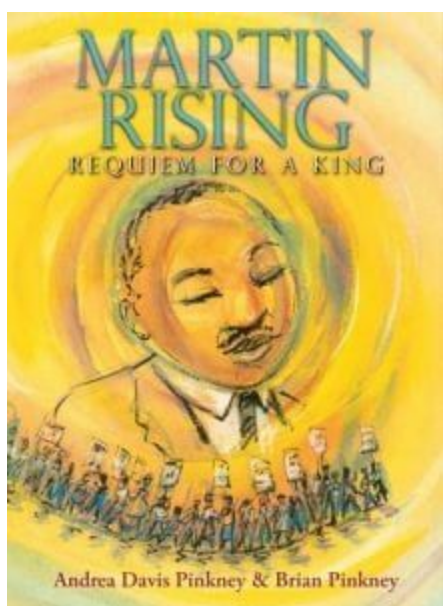
Scholastic, 2018. 978-0-545-92827-4. 162 p. \$7.99.

BOOK REVIEW | On Christmas Eve, 1970, a flight took off from Lima, Peru. Among the 86 passengers of Flight 508 were seventeen year old Julia Koepecke and her mother. They were looking forward to spending the holiday at their research station home in the remote jungle where Julia's zoologist parents conducted their research. Shortly after clearing the mountains, however, Flight 508 encountered intense storms and was struck by lightning causing it to break up in mid-air. Julia found herself strapped into a row of seats, tumbling two miles to the jungle floor below. She awoke the next morning, injured and alone in the remote rainforest. She quickly determined that in order to survive, she would need to begin moving. Drawing upon lessons imparted by her father and her years of experience living in the remote jungle, she began to follow a waterway, keeping aware of dangers in the rainforest and battling her deteriorating physical condition. Finally, on the tenth day of her journey, she came across a remote cabin and was rescued by three forest workers. Taken to safety, she learned that she was the sole survivor of the plane crash.

THOUGHTS | This book is more than an amazing story of survival. Olson weaves information on Amazon history, jungle plant and animal life and the search effort to find survivors of Flight 508 around the story of Julia's experiences. The result is a complete picture of the events surrounding the crash and the insurmountable odds Julia faced. Readers will find themselves hard-pressed to put this title down! Highly recommended.

BOOK TALK | I woke up, alone and disoriented, the sounds of the Peruvian jungle all around me. How did I end up here? Then it all came flooding back...I had been on a plane with my mother, flying home to join my father for Christmas, when there was a storm, turbulence, and flash of lightning. Then I was falling, still strapped into my seat and then blackness. The plane must have broken up and fallen in the jungle below. I call out for my mother, for anyone, but the only sounds I hear are the sounds of the birds, animals and insects of the jungle. I am injured and alone--miles from civilization. I can hear planes above, but there is no way for them to see me beneath the jungle canopy. I have only one choice--I must walk. I stumble across a small stream, and follow it to where it empties into a larger waterway. Perhaps it will lead to a village and rescue. To find out, read *Lost in the Amazon* by Tod Olson.

Elizabeth Henry
Lampeter-Strasburg School District



Poetry
Grades 4-7

CONNECTIONS

- This work is a great resource for social studies units on Civil Rights and African American history.
- It is also a great example of a mentor text that shows a chronological text structure done in a creative way. Whether the poems are read silently or out aloud, they are equally moving.
- Students could perform dramatic readings of selected poems. A factual introduction to the historical events would help students appreciate the work even more.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Horn Book*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*
- ★ *VOYA*

AWARDS - Best Book of the Year

- ★ Washington Post
- ★ Kirkus Reviews
- ★ New York Library
- ★ School Library Journal

Pinkney, Andrea Davis, and Brian Pinkney. *Martin Rising: Requiem for a King.*

Scholastic, 2018. 9780545702546. 128 pp. \$19.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Pinkney takes us on a lyrical journey through the weeks preceding and the days following the death of Martin Luther King in a series of what she calls “docu-poems.” The book begins with a prelude about Henny-Penny of fairy tale fame who plays the role of the Greek Chorus, as explained by Pinkney in her author’s note. Henny Penny appears throughout the text and in one poem tries to stop time in an effort to prevent the fatal events that will occur. This tribute focuses on the events surrounding the Memphis sanitation worker strike and the protest marches and speeches that King undertook in their support. She makes use of the strike’s phrase “I am a Man” in several poems. On April 3, King returned to Memphis to further help the workers’ cause and gave his famous “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech. He was assassinated the following day. The poems before Martin’s death have chapter headings of “Dawn” and “Daylight,” while those that discuss events after the assassination are labeled “Darkness.” These serve as metaphors of the fight for civil rights. The title of each poem includes the date and events are presented chronologically. The final series of poems are presented under the heading “Dawn” once again and include a poem on the creation of Martin Luther King Day, which keeps his spirit and dreams alive. Pinkney includes a timeline of MLK’s entire life in the back matter with a more detailed listing of the events that took place in 1968, which are the main focus of this book. In the author’s note, Pinkney suggests that these poems could be performed out loud or read silently. Brian Pinkney’s expressionist illustrations are done in watercolor, gouache, and India ink. In the Illustrator’s note, he explains that he wanted them to convey the emotions of the events, rather than just a realistic portrait. The back matter includes a brief synopsis of King’s life in prose, accompanied by photographs. This will help those unfamiliar with all the details of his life and the sanitation strike to understand this text better. Source notes are also included.

THOUGHTS | This is an excellent example of creative nonfiction, but is more importantly a moving and fitting eulogy of a famous American. This book should be a part of every library’s collection.

BOOK TALK | The life and accomplishments of Martin Luther King, Jr. are well-known, but you have never heard his story told as masterfully as it is in Pinkney’s *Martin Rising: A Requiem for a King*. This wonderful tribute is a series of what the author calls docu-poems and they are well-crafted. The poems are chronologically organized into three sections: Daylight, Darkness and Dawn. They focus on the plight of the Memphis sanitation workers and the protest marches and speeches that King undertook to support them. The poems in the Darkness section are about the events and emotions surrounding King’s assassination. This text is also a work of art and the expressive illustrations are an integral part of the story. A lyrical biography, this is one that will linger with you for some time.

Denise Medwick
West Allegheny School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 5-8

CONNECTIONS

- Using all the books in the series, or even just two of them, it would be interesting to compare how Reynolds creates a distinct voice for all of the characters.
- The problem Lu has with hurdles can be seen as an overarching metaphor (he has other "hurdles" in the book he struggles with). This can offer a great opportunity to discuss literary techniques.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

Reynolds, Jason. *Lu*.

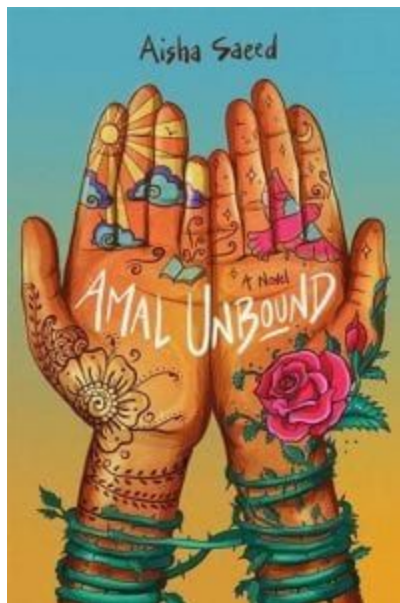
Antheneum Books for Young Readers, 2018. 978-1-481-45024-9. 218 p. \$16.99.

BOOK REVIEW | The fourth and final installment in Jason Reynold's popular *Track* series features Lu, the blinged-out, lightning fast (and fast-talking) team co-captain. Lu has albinism, but his insecurities about that (or anything else) are well-masked. "I am/ the man/ the guy/ the kid/ the one/ the only/ The Lu/ Lucky Lu" (1), he tells himself, rightfully taking pride in his identity and abilities. Lu has a lot going for him, not the least of which is that his homelife is more secure and stable than that of his teammates featured earlier in the series (*Ghost*, 2016; *Patina*, 2017; *Sunny*, 2018). However, Lu's seemingly unshakeable self-confidence begins to wobble a bit when his coach decides that Lu should try running hurdles. These literal obstacles in his path serve as a gentle metaphor for the other new things in Lu's life that are stopping him short and tripping him up. His mother is pregnant after years of infertility, and Lu isn't sure he's ready give up his only-child status. Meanwhile, some threatening ghosts from the past—his own and his father's—have resurfaced, forcing Lu to dig deep inside himself for strength and courage.

THOUGHTS | The book's ending is a little over-the-top dramatic; nevertheless, it is satisfying. *Lu* is a winner, as is the entire *Track* series.

BOOK TALK | If you've been reading Jason Reynold's *Track* series, you already know Lu, the blinged-out, lightning fast (and fast-talking) team co-captain. Lu has albinism, but that's never stopped him from taking pride in his identity and abilities. Lu has a lot going for him, but his seemingly unshakeable self-confidence begins to wobble a bit when his coach decides that he should try running hurdles. Lu just can't seem to get over them! As if that's not enough to deal with, he's going to have a little brother or sister, and Lu isn't sure he's ready give up his only-child status. Don't miss the fourth and final book in the popular *Track* series!

Maggie Bokelman
Cumberland Valley School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 5-8

CONNECTIONS

- Teachers guide from the publisher:
http://images.randomhouse.com/teachers_guides/9780399544682.pdf
- Resources from the author's website:
<http://aishasaeed.com/amal-unbound-teaching-resources-page/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

Saeed, Aisha. *Amal Unbound*.

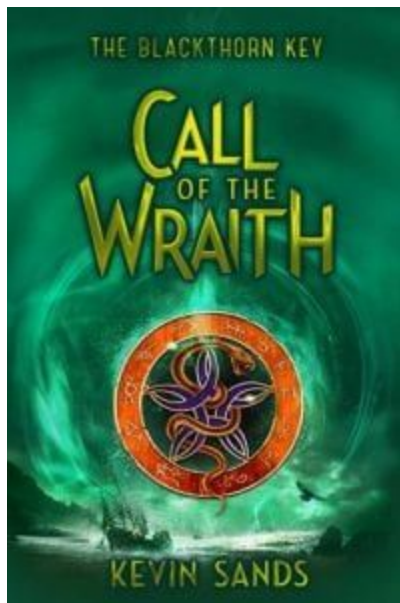
Nancy Paulsen Books, 2018. 978-0-399-54468-2. 226 p. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Amal, a young Pakistani girl, is one of the top students in her village school and dreams of going to college and becoming a teacher. Her confidence and dreams begin to shatter when her mother falls into a deep depression after giving birth to the family's fifth daughter. Amal learns for the first time how deeply entrenched gender roles are etched into the fabric of her local culture when she finds out she must leave school and take over as her family's primary caretaker. Then, an even more devastating turn of events leads to Amal being forced to leave home and become an indentured servant of the village's feudal landlord. Amal, stuck in a system that could potentially keep her—and others like her—trapped for life, is willing to risk everything for freedom and justice. The ending is upbeat and highly satisfying.

THOUGHTS | This story shines a light on the gender discrimination, antiquated feudal systems, and horrific indentured servitude practices that still exist around the globe (including in dark corners of the United States). The novel is well written, and the pacing is perfect. Amal is a likeable and relatable protagonist who young readers will root for all the way to the end as she fights to return to her family, attend school, and follow her dreams. A highly recommended title for middle schools.

BOOK TALK | Amal, a young Pakistani girl, is one of the top students in her village school. She dreams of becoming a teacher. Then, her world is turned upside down when she accidentally angers the villages' corrupt feudal landlord. She is taken from her family as an indentured servant, and becomes stuck in a system that could potentially keep her--and others like her--trapped for life. How much is Amal willing to risk for freedom, justice, and her dreams?

Maggie Bokelman
Cumberland Valley School District



Historical Fiction
Grades 6 and up

Awards

★ Best of Titlewave

Sands, Kevin. *Call of the Wraith*.

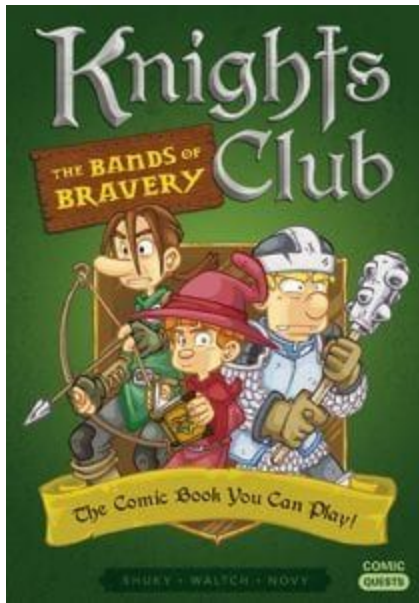
Aladdin, 2018. 978-1-534-42847-8. 494 p. \$18.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Christopher Rowe wakes up in an unfamiliar bed, on an unfamiliar farm – with no memory of who he is or how he got there. The family who found him says he was in a shipwreck, stranded in ice, possessed by a demon — and saved by a witch. As Christopher regains his strength and gets his bearings, he learns that strange happenings are occurring around the farm, and local children have been taken by a mysterious specter known as The White Lady. Curious that Sybil O’Malley – the witch who saved his life – may hold some answers, Christopher sets out to question the witch as well as a former witch hunter, Edmund Darcy. Along the way, Christopher reunites with friends Sally and Tom and his trusty apothecary sash. But the mystery of the White Lady and the missing children is much more dangerous than they can imagine. Determined to find and free the missing children and his missing memories, Christopher, Tom, and Sally are once again thrust into an adventure full of puzzles, pirates, and daring rescues.

THOUGHTS | The fourth installment in Sand’s The Blackthorn Key series does not disappoint – it may even be the best one yet. This series is engaging for reluctant readers, relatable to tweens, and just a well-written, adventurous series that deserves a place on all library shelves.

BOOK TALK | Christopher Rowe wakes up with no memory - he doesn’t know who he is or where he is, but dreams of being trapped in ice. The family who found his says he was shipwrecked, possessed by a demon, and saved by a witch. Curious, Christopher wants to find this witch, and find some answers. But children in the area keep disappearing, supposedly kidnapped by a ghost named The White Lady, so Christopher’s hosts advise against travelling. For Christopher, that’s not an option, and he sets out to question the witch and find his memories. As with Christopher’s previous adventures, this book contains unpredictable schemes, exceptional explosions, and complex puzzles that will have readers on the edge of their seat until the very last page.

Vicki Schwoebel
Friends’ Central School



Graphic Novel
Grades 4-8

CONNECTIONS

- Graphic Novel
- Choose Your Own Adventure
- Gaming

Shuky. *Knights Club: The Bands of Bravery.*

Quirk Books. 2018. 978-1-68369-055-9. \$9.99.

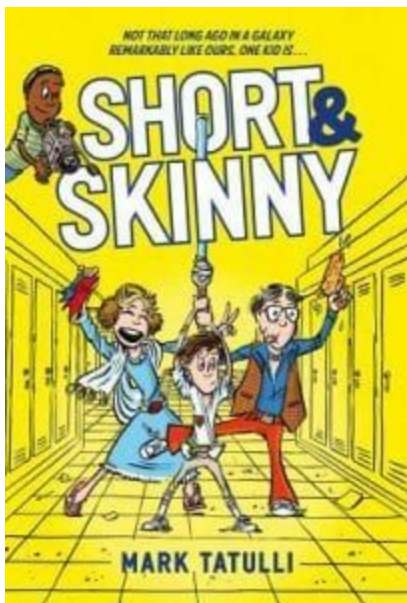
BOOK REVIEW | What is better than digging in compost, watering plants, and harvesting? Almost anything, especially becoming a knight! Three brothers, each with different abilities have had enough of working in the fields and are ready to go to knight school! Travel on this journey with them, as they begin their quest of bravery to become knights!

This is a choose your own quest novel, comic book style! Take part in the adventure by choosing one of the brothers' rank. Using a tally sheet provided in the book, readers can mark their points and ranks as they make decisions for their characters. Using the panels and numbers, have your character travel throughout the land, making choices to help them on their way toward knighthood!

THOUGHTS | I love the idea of a comic book style choose your own adventure. This story allows readers, both male and female, really to become involved in the story. Readers not only have to make decisions for their character, but they can actually mark points and ranking, allowing them to "level up" within the book. A new idea for an original book type!

BOOK TALK | This graphic novel allows you to choose your own destiny! Choose one of three brothers and travel into the city to become one of the greatest knights around! Collect money and loot, dive into battles, and use your intellect to see how far your travels can take you!

Rachel Burkhouse
Otto-Eldred School District



Graphic Memoir
Grades 4-8

CONNECTIONS

- Author's Website:
<https://www.marktatulli.com/>
- Short & Skinny would be a standout selection for a middle grade book club, especially combined with a screening of *Star Wars*!

Tatulli, Mark. *Short & Skinny*.

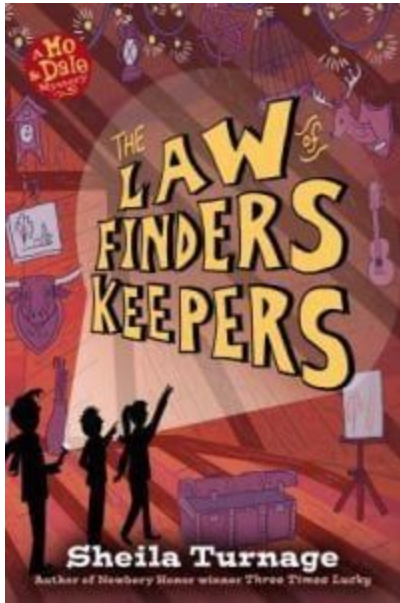
Little, Brown and Company, 2018. 978-0-316-44051-6. 249 p. \$12.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Oh, slop! It's the summer of 1977, and 12-year old aspiring cartoonist Mark Tatulli has had it with being short and skinny. The neighborhood bullies view him as an easy target. He's listed as "unofficial" on the swim team roster because his times are so slow. His best friend, sister, and brother all enjoy a regular laugh at his expense. In a last-ditch attempt to bulk up, Mark orders a bodybuilding kit that's advertised in the back of a comic book. Maybe by the beginning of eighth grade he'll have the height, muscles, and confidence to talk to his crush, Lisa Gorman. 1977 is also the summer of *Star Wars*; inspired by the game-changing film, Mark and his friends join forces to make their own homegrown spoof of the movie called *Star Bores*. Can discovering his passion – and editing his own Super 8 movie – transform the life of the self-proclaimed "Mayor of Munchkin City?" Mark Tatulli's bright artwork vividly depicts the 1970s, while the relatable storyline captures the universal preadolescent angst. A variety of panel sizes and layouts gives every page a fresh look. Even better, the story is laugh-out-loud funny while still inviting empathy (and a touch of commiseration).

THOUGHTS | *Short & Skinny* joins a growing number of outstanding graphic memoirs. It fits in perfectly right between *Smile* by Raina Telgemeier and *Hey, Kiddo* by Jarrett J. Krosoczka. It would be a standout selection for a middle grade book club, especially combined with a screening of *Star Wars*.

BOOK TALK | Oh, slop! It's the summer of 1977, and 12-year old aspiring cartoonist Mark Tatulli has had it with being short and skinny. The neighborhood bullies view him as an easy target. He's listed as "unofficial" on the swim team roster because his times are so slow. His best friend, sister, and brother all enjoy a regular laugh at his expense. In a last-ditch attempt to bulk up, Mark orders a bodybuilding kit that's advertised in the back of a comic book. Maybe by the beginning of eighth grade he'll have the height, muscles, and confidence to talk to his crush, Lisa Gorman. But it's not all bad because 1977 is also the summer of *Star Wars*! Mark and his friends join forces to make their own homegrown spoof of the movie called *Star Bores*. Can discovering his passion – and editing his own Super 8 movie – transform the life of the self-proclaimed "Mayor of Munchkin City?"

Amy V. Pickett
Ridley School District



Mystery
 Grades 4-6

CONNECTIONS

- Author website:
<https://www.sheilaturnage.com/>
- Character education: friendship, idea of “finders keepers”

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *VOYA*

Turnage, Sheila. *The Law of Finders Keepers (A Mo & Dale Mystery)*.

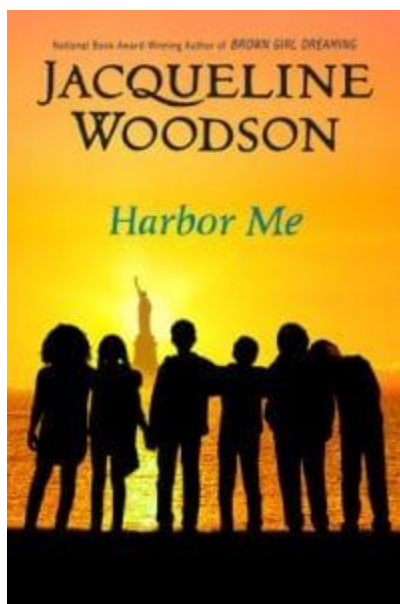
Kathy Dawson, 2018. 978-0-803-73962-8. 356 pp. \$16.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Mo, Dale, and Harm are back in the newest addition to the *Mo & Dale Mystery* series. For years, Mo has quietly been searching for “Upstream Mother.” After unwittingly finding clues about her, the Desperados are on the case to find her no matter what the cost. With limited clues and lots of questions, the search for “Upstream Mother” may be more than Mo expected. At the same time, treasure hunter Gabriel Archer comes to town looking for Blackbeard’s treasure, and the Desperado Detective agency is hired by Mayor Little’s mother to work the case and find the treasure. As they dig through the Little’s attic, they find clues about the history of Tupelo Landing and the location of the treasure, but location isn’t enough when you’re up against a professional treasure hunter who will steal and cheat to find the treasure. As if treasure wasn’t enough for the Desperados, Harm’s mother, Kat, has returned and is working with Gabriel. Neither Harm nor Mr. Red are thrilled about her return, and quickly neither are Mo, Dale, and others when they realize what she’s up to. All the while, antics towards Attila and the quirkiness of the Colonel, Miss Lana, and the residents of Tupelo Landing explore the meaning of friendship, family, and community.

THOUGHTS | This is a fabulous middle-grades series. Each title can stand-alone or be read in order. The characters are honest and unique, as is the setting. Students will relate to a number of the residents of Tupelo Landing, especially Mo, Dale, and Harm. Highly recommended series.

BOOK TALK | What would you do if you’d been searching for your mother your whole life but couldn’t find her? How would you balance the love you have for the people who found you and raised you, but the want to know “your story”, her story? What would you do if you did find her? At the same time, you can’t wallow in what was or might be because your friends and town need you. A treasure hunter has come in search of Blackbeard’s treasure; Tupelo Landing is the last known location of Blackbeard’s family and men. How do you, a 12-year-old detective, beat a professional treasure hunter at his own game? What happens when your detective partner learns that his mother, who abandoned him, is working for the treasure hunter and decides she wants him back? What do you do? Keep searching and hope that *The Law of Finders Keepers* by Sheila Turnage changes your story.

Erin Bechdel
Beaver Area School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 4 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Immigration
- Debate of current policy on immigration
- Family structure
- Character education: acceptance
- Jacqueline Woodson Teacher's Guide
http://images.randomhouse.com/teachers_guides/9780399252525.pdf
- <https://www.jacquelinewoodson.com/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Harbor Me*.

Nancy Paulsen Books, 2018. 978-0-399-25252-5. 176 p. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Hayley has a secret that she's not quite ready to share, but she soon learns, so do all of her classmates. When Ms. Laverne, their teacher, introduces the class to ARTT (A Room to Talk), Hayley learns about her classmates, Esteban, Tiago, Amari, Ashton, and Holly, and the struggles they deal with each day. Struggles with race, immigration, economics, bullying, family, grief, and loss. As each student shares his or her story, Hayley realizes that she is not alone. Everyone struggles and has fears. It's not about the individual struggle but about how one finds strength to overcome the struggle and be a harbor, for those struggling. Soon she understands what Ms. Laverne means when she tells the students to "be a harbor" and protect someone else. ARTT and each other are her harbor, and she is theirs.

THOUGHTS | This book could not be more timely. From the perspective of fifth and sixth graders, the stories of deportation, bullying, fear of being shot, family dynamics, death, and not fitting in are heart-wrenching and too true. Woodson masterfully shares real stories from a child's perspective, a perspective that does not usually have a voice. This is a must-have for all school libraries. Although recommended for middle grades, it is a worthy read by all ages. Woodson puts it perfectly when she writes, "*I know in my heart, Tiago whispered, the language we like to speak is music and poetry and even cold, sweet piraguas on hot, hot summer days. But it feels like this place wants to break my heart. It feels like every day it tries to make my mom feel tinier and tinier, like the size of Perrito's head in my hands*" (129). These kids will not be broken, and this novel gives everyone strength to persevere.

BOOK TALK | The students in Ms. Laverne's class all have a secret. Struggling with race, immigration, economics, bullying, family, grief, and loss, they use ARTT (A Room To Talk) each week to learn about one another and understand not only their individual stories, but also broad stories of struggle throughout their neighborhoods, communities, and country. But, when fear silences their stories, the voiceless must learn how to stand up and find their voice again. I will be your harbor. Will you *Harbor Me* by Jacqueline Woodson?

Erin Bechdel
Beaver Area School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 4-7

CONNECTIONS

- <https://www.frontdeskthebook.com/or-teachers/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ Asian/Pacific American Children's Book Award Winner

Yang, Kelly. *Front Desk*.

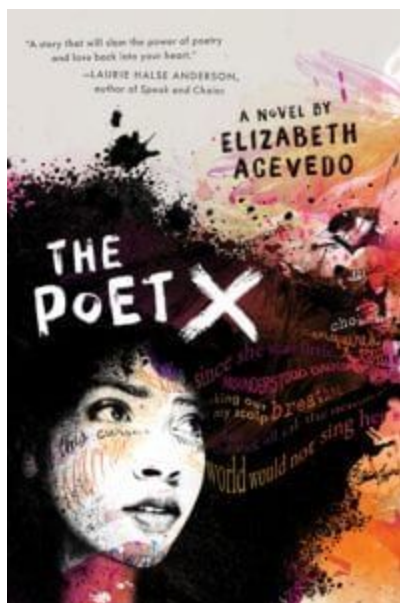
Arthur A. Levine, 2018. 978-1-338-15779-6.304 p. \$16.99.

BOOK REVIEW | The rollercoaster ride of hopes, dreams, and disappointments that characterizes the lives of so many immigrants is at the heart of *Front Desk*, a book informed by Yang's own childhood. 10-year-old Mia Tang's parents jump at the chance to manage a hotel in Southern California, only to find that they will be on call 24/7, and the job isn't as lucrative as promised. Mia, who's more than willing to help out at the front desk, is disappointed to learn she's banned from the hotel pool and that her parents won't earn enough for trips to Disneyland. Although the novel's tone is breezy, neither the reader nor Mia is sheltered from learning the harsh realities of life for Chinese immigrants in the 1990s, which include racism, loan sharks, and homelessness. Mia dreams of being a writer, but her mother discourages her because she's not a native English speaker. However, Mia's talent becomes evident when she writes letters for family friends in desperate situations, saving the day with her boldness and ingenuity.

THOUGHTS | Mia is a funny, feisty heroine whom kids will love. Recommended for upper elementary and middle school libraries; the fact that it is an "own voices" book about the Chinese immigration experience is a bonus.

BOOK TALK | 10-year-old Mia Tang's parents jump at the chance to manage a hotel in Southern California, only to find that that the job isn't at all what they expected. Mia, who's more than willing to help out at the front desk, is disappointed to learn she's banned from the hotel pool and that her parents won't earn enough for trips to Disneyland. The work is far from glamorous, and Mia hides her "job" from the kids at her new school--who include the hotel owner's unpleasant son. Still, Mia makes friends with many of the guests, and loves helping out. But when she has the chance to really make a difference in the lives of people she cares about, how much of a risk is she willing to take?

Maggie Bokelman
Cumberland Valley School District



Realistic Fiction
Novel in Verse
 Grades 9 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Use with a poetry club or curricular unit

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Horn Book*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ *Michael L. Printz Award*
- ★ *Pura Belpré Author Award*

Acevedo, Elizabeth. *The Poet X*.

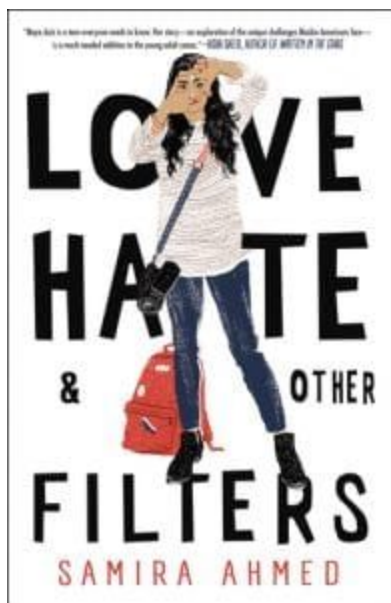
Harper Collins Children's Books, 2018. 978-0-062-66280-4. 368 p. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Fifteen year old Xiomara Batista feels invisible and hates that the attention given to her is through cat calls and comments about her curves. Her parents, who immigrated from Puerto Rico, see only her flaws, and her genius twin brother has his own secrets. So Xiomara writes, pouring her heart and soul into her leather notebook. When she is paired with Aman in science class, Xiomara begins to crush – hard – on her lab partner, and a romance blossoms. Although her devoutly Catholic mother has forbidden Xiomara to date, she and Aman sneak around, and Xiomara begins to share her poetry with him, which makes her feel alive. Invited to a slam poetry club, Xiomara discovers The Poet X inside her, and finally feels seen.

THOUGHTS | This is an incredible novel in verse that is worthy of all the awards its won. Xiomara's voice is raw and real, and readers – especially teen girls – will see echoes of the sexism that plagues women everyday. The narrative is believable and Acevedo's words a treasure.

BOOK TALK | Where can you truly be yourself? For fifteen year old Xiomara Batista, it's in the pages of her journal, between the letters of her poetry. Xiomara has always felt invisible around her genius brother and her strict parents, who emigrated from Puerto Rico. So Xiomara spills her thoughts into her leather notebook. When Xiomara is paired with Aman in science class, she begins to fall for him - hard - and finds that Aman really sees her for who she is, and that her words might have space off the page as well. Inspired to join a slam poetry club, The Poet X begins to discover her voice. This is a book in verse for fans of poetry, rhymes and hip hop.

Vicki Schwoebel
Friends' Central School



Realistic Fiction
Grades 9 and up

CONNECTIONS

- This book would be an excellent introduction to Muslim tradition and culture.
- It could also spark discussions about terrorism, racism, prejudice, bigotry and tolerance.
- Watch an interview with the author at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPv2gXgToxo>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*
- ★ *VOYA*

AWARDS

- ★ School Library Journal Best Book of 2018
- ★ Seventeen Magazine Best YA Book of 2018
- ★ New York Times Bestseller

Ahmed, Samira. *Love, Hate & Other Filters*.

Soho Teen, 2018. 978-1-616-95847-3. 281 p. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Illinois high school senior Maya Aziz is caught between two very different worlds. Her Indian American parents are very traditional and expect her to go to college close to home, study law or medicine, then marry a nice Muslim boy. She, however, is more interested in attending NYU to study film and dating Phil, her white classmate and longtime crush. Just when she has worked up the courage to tell her parents her plan, a heinous crime is committed, presumably by a terrorist with the same last name as Maya. This act is foreshadowed by the thoughts of a disturbed young man that precede each chapter of the book. The backlash experienced by her family after this act of terror causes her parents to tighten their rules even more. Readers will empathize with Maya as she struggles to chase her own dreams while simultaneously trying not to disappoint her parents.

THOUGHTS | There are so many lessons about prejudice and tolerance to be learned from this title. Not only is Maya targeted and bullied at school because of her Muslim Indian background, but her parents' livelihood is even threatened in an act of hatred. In addition to terrorism and bigotry, this book could spark discussions about interracial couples and/or Muslim Indian culture and tradition. Pair it with Gloria Chao's *American Panda* for readers who want more stories about defying tradition or with Tanaz Bhathena's *A Girl Like That* for those who want to learn more about race, religion, and the Muslim culture. However it is used, this timely and thought-provoking novel definitely deserves a place in all high school library collections.

BOOK TALK | Have you ever felt like your parents were being unfair? Like they were trying to control your life or plan your future for you? High school senior Maya Aziz, an American-born Muslim Indian, wants to attend NYU, study film, and date her white classmate, Phil. Her parents, however, have other ideas about how she should spend her future, which include a career in law or medicine and a marriage to a suitable Muslim boy. Things become even worse when a horrific act of terrorism is committed, presumably by someone with the same last name as Maya. Following this crime, Maya and her parents become victims of prejudice and bigotry, causing her parents to tighten the reins even further. Will Maya ever get to live out her own dreams, or will she have to live out her parents' dreams? Read this book to find out!

Julie Ritter
Montoursville Area School District



Graphic Novel
Grades 9 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Compare/Contrast *Speak* with another #MeToo book
- Discussion: What do you think about the graphic adaptation of a very personal and serious situation?

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Horn Book*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Library Journal*
- ★ *School Library Journal*
- ★ *VOYA*

**Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Speak: The Graphic Novel*.
Illustrated by Emily Carroll.**

Farrar Straus Giroux, 2018. 978-0-374-30028-9. 374 p. \$19.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Melinda enters high school having called the cops at an end of summer party. On the first day, she has “the wrong hair, the wrong clothes, the wrong attitude, and...[no one] to sit with” (4). Through the course of the graphic novel, readers experience Melinda’s first year of high school following a sexual assault which goes unreported. As Melinda withdraws further into herself, readers can see and feel the impact of her assault and the loneliness she experiences by keeping it a secret.

THOUGHTS | Years of readers will rejoice with this graphic novel version of Anderson’s modern classic *Speak*. If possible Carroll’s illustrations heighten Melinda’s lonely and bleak narrative. While art is a major comfort to Melinda in the novel, artwork is at the center of this adaptation. No scenes are graphically depicted; however, Melinda’s situation is unchanged.

BOOK TALK | Enhanced by Carroll’s illustrations, the graphic adaptation of Anderson’s modern classic, *Speak*, will captivate a new generation of readers and twenty years of fans. Melinda’s story remains unchanged, but stark black and white illustrations portray a whole new level of her loneliness. Readers will see Melinda’s first year of high school as she withdraws into herself following an unreported sexual assault.

Maryalice Bond
South Middleton School District



Mystery
Grades 9 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Author website:
<http://www.jenniferlynnbarnes.com/>
- Twitter: @jenlynnbarnes

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ VOYA

Barnes, Jennifer Lynn. *Little White Lies*.

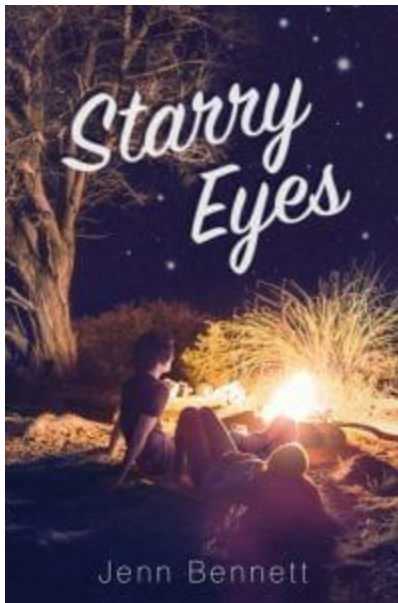
Freeform Books, 2018. 978-136801413-7. 390 pp. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Sawyer Taft knows little about luxury and even less about her family. So when Lillian Taft, her grandmother, appears and offers her half-a-million dollars to come live with her and fulfill a debutante contract, Sawyer can't refuse. Soon she finds herself in a new world, full of debutantes, wealth, Southern hospitality, and family secrets that was only 45-minutes away her entire life. As Sawyer befriends her cousin, Lily, and her friends, she also learns secrets that lead to blackmail, arrest, and enemies coming together for a common good. But with secrets, comes curiosity too. Sawyer knows her mother left this life when she got pregnant during her debutante year, and one of four men must be her father. With the help of a friend, she begins to eliminate potential dads until she unleashes a secret that could tear apart her new life and her new-found family.

THOUGHTS | Told through first-person narration and alternating between present and past events, *Little White Lies* is an entertaining romp through secrets, wealth, Southern hospitality, and debutantes.

BOOK TALK | What would you do if you were offered half-a-million dollars to move in with your grandmother (a woman you've never met because she kicked your mom out when she was 18)? All you have to do is sign her contract stating that you will live with her and participate in the Symphony Ball, which means be a debutante, and your college tuition (plus some) is covered. Seems like an easy answer, but you know that you're not quite a Southern, genteel, young lady, and people know your story. How do you embrace the new-found family (who is only a 45 minute drive from you and your mom) while reconciling the lies you've always heard about them? What do you do when you realize that you now have access to the world that includes the man who might be your father? How do you reconcile with your mother, act the part of a "proper deb", keep your cousin's secrets, blackmail her nemesis, and detect your biological father? What do you do when your *Little White Lies* by Jennifer Lynn Barnes, lead to exposing a secret that will ruin your new-found family and land you in jail?

Erin Bechdel
Beaver Area School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 9 and up

CONNECTIONS

- In the book, one of Lennon's hobbies is map-making; a few of his maps are even pictured at the beginning and end of the book. Students could study these maps and then create maps of their own using proper measurements and localities that are meaningful to them. They could even plan out a local camping/hiking trip of their own and then, if possible, take a field trip there.
- Lennon shares many survival tips with Zorie, such as what to do when confronted by a bear, how to treat a California kingsnake bite, and how to determine the location of a storm. Students could create their own wilderness survival guides as they read this book.

STARRED REVIEWS

★ *Kirkus*

Bennett, Jenn. *Starry Eyes*.

Simon Pulse, 2018. 978-1-481-47880-9. 417 p. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | It's the summer before senior year, and at her mother's insistence, Zorie agrees to go on a camping trip at a luxurious resort in northern California with her popular friend, Reagan, and some other girls. In an unexpected turn of events, however, she discovers last minute that there will be boys on this trip as well, including her ex-best friend, Lennon, and her crush, Brett. Things take a turn for the worst when the group gets kicked out of the campground, Reagan and Zorie get into a huge fight, and the group ditches Zorie and Lennon in the wilderness. Left alone in the wild, Zorie and Lennon face many obstacles, but perhaps their biggest obstacle is their own unresolved feelings about each other. This beautifully written novel straddles the line between love story and adventure/survival story and would make an excellent addition to any young adult collection.

THOUGHTS | Definitely written for a high school audience, there is some swearing and sex throughout this book. The book also addresses some sensitive subjects, including lesbianism (Lennon has two mothers), homophobia (Zorie's father despises Lennon's mothers) and divorce (Zorie's parents separate when her father cheats on her mother). However, everything is very tastefully written and likely very relatable for many teens. The thrill of wilderness survival adds an exciting backdrop to the story, setting it apart from your everyday love story. This is a must-have for all high school libraries!

BOOK TALK | "We all stand silently. Staring. The bear stares back. He sniffs the air again, and a huge pink tongue licks the side of his muzzle. He's curious about us, and completely unafraid. In fact, whatever he smells in the air has made him brave. He steps out of Brett's tent, paw ripping the fabric as his leg swings around. He's going to charge us. We're going to die." When Zorie agreed to go on a camping trip with a group of friends the summer before her senior year, she never imagined the horrors she would have to face. Hungry bears. Snake bites. Massive thunderstorms. Her ex-best friend, Lennon, who she may or may not still have feelings for. Will Zorie survive the wilderness? Will her and Lennon rekindle their connection? Or will everything go terribly wrong? Read *Starry Eyes* to find out!

Julie Ritter
Montoursville Area SD



384.8 Film History Grades 7 and up

CONNECTIONS

- This title could be incorporated in various courses--film studies, history, government, etc.
- "The Hollywood Ten: The Men Who Refused to Name Names" The Hollywood Reporter.
<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/lists/hollywood-ten-men-who-refused-839762>
- The Hollywood Ten-1950 short film featuring profiles of the ten, excerpts from their Congressional testimony and personal statements.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EcdlB9qve8>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

Brimner, Larry Dane. *Blacklisted!: Hollywood, the Cold War, and the First Amendment.*

Calkins Creek, 2018. 978-1-620-91603-2. 171 p. \$17.95.

BOOK REVIEW | In *Blacklisted!*, Larry Brimner recounts the story of the 1947 House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) investigation of the film industry and the subsequent blacklisting of 10 Hollywood figures. As the Cold War intensified between the United States and communist Russia, many began to fear that Communists had infiltrated various parts of American society. The goal of the House Un-American Activities Committee was to investigate and root out these potential Communist threats. Their focus soon turned to Hollywood, and actors, directors, producers, and screenwriters found themselves subpoenaed to face accusations that they were Communists. Ultimately, 10 Hollywood figures who were called before the committee refused answer questions, citing the protections afforded them by them by the Constitution (namely freedom of assembly and freedom of speech). Held in contempt of Congress, the men were sentenced to time in prison and were denied employment by Hollywood studios. In order to make ends meet, some were forced to work under pseudonyms for less pay, others moved out of the country or left the film industry altogether. This thoroughly researched work incorporates testimony and accounts from the HUAC hearings as well as numerous photos and documents.

THOUGHTS | An excellent examination of an event in American history that offers many parallels to current debates about civil liberties and the role of the government in investigating perceived threats.

BOOK TALK | "Are you now, or have you ever been a member of the Communist party?" In 1947 Hollywood, this was a question that terrified members of the entire movie making industry. Worried that Communists had infiltrated the movie industry and were attempting to influence Americans, members of Congress had decided to investigate Hollywood. Writers, directors, producers and other industry members found themselves called in front of a Congressional committee and questioned about their political affiliations and beliefs. But they knew that the First Amendment protected freedom of speech and assembly, and they felt that Congress had no right to delve into their personal lives. Should they stand their ground and refuse to answer questions, even if it meant losing their careers, their savings, and risking prison time? What would you do if faced with this choice? Discover what happened in *Blacklisted: Hollywood, the Cold War and the First Amendment*.

Elizabeth Henry
Lampeter-Strasburg School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 9 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Use this book as an introduction to Taiwanese culture or history in a World Cultures or World History class.
- Use this book to spark discussions about America as a melting pot and what this means for descendants of immigrants who feel like they are torn between two different worlds.
- Find a parents' guide to the book at <https://www.common sense media.org/book-reviews/american-panda>
- Read an interview with the author at <https://chireviewofbooks.com/2018/03/06/american-panda-gloria-chao-interview/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Connection*
- ★ *School Library Journal*
- ★ *VOYA*

Chao, Gloria. *American Panda*.

Simon Pulse, 2018. 978-1-481-49910-1. 310 p. \$17.99.

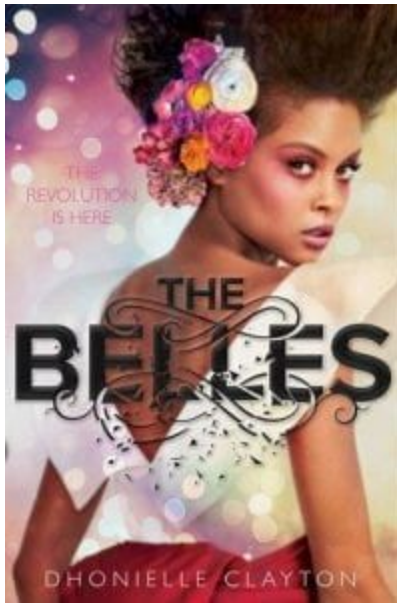
BOOK REVIEW | Seventeen-year-old Taiwanese American Mei Lu is a freshman at MIT, where she is studying to become a doctor as per her parents' wishes. The truth, however, is that she hates germs and finds biology boring. Her real dream is to own a dance studio. To make matters worse, she finds herself falling for a fellow MIT student named Darren, who she knows her parents will never approve of because he is Japanese, and her very traditional parents are already pre-arranging her marriage to another Taiwanese doctor. As Mei struggles to find her own happiness while still maintaining a relationship with her parents, she finds herself building a web of lies that is destined to eventually unravel. Read the book to find out whether these lies drive a wedge between her and her family, or whether she finds a way to reconcile her own hopes and dreams with their expectations.

THOUGHTS | This book will resonate with any teen who is trying to follow his/her dreams and find him/herself, especially those who feel pressure from their parents to succeed. Pair this book with Samira Ahmed's *Love, Hate, & Other Filters* for students who are caught between tradition and reality. This title also has educational value, as abundant references to Taiwanese culture and history make it an excellent complement to any high school social studies curriculum.

BOOK TALK | Seventeen-year-old Taiwanese American Mei Lu has always done everything her parents have ever asked of her: she graduated from high school a year early, stayed away from boys who were not successful Taiwanese suitors, and is studying to become a doctor at MIT. But the truth is, she hates germs. She finds the idea of interacting with cadavers and sick people appalling. She wants to date her classmate who is definitely NOT Taiwanese. Heck, she even thinks stinky tofu - a traditional Taiwanese dish - smells like athlete's foot. So where DOES she fit in? Certainly not with her parents and their traditional Taiwanese culture and beliefs. Not with her biology classmates, who are all gung-ho about cadavers and germs. Will Mei ever find a path that doesn't totally dismiss her own dreams or push her parents away for dismissing theirs? Read *American Panda* to find out.

Julie Ritter

Montoursville Area School District



Fantasy
Grades 8 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Exploration of society's obsessive focus of beauty standards

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Publisher's Weekly*
- ★ *Kirkus*

Clayton, Dhonielle. *The Belles*.

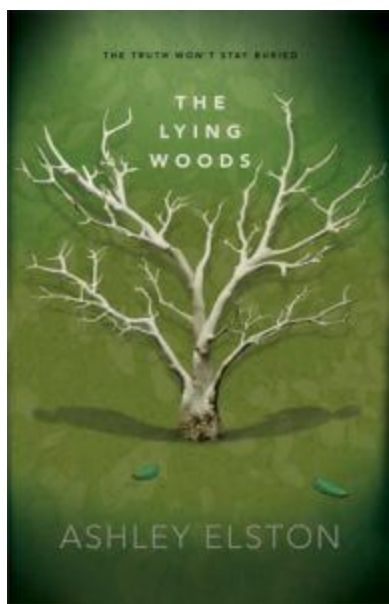
Freeform, 2018. 978-1-484-72849-9. 448 p. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Camille Beauregard and her sisters have been raised as Belles, powerful beings who have the ability to manipulate beauty and save their fellow citizens “from a life of unbearable sameness” (12). At her debut, Camille wows the crowd and the royal family with her creativity and poise, but is disappointed when her sister is picked as the Queen’s favorite, securing the coveted role of royal Belle. Camille begins working in a tea shop transforming local patrons, but a mysterious change in circumstances soon brings Camille to the palace. Under the tutelage of the Princess, Camille’s powers are tested – as is her loyalty to the crown. As time passes, Camille begins to see dark undertakings in the castle and questions her role as Belle. But being a Belle is all she knows, and Camille must confront the evasive history of the Belles in order to move forward.

THOUGHTS | Clayton does an excellent job of weaving class, race, and gender politics into her story and allowing readers to reflect on our own beauty obsessed world. This is an enthralling, unique fantasy with rich characters and vivid world-building. Perfect for fans of the *Uglies* series.

BOOK TALK | What if you had the ability to manipulate beauty? Would you use it for good or bad? That’s the life for Camille and her sisters, powerful girls who have the ability to change physical appearances, and save their fellow citizens “from a life of unbearable sameness.” Since childhood, Camille has been training to serve the Queen, and is beyond excited when chosen as royal Belle. But being in court isn’t all glitz and glitter. Camille learns that that beneath the royal balls and gorgeous dresses, the Queen and Princess are deceptive, manipulative, and engaged in dark deeds that threaten the future of the kingdom. Camille’s loyalty to the crown is tested - and so is her loyalty to her fellow Belles.

Vicki Schwoebel
Friends' Central School



Realistic Fiction
Grades 9 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Write a letter to Owen's dad as Owen. This can be done at any point throughout the novel using what Owen knows or learns about his dad.
- Journal: If you lost all of your worldly possessions like Owen and his mother, what one item would you want to save?

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*

Elston, Ashley. *The Lying Woods*.

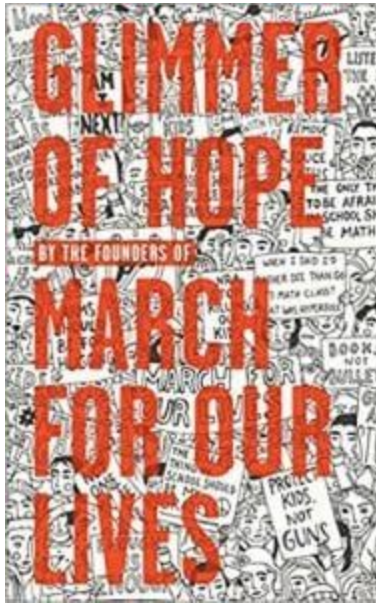
Disney-Hyperion, 2018. 978-1-368-01478-6. 336 p. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Hours before his father's embezzlement goes public, Owen's mother gets him from his elite New Orleans boarding school. Forced to leave all of their possessions including their house behind, Owen and his mom move in with her sister, and Owen must adjust to senior year back in Lake Cane. Living among the families whose life savings and retirements were invested in Louisiana Frac (the primary local employer) proves to be more difficult than he imagined. Of course, his father is long gone. Most are suspicious of their involvement or their knowledge of Owen's father's whereabouts, but Owen and his mother are left to deal with the repercussions and threats. Told in alternating chapters Owen's story unfolds over dual narratives from the past and the present. With mystery surrounding his entire life, Owen must look to the past to help guide his future.

THOUGHTS | Subtle in its mystery, this book is difficult to describe without giving away key details. With dual narratives from different time periods, readers will work the entire novel to puzzle out the story of Owen's life. At times a page-turning mystery and others character driven, this work will have a wide appeal. A must-purchase for high school libraries.

BOOK TALK | "There's no mistake. I promise you, Owen, it's bad. It's worse than bad.... You can't stay here." Ripped from his prestigious boarding school life, Owen and his mother move into his aunt's house back in Lake Cane, Louisiana. With suspicious stares and angry glares following his every move, Owen tries to deal with the repercussions of his father's deceit. A job at a local pecan orchard gives Owen some insight into who his father was before becoming wealthy. As Owen learns more about himself and his family, alternating stories unfold through Owen's current and Noah's past narratives. This subtle mystery will keep you engaged with every twist and turn.

Maryalice Bond
South Middleton SD



363.33 Control of Firearms
Grades 8 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Harness students interest and passion for activism with titles like *Yes You Can! Your Guide to Becoming an Activist*, *Girl Rising: Changing the World One Girl at a Time*, *Putting Peace First: 7 Commitments to Change the World*, and *Nevertheless, We Persisted: 48 Voices of Defiance, Strength and Courage*.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*

The Founders of March For Our Lives. *Glimmer of Hope*.

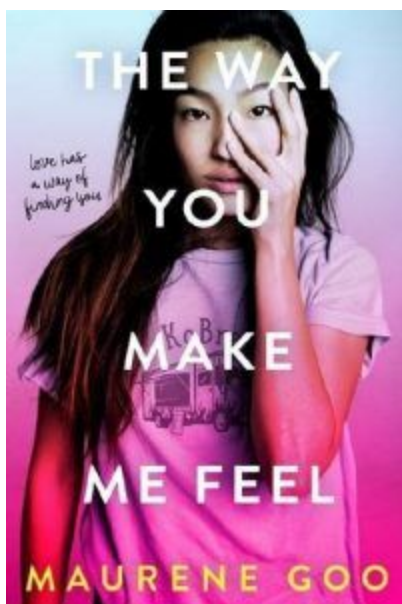
Razorbill. 2018 978-1-984-93609-0. 208 pp. \$18.00.

BOOK REVIEW | Conversational in tone, *Glimmer of Hope* is a collection of essays and recollections written by the students involved in the March for Our Lives movement. The survivors of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida came together to create a response to the gun violence plaguing the USA. Featured essays written by the famous leaders of movement David Hogg, Emma Gonzalez, Delaney Tarr, Cameron Kaskey, and several others reflect on the events during the day of the shooting and the weeks following as they planned for action. The students provide a timely and inspiring call to action and the book ends with a platform of ten specific reforms with the aim to put sensible gun control legislation into place across the country.

THOUGHTS | An inspiring read, encouraging readers to take a stand to prevent future tragedy. A recommended purchase for every high school collection.

BOOK TALK | On Valentine's Day last year, yet another horrific tragedy happened at one of our nation's schools when seventeen students and staff members were killed and seventeen more were injured by a student with a cache of automatic weapons. This book is a collection of essays, recollections, and conversations written by student survivors from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida who lost friends and family members on that day. They each recall and comment on the events of that day and the days that followed as they grappled with the after effects of such a tragic experience. Not willing to simply sit and grieve the students in Parkland mobilized to organize the incredibly successful March For Our Lives events and created a vibrant and growing gun control movement. If you are concerned about gun violence in our country, this book can give you inspiration to take action to change gun control laws.

Nancy Summers
Abington School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 9 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Journal: Write an apology to someone you may have wronged. If you've never wronged anyone (reconsider your answer), write about a time that you feel someone has wronged you. What helped you move forward?
- Plan a trip to a city, and include the who, what, when, where, why, & hows. Is there any food truck information for your destination?
- Create a business plan for a food truck. What will you sell and why?

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*

Goo, Maurene. *The Way You Make Me Feel.*

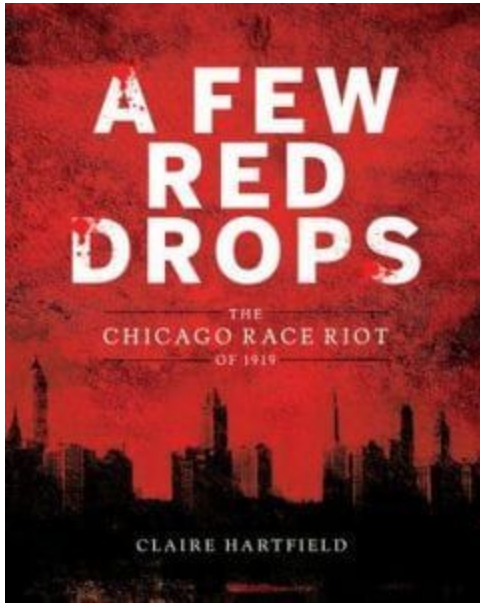
Farrar, Straus and Giroux Books, 2018. 978-0-374-30408-9. 352 p. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | With a young father who feels very chill and never follows through on punishments, Clara is known for pulling off epic pranks. When one goes too far and Adrian is called into the principal's office with other parents, he's ready to lay down the law. Instead of roaming free for the summer, Clara will spend it working on the KoBra, Adrian's food truck. To make matters worse, Clara's arch nemesis Rose will be joining her. If things don't go well, Clara can kiss her end of summer trip to visit her mom in Tulum, Mexico goodbye. Forced to work together in a confined space, Clara begins to see that Rose might not be so bad. Does being friendly with Rose mean she can't be friends with Felix and Patrick, and what about the coffee cart guy Hamlet? He's not Clara's type – at all!

THOUGHTS | Readers will be hungry for LA's food truck cuisine after devouring this one. *The Way You Make Me Feel* is a fun and lighthearted summer read about growing up and features a great father-daughter relationship. With older characters and references to prom, it will be a hit in high schools, but it could be appropriate for younger readers too.

BOOK TALK | For Clara living with Adrian can be like having an older brother for a father. Though he's young and normally very chill, Adrian has had enough of Clara's casual pranks. When she takes a prank too far, Adrian revokes Clara's carefree summer privileges including her trip to see her mom in Tulum, Mexico. Clara has to earn back his trust and her freedom. As if working on Adrian's food truck the KoBra, isn't hard enough, Rose, the target of much of Clara's angst will be working there too. It turns out that Rose might not be too bad, and the cute coffee cart guy Hamlet isn't so bad either. Clara worries that she's losing the "old her" along with her friends Felix and Patrick, but meeting new people has allowed Clara to see things differently. She has a lot to learn this summer - about herself, her family, and who she wants to be. If the budding romance and frenemies antics don't hook readers, the LA food truck scene definitely will!

Maryalice Bond
South Middleton School District



305.8 Race Relations, United States Grades 7 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Compare with Carl Sandburg's reporting in *The Chicago Race Riots*, July, 1919 (Dover 2013).
- Johnson, Steve. "Chicago 1919: Confronting the Race Riots' looks to bring city to terms with a chilling summer 100 years ago." *Chicago Tribune*, 19 Jan. 2019.
www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/museums/ct-ent-chicago-1919-race-riots-project-0122-story.html.
- McBroom, Kathleen. "A Few Red Drops: An Interview with Claire Hartfield." 18 Feb. 2018.
www.booklistreader.com/2018/02/05/books-and-authors/a-few-red-drops-an-interview-with-claire-hartfield/.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*
- ★ *VOYA*

AWARDS

- ★ Coretta Scott King Author Award

Hartfield, Claire. *A Few Red Drops: The Chicago Race Riot of 1919*.

Clarion Books, 2018. 198 p. 978-0544-78513-7 \$18.99.

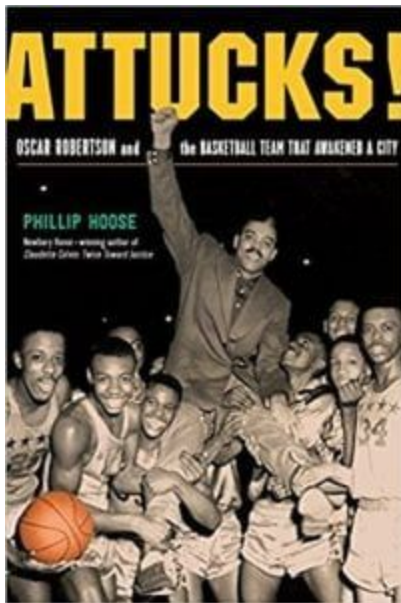
BOOK REVIEW | In the hot summer of 1919 in Chicago, temperatures were high and residents were urged to cool off at the city's unofficially segregated beaches. Five black teenagers rafted safely at the (black) Twenty-Sixth street beach, but when they drifted too close to the (white) Twenty-Ninth street beach, they attracted the ire of the white beach-goers angry at the "invasion." When a white man began throwing stones at the boys, he accidentally but fatefully caused 17-year-old Eugene Williams to drown. When the white officers failed to arrest the guilty man, word spread quickly. Rumors and hatred few through the city, and riot took hold, taking the lives of 38 people and injuring 537 (two-thirds were black; one-third were white) in the span of one week.

Also in that hot summer of 1919, the world was emerging from World War I and Chicago was a northern city still highly racially segregated. Workers in the growing meat-processing plants were fighting for work, fighting for unionization, and fighting between each other; immigrants from Ireland and Eastern Europe faced persecution, as did the black immigrants from the southern states (who were usually the last to be hired). Though the number of blacks employed grew from a thousand in 1915 to more than ten thousand in 1918, they "particularly resented that they, who were native to American soil, were passed over...in favor of recently arrived immigrants" (104). Locating housing was also painfully limited, for, as a real estate dealer said, "you people are not admitted to our society" (109). The efforts of journalists and union workers to improve equality helps to tell the full story. Many details are chilling for their reality today, such as, "Just catching a policeman's attention might well cause a black person's heart to skip a beat" (113).

THOUGHTS | This is a thorough and detailed presentation of race relations and a changing nation, with bearing on our present. The first two and the last three chapters are devoted to the riot, but the bulk of the book focuses on the economic, political and social history of Chicago that allowed the riot to occur—and not solely in Chicago. Hartfield explains that in the U.S. that summer, twenty-five riots with racial causes led to the label "Red Summer" for 1919. Chicago leaders could have blamed the poor and turned away from the unrest, but they chose to examine the riot and seek justice for the victims—and since that day "progress has come in fits and starts" (167). A compelling look at the causes and costs of social change.

BOOK TALK | In the hot summer of 1919 in Chicago, temperatures were high and residents were urged to cool off at the city's unofficially segregated beaches. Five black teenagers rafted safely at the (black) Twenty-Sixth street beach, but when they drifted too close to the (white) Twenty-Ninth street beach, they attracted the ire of the white beach-goers angry at the "invasion." When a white man began throwing stones at the boys, he accidentally but fatefully caused 17-year-old Eugene Williams to drown. When the white officers failed to arrest the guilty man, word spread quickly. Rumors and hatred few through the city, and riot took hold, taking the lives of 38 people and injuring hundreds in just one week. One hundred years ago--there was a reason that the summer of 1919 was called "Red Summer"--riots erupted in numerous cities. This book shows us the riots, the before, and the after.

Melissa Scott
Shenango Area School District



796 Sports
Grades 7 and up

CONNECTIONS

- 1955 Indiana State Basketball Championship Game, Crispus Attucks v. Gary Roosevelt-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWgXd7i1iIo>
- 1956 Indiana State Basketball Championship Game, Crispus Attucks v. Lafayette Jefferson, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h mVakfAJwkM>
- Educator's Guide-http://www.philliphoose.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Attucks_Commoncore-FINAL.pdf
- This title takes place in the same place & era as the movie Hoosiers. Pair the book with the film and discuss.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publisher Weekly*

Hoose, Phillip. *Attucks!: Oscar Robertson and Basketball Team that Awakened a City.*

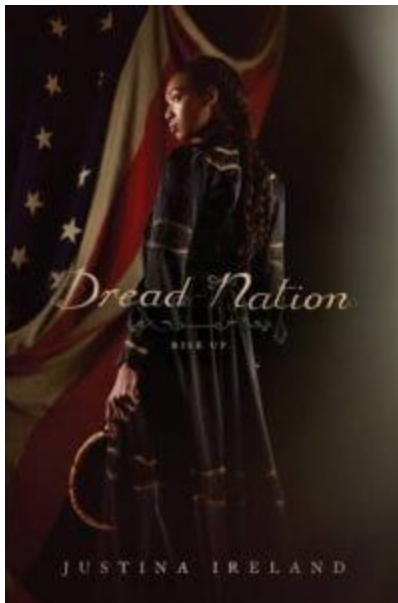
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018. 978-0-374-30612-0. 212 p. \$19.99.

BOOK REVIEW | In 1955 and 1956 the Crispus Attucks Tigers boys basketball team from Indianapolis won the Indiana state high school basketball championship. But their story is more than one of athletic achievement. It is a story about the African American experience, the Great Migration, racism, poverty, community, and more. Since the founding of the segregated all-black Crispus Attucks High School in 1927, players had faced numerous obstacles including inferior basketball facilities, limited funding, finding schools willing to play them, biased referees, hostile crowds, and more. By the mid-1950's, under the leadership of innovative coach Ray Crowe, and with the play of talented players such as future NBA Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson, the team had developed into an Indiana powerhouse. *Attucks* explores the journey of the team and it's players, incorporating accounts of games that will keep readers on the edge of their seat. The text is supplemented by numerous photos, newspaper clippings, and supplementary back matter material.

THOUGHTS | This terrific title will appeal to sports fans or any reader looking for an engaging non-fiction read. Author Phillip Hoose does a great job of intertwining historical information with edge of your seat basketball action. If you are in a secondary library, this title deserves a spot on your shelves.

BOOK TALK | In 1950's Indiana high school basketball was king. Schools built enormous gymnasiums and the whole town would turn out for games. Every team had one goal-to make it to the state championship game in Indianapolis at the end of the season. Small schools, large schools, city schools, and rural schools all competed to make it to the game. Though the championship game was in Indianapolis, no Indianapolis team had ever won the big game. That changed in 1955 when the Crispus Attucks Tigers won the title game with a roster of talented players (including future NBA Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson) and under the leadership of an innovative coach. Discover more about their journey, including the numerous obstacles faced by the school and the team, in *Attucks!: Oscar Robertson and Basketball Team that Awakened a City.*

Elizabeth Henry
Lampeter-Strasburg School District



Historical Fantasy
Grades 9 and up

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*
- ★ *Horn Book*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publisher's Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

Ireland, Justina. *Dread Nation*.

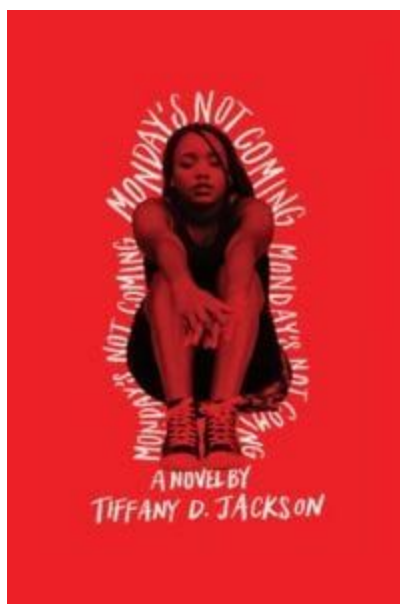
Balzer + Bray, 2018. 978-0-062-57060-4. 451 p. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | In the late 1800s, people have lived in constant fear since the dead came to life after the Battle of Gettysburg. The dead roam the countryside, while major cities like Baltimore and Philadelphia struggle to protect their citizens from attacks. As a black woman in the late 1800s, Jane McKee doesn't have many options, and is studying to be an attendant – a highly skilled personal guard for an upper class white woman. But Jane dreams of heading home to Kentucky, and to her mother – the only person who has ever loved her. As families in Baltimore begin to go missing, Jane and her fellow attendant (and nemesis/frenemy) Katherine are thrown into a life changing mystery that exposes corrupt politicians and dark conspiracies.

THOUGHTS | This is more than just an alternative history or gory zombie tale – Ireland expertly explores the political landscape of the time and scrutinizes slavery, racism, and sexism, which echoes strongly across today's political climate. A must-read for teens.

BOOK TALK | It's the late 1800s, and during the Battle of Gettysburg, those who perished on the battlefield didn't exactly stay dead. Zombies now roam the streets, and black women like Jane McKee are trained as attendants - basically personal guards for upper class white women. But Jane dreams of her life before school, and a life before the zombies. When people start to go missing from Baltimore, Jane and her fellow attendant Katherine are unwittingly thrown into a mystery that takes them across the country, fighting selfish mayors and the stereotypes of the time period. A fast-paced, action adventure - with zombies.

Vicki Schwoebel
Friends' Central School



Mystery
Grades 9 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Sociology or Law and Order course study comparing kidnapping cases and/or child murder cases
- Twitter @WriteinBK
- Website: <http://writeinbk.com/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ *School Library Journal* Best YA Books of 2018
- ★ Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award Winner
- ★ John Steptoe Author Award
- ★ Walter Dean Myer Honor Book

Jackson, Tiffany D. *Monday's Not Coming.*

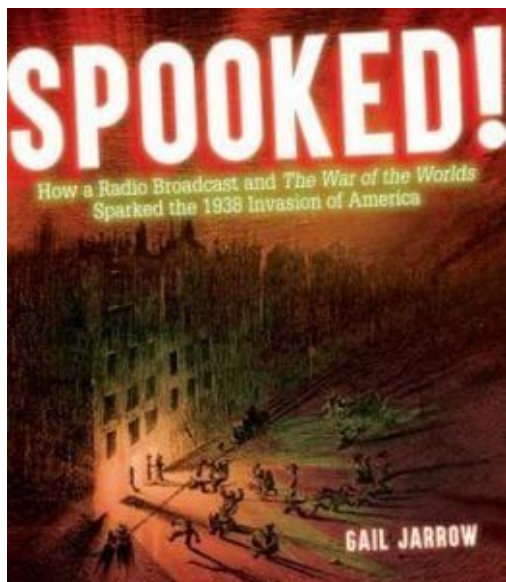
Katherine Tegen Books, 2018. 978-0-062-42267-5. 435 p. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Claudia Coleman and Monday Charles are best friends. They do everything together until the summer Monday disappears. Claudia is concerned about Monday, but the adults in her life don't think anything is wrong. They believe the story that Monday has gone to live with her father, but Claudia knows that would never happen because she knows Monday, and the stories Mrs. Charles and her sister, April, provide don't add up. As she continues to worry and search for Monday, Claudia realizes that she doesn't know Monday nearly as well as she thought. Without her, Claudia's grades slip, truths are brought to life, and she must develop as an individual in order to find out the truth behind Monday.

THOUGHTS | Starred by both Publisher's Weekly and School Library Journal, *Monday's Not Coming* is an amazing follow-up to Jackson's 2017 novel, *Allegedly*. Through Claudia's narration readers are immersed in her struggle to find her best friend while also finding her own voice. She is raw and full of emotion while also strong and determined. Claudia shines a light on the impact of friendship and determination to find the truth when everyone else around is willing to accept the story. *Monday's Not Coming* is an amazing mystery with twists and turns that keep readers wanting more.

BOOK TALK | What would you do if your best friend in the world disappeared? Would you accept the story that she went to live with her father? She's your best friend, you know she didn't know her dad, let alone up and leave to live with him without a word. Would you believe the adults in your life that say mind your own business? You shared everything with your best friend; you can't mind your own business. Something's not right. How do you move on when your whole world is your best friend? Your grades slip because she's gone; you have experiences with friends and boyfriends and can't share them with her. How do you piece together your life without her story? How do you move on when *Monday's Not Coming* by Tiffany D. Jackson.

Erin Bechdel
Beaver Area School District



791 Radio
Grades 7 and up

CONNECTIONS

- This title could easily be incorporated into lessons about fake news
- The book contains many first person accounts/reactions to the radio broadcast. Teachers could utilize these to create various writing prompts.
- Listen to the actual broadcast: ‘War of the Worlds’ 1938 Radio Broadcast.” YouTube.
[youtube.com/watch?v=OzC3Fg_rJM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzC3Fg_rJM)
- “American Experience: War of the Worlds” (website). PBS and WGBH Educational Foundation.
[pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/introduction/worlds/](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/introduction/worlds/)

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Bulletin for the Center of Children’s Books*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ Seibert Honor Book

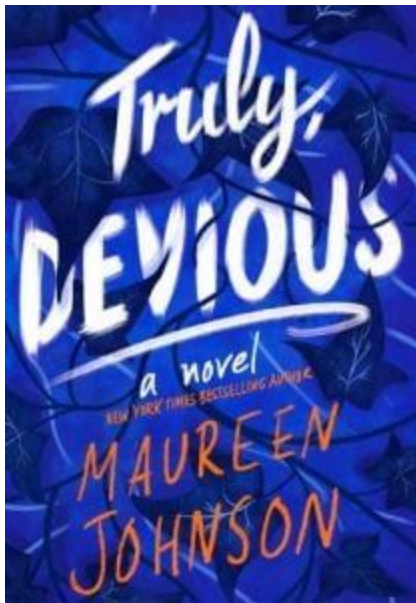
Jarrow, Gail. *Spooked!: How a Radio Broadcast and The War of the Worlds Sparked the 1938 Invasion of America*. Calkins Creek, 2018. 978-1-629-79776-2. \$18.95.

BOOK REVIEW | On the evening of October 30, 1938, Orson Welles and the members of the Mercury Theatre group took their place in front of the microphones for their weekly nationwide radio program. On the schedule: a dramatic adaptation of H.G. Wells’s *The War of the Worlds*, a story recounting the invasion of Earth by Martians. Little did the actors know that their broadcast would strike panic and fear in some of their listeners. In an effort to update the story and engage the audience, the decision had been made to change the setting of the story to contemporary America and to incorporate news bulletins and eyewitness interviews as storytelling techniques. In addition, names of real places and political leaders were used. The effect was realistic—too realistic for some listeners, who mistakenly believed the dramatic play was a real news broadcast about actual events. The subsequent outcry made Orson Welles a nationwide celebrity and also led to a debate about “fake news” and the role and responsibilities of broadcast media. The text is supplemented by numerous photos, illustrations, a timeline, and numerous recommended websites where readers can listen to the broadcast and learn more about the event.

THOUGHTS | This timely exploration of a unique historical events is a worthwhile addition to library shelves. Readers will find themselves caught up in the retelling of the broadcast and the reactions of everyday citizens to the event. Highly recommended.

BOOK TALK | Martians have invaded the United States! I turned on the radio and heard the news broadcasts--they just landed in New Jersey and are attacking those they encounter! How could this have happened? We live in a modern era-it’s 1938, for goodness sake. Shouldn’t the government have been able to detect they were coming and warn us? I guess it’s too late to ask questions--I need to grab some belongings and get on the road. Maybe if I travel out into the country, I can evade the Martians....it’s worth a try, right? Discover the true story of a 1938 radio drama that fooled and frightened some Americans into temporarily believing that Martians had invaded Earth in *Spooked!: How a Radio Broadcast and The War of the Worlds Sparked the 1938 Invasion of America*.

Elizabeth Henry
Lampeter-Strasburg School District



Mystery
Grades 8 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Website:
<https://www.maureenjohnsonbooks.com/>
- Twitter @maureenjohnson
- Book Trailer:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4QpRux2q_E

STARRED REVIEWS



Johnson, Maureen. *Truly Devious*.

Katherine Tegen Books, 2018. 978-0-06-233805-1. 416p. \$17.99.

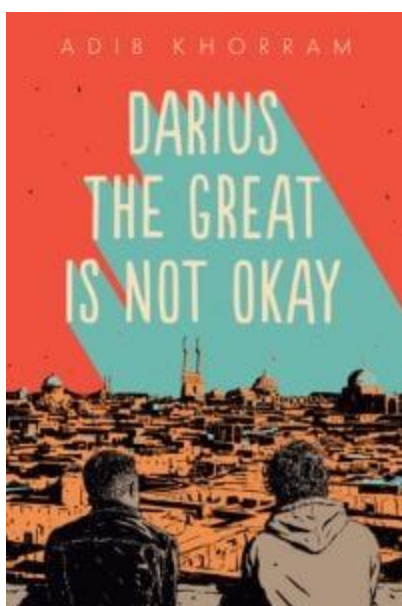
BOOK REVIEW | Stevie Bell is a first year at Ellingham Academy, an eclectic school founded by millionaire Albert Ellingham. Her obsession with crime and criminology made her an expert on the 1936 Ellingham murders and disappearance of Alice Ellingham, Albert's daughter, after the morbid reception of a riddle by Truly Devious. Stevie is determined to figure out what happened to Alice and who Truly Devious actually is, but first she must figure out life at boarding school. As her life intertwines with those of her housemates, Ellie, David, Nate, Hayes, and Janelle, along with students at Ellingham, Stevie realizes there is more to everyone and everything than meets the eye. When Stevie receives a message from Truly Devious (or at least thinks she does), her world takes a turn that includes murder. With mystery surrounding many of her classmates, it is up to Stevie to figure out the truth and solve the newest Ellingham murder before the school shuts down, or worse, her parents make her come home.

THOUGHTS | *Truly Devious* truly is an enjoyable mystery. Stylistically closer to Agatha Christie than James Patterson (for reference), the novel takes time to build and is not action-packed. Characters develop, which allows the reader to piece together the story as it happens. The interspersed pieces from the original Ellingham murders with the current students and murder leave holes for the reader that *Truly Devious* doesn't answer. Some of the holes are frustrating (the compact), while others, David, will work themselves out in time.

BOOK TALK | 1936. Ellingham Academy. Iris and Alice Ellingham, wife and daughter of millionaire and founder of Ellingham Academy Albert Ellingham, are missing. Dottie Epstein, a student is missing. A note is received: "Look a riddle! / Time for fun! / Should we use / a rope or gun? / Knives are sharp / and gleam so pretty / poison's slow, / which is a pity / fire is festive / drowning's slow / hanging's a ropy way to go / a broken head / a nasty fall / a car colliding / with a wall / bombs make a / very jolly noise / such ways to / punish naughty boys! / What shall we use? / We can't decide. / Just like you cannot / run or hide. / Ha ha / Truly, / Devious (Johnson)

Present day. Ellingham Academy. Stevie Bell is obsessed with the Ellingham kidnapping and murders, so when she gets accepted into the elite school, she recognizes her chance to access all she needs to solve the elusive case. But Stevie quickly winds up in a case of her own. Wrapped up in what was and what is *Truly Devious* by Maureen Johnson.

Erin Bechdel
Beaver Area School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 9 and up

CONNECTIONS

- This title could be used for an exploration of religious attitudes and practices in literature with titles such as *You Bring the Distant Near* and *Saints and Misfits*

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ William C. Morris YA Debut Award

Khorram, Adib. *Darius the Great is Not Okay*.

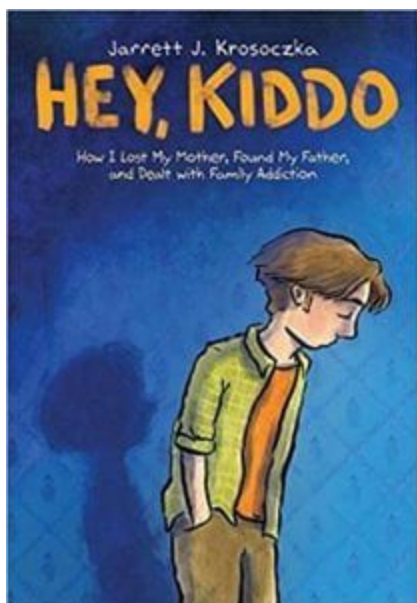
Razorbill. 2018. 978-0-525-55296-3. 320 pp. \$18.00.

BOOK REVIEW | Sixteen-year-old Darius is named after the Persian emperor, Darius the Great, but does not feel the greatness within himself. A bit of a loner, he stands apart at school because of his anxiety and depression and his “Fractured Persian” heritage. Darius also feels apart from his own family. His mother, an Iranian immigrant, speaks Farsi with his charming and lovable younger sister Laleh but not with him. His father, a successful architect, has become distant and seemingly disapproving of Darius’ behavior, hair style, and lack of social skills. When Darius’ grandfather is diagnosed with cancer the family makes an extended visit to the family home in Yazd in Northern Iran. There Darius discovers much about his family, his heritage, and himself. He also finds true friendship with his grandparents’ teenaged neighbor, Sohrab, who shows Darius how to live in the moment. An enjoyable read – it is well-written with engaging characters and a thoughtful treatment of clinical depression.

THOUGHTS | The book provides a fascinating glimpse into a culture we do not see often on our shelves, Persian culture with the influence of the Zoroastrian faith, a minority religion in Iran.

BOOK TALK | Darius doesn’t really fit in anywhere. He is a bit geeky- he’s introspective at school and bullied by guys on the soccer team. At home, his overachieving father seems distant and disapproving of Darius’ lack of social status and athletic skills. When his grandfather is diagnosed with cancer, the family decides to take an extended trip back to his mother's small village in Iran and Darius feels that he won't fit in there either. But when he arrives he meets his grandparents’ teenage neighbor and he finally finds someone who gets him and shows him what it's like to really live. There are so many interesting aspects to this book. It explores the issue of clinical depression very realistically - the main character and his father suffer from it and we see how they deal with it and also how other people react to it as well. It has a feel to it that is similar to Aristotle and Dante - there is a hint of a romantic relationship between the two boys that is not the sole focus of their story but an added element. And it is also a great look at a Persian culture, something that we don't read about too often. This book is a gem, a really sweet coming of age tale- funny, heartbreaking and ultimately uplifting.

Nancy Summers
Abington School District



Graphic Memoir
Grades 8 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Author's Website:
<http://www.studiojkk.com/>
- Book Trailer:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUcRsbAGDw>
- Jarrett J. Krosoczka's 2013 TED talk

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*
- ★ *Horn Book*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ National Book Award, Finalist
- ★ YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction, Finalist
- ★ 2019 Top Ten Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers

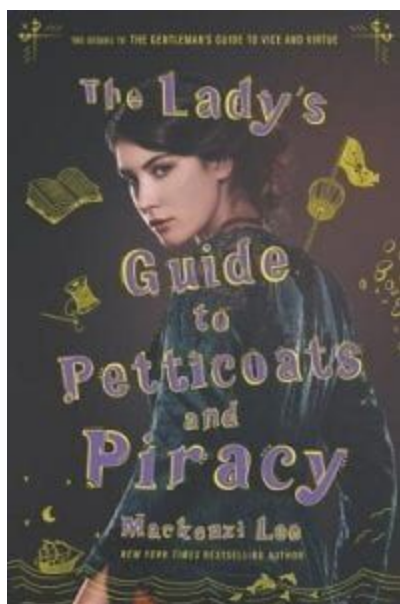
Krosoczka, Jarrett J. *Hey, Kiddo: How I Lost My Mother, Found My Father, and Dealt with Family Addiction*. Graphix, 2018. 978-0-545-90248-9. 320 p. \$14.99.

BOOK REVIEW | As a child, Jarrett “Ja” Krosoczka was taken in by his grandparents because his single mom, a heroin addict, was unable to care for him. Over the years, Jarrett would occasionally see his mother, Leslie, but she was usually absent from birthdays and special occasions as she moved in and out of jail, rehab, and halfway homes. His true support system was his grandparents (the very colorful Joe and Shirl), aunts and uncles, and a handful of close friends. When his father reaches out via a letter, Jarrett must decide whether or not to pursue a relationship with the man who has always been just a name on his birth certificate. Through it all, Joe and Shirl are stalwart, loving guardians who support their grandson’s interest in art and comics. Krosoczka’s artwork is rendered in shades of burnt orange, grey, and brown. Soft lines and shading lend a nostalgic mood to memories both cherished and painful. Actual letters from Jarrett’s parents, his childhood drawings, and other family artifacts make this graphic memoir especially personal.

THOUGHTS | Readers will embrace Ja’s journey from confused little boy to teenager finding his voice through art. Don’t skip the Author’s Note, which provides further context and an epilogue of sorts. Also check out the [book trailer](#) and Krosoczka’s [2013 TED talk](#) for even more insights into how addiction and art have impacted his life.

BOOK TALK | Jarrett “Ja” Krosoczka was raised by his grandparents because his single mom, a heroin addict, was unable to take care of him. Over the years, Jarrett would occasionally see his mother, Leslie, but she was usually absent from birthdays and special occasions as she moved in and out of jail, rehab, and halfway homes. His true support system was his grandparents (the very colorful Joe and Shirl), aunts and uncles, and a handful of close friends. When his father reaches out with a letter, Jarrett has to decide whether or not to connect with the man who has always been just a name on his birth certificate. Through it all, Joe and Shirl lovingly support their grandson’s interest in art. Read *Hey, Kiddo* to experience Ja’s journey and how both addiction and art have shaped his life.

Amy V. Pickett
Ridley School District



Historical Fiction
Grades 9 and up

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

Lee, Mackenzi. *The Lady's Guide to Petticoats and Piracy*.

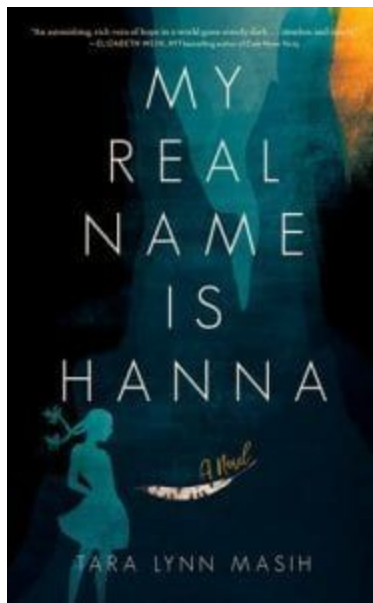
Katherine Tegen Books, 2018. 978-0-062-79532-8. 464 p. \$18.99.

BOOK REVIEW | After an exciting (if unplanned) tour of Europe with her brother Monty, Felicity Montague is living in Edinburgh, making ends meet working in a pastry shop. Her free time is spent appealing to local medical schools, determined to enroll and study – even if, at the time, women are not allowed to be doctors. After repeated rejections and an unwelcome and unwanted marriage proposal, Felicity finds herself in Germany on the heels of her idol, the radical physician Alexander Platt. But winning over Platt means winning over his fiancée Johanna, who also happens to be Felicity's former childhood best friend. Felicity is reluctant to see Johanna again, but when she hears Platt is in need of research assistants, she knows reconnecting with Johanna is her only hope to pursue medicine. And complicating things is Sim, Felicity's mysterious companion who agreed to pay for her travel expenses to Germany in exchange for entrance to Johanna's house. Like last year's *The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue*, Lee breathes life into this spunky Montague sibling, and readers will love Felicity's determination, spirit, and adventures across the globe.

THOUGHTS | A lovely and refreshing look at gender roles in historical Europe, featuring an ace – or asexual – protagonist. Give this to any teen or adult looking for witty, spirited and LGBTQ+ friendly historical fiction.

BOOK TALK | After touring Europe with her brother Monty, Felicity Montague is quietly living in Scotland, working in a bakery. Felicity's true passion is medicine, and she spends her free time appealing to local medical schools to let her in, even though it's the 1800s and women do not practice medicine. Determined and strong headed, Felicity goes after her idol, the radical physician Alexander Platt. Platt happens to be engaged to Felicity's former best friend Johanna, and things did not end well for the two. But Felicity is determined to be Platt's research assistant, and will do anything to do so. Pick this one up if you love determination, spirited, and adventurous characters!

Vicki Schwoebel
Friends' Central School



Historical Fiction
Gr. 7 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Holocaust
- War
- Social studies
- Ukraine

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *School Library Journal*

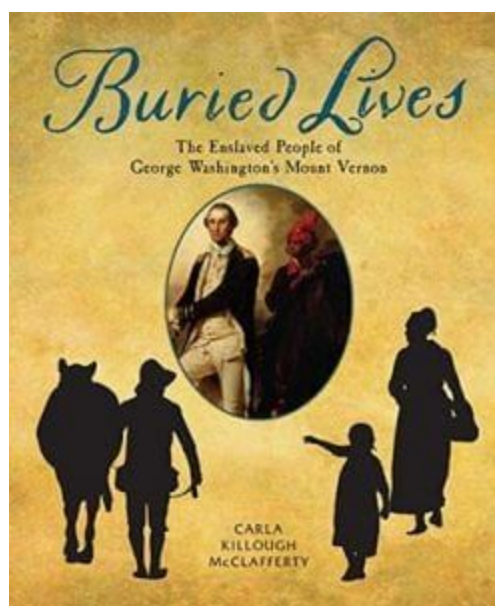
Masih, Tara Lynn. *My Real Name is Hanna*.
Mandel Vilar Forge, 2018. 978-1-942134-51-0. \$16.95. 208 p.

BOOK REVIEW | Hanna Slivka lived a normal life, exploring her town, going to school, and giggling over her crush Leon. Everything was fun and normal until Hitler's army crossed into the Soviet-ruled Ukraine and took over. Now, her life is going to change as Hitler and the Gestapo declares that her town, and many others, need to be shtetle, or Jew-free. Hanna and her family will soon face challenges that they did not expect – cold and dirty stares and comments from neighbors they have known for years, limited food and supplies, and running to stay alive. Thankfully Hanna has one good neighbor, Alla, who assists as much as she can, helping with the simplest things, such as creating a pysanky egg. Hanna and her family flee to the underground caves to hide, fighting against Hitler's army and their own minds and bodies as negativity, despair, and starvation set in. The fight to survive may be more difficult then the fight against the actual army, but Hanna and her family will do anything to live on and tell their story.

THOUGHTS | A true-based story of one of the only surviving Ukrainian families during the Holocaust. Hanna's tale is heartbreaking and gripping, leaving the reader with a sense of fear that needs to be told again and again not to forget the lost souls of the Holocaust.

BOOK TALK | The destruction in the Ukraine during the Holocaust was massive. Most Jewish families were torn apart or completely destroyed. This novel follows Hanna, one of the only families who were kept together during this terrifying time. Hanna tells the story of what her family went through, where and how they hid, and how they survived this terrible time.

Rachel Burkhouse
Otto-Eldred School District



306 Slavery Grades 6-12

CONNECTIONS

- This title would pair well with a fiction book about *Oney Judge*, *Taking Liberty* by Ann Rinaldi, or another non-fiction title, *Never Caught, the Story of Ona Judge* (Young Readers Edition) by Erica Armstrong Dunbar
- Slavery at Mount Vernon-<https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/slavery/>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*

McClafferty, Carla Killough. *Buried Lives: The Enslaved People of George Washington's Mount Vernon*.

Holiday House, 2018. 978-0-823-43697-2. 158 p. \$24.99.

BOOK REVIEW | George Washington, the hero of the American Revolution and the first President of the United States, was a lifelong slave owner. He inherited his first slaves at the age of eleven and at the time of his death, 317 slaves lived on his estate. Clara Killough McClafferty explores the world of Washington's slaves by relating the lives and experiences of six: William Lee, Christopher Sheels, Caroline Branham, Peter Hardiman, Oney Judge, and Hercules. McClafferty relies on extensive research, including numerous primary source documents as well as Washington's own words to describe life at Mount Vernon and the Presidential residence, as well as explaining the role of six within the household and what their everyday life may have been like. The text is supplemented by numerous images, diagrams, maps, and primary source documents. Photos of present day interpretive displays at Mount Vernon also help to illustrate what life may have been like for those on the plantation. The closing chapters of the book examine what happened to Washington's slaves after his death as well as a discussion about the ongoing work at Mount Vernon to remember the people enslaved there and the archaeological work currently taking place to locate the final resting places of those who were enslaved on the estate.

THOUGHTS | This title sheds much needed light on individuals often ignored by history. The text benefits from McClafferty's extensive research and incorporation of primary source materials. Highly recommended for secondary collections.

BOOK TALK | William Lee. Christopher Sheels. Carline Branham. Peter Hardiman. Oney Judge. Hercules. They were six of the slaves owned by George Washington, the first President of the United States of America. Their names and lives were forgotten by history for many years, but due to the work of historians and authors, their life stories are being rediscovered. Clara Killough McClafferty is one such author. Through her research into life at Mt. Vernon, Washington's plantation, as well as her research into Washington's writings and records, she has been able to bring the stories of these six individuals to life. Readers will learn more about their families, the work they performed within the household, their daily life and their lives after Washington's death.

Elizabeth Henry
Lampeter-Strasburg School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 9 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Compare/Contrast the US politics and justice system to other countries.

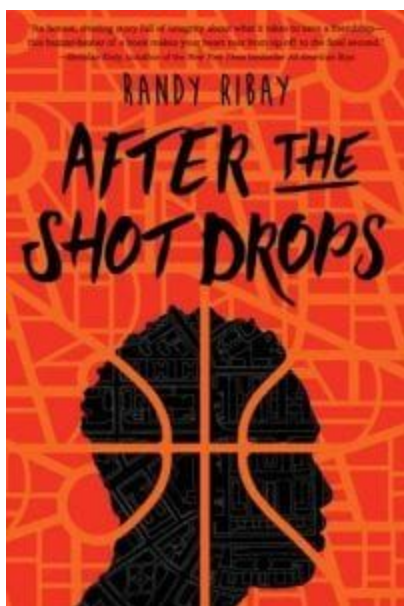
McNeil, Gretchen. *#MurderTrending*.
Freeform, 2018. 978-1-368-01002-3. 352 p. \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Dee Guerrera wakes up in the middle of a nightmare. She's been sentenced to live out the remainder of her days (which won't be many) on Alcatraz 2.0, a modern reality app where convicted criminals are sent to be hunted by one of many *authorized* serial killer personalities. With a reality television star elected President of the United States and the Department of Justice sold to the highest bidder, convicted criminals have little hope of surviving until an appeal date. Initially Dee isn't hopeful, but as things seem to go her way, she aims to prove her innocence. On an island of serial killers hunting down convicted criminals, is there anyone Dee can trust or anyone who will believe her?

THOUGHTS | Teens hungry for fast-paced, serial killer fiction will rejoice with this YA title. *#MurderTrending* is an essential purchase where horror books are requested. Gruesome descriptions of death throughout the novel make this suitable for mature students.

BOOK TALK | "Fifty million people are about to watch me die," thinks Dee Guerra as she wakes up in the middle of Alcatraz 2.0, a twisted modern prison where serial killers are set loose to hunt criminals. Recently found "guilty" of first degree murder, Dee is determined to prove her innocence. With a reality TV star leading the country and the Department of Justice hungry for good ratings, Dee's situation is bleak while her every move is tracked. The gruesome deaths pile up in this fast-paced, hunter/prey survival story.

Maryalice Bond
South Middleton School District



Realistic Fiction
Grades 9 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Official author site, with description of next book, *Patron Saints of Nothing* (2019): <http://www.randyribay.com>
- Official author blog: <https://randyribay.wordpress.com>
- Similar popular YA novels include: *Rucker Park Setup* (2008) by Paul Volponi; *Dear Martin* (2017) by Nic Stone; *All-American Boys* (2017) by Jason Reynolds & Brendan Kiely.

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Connection*
- ★ *School Library Journal*
- ★ *VOYA*

Melissa Scott
Shenango Area School District

Ribay, Randy. *After the Shot Drops*.

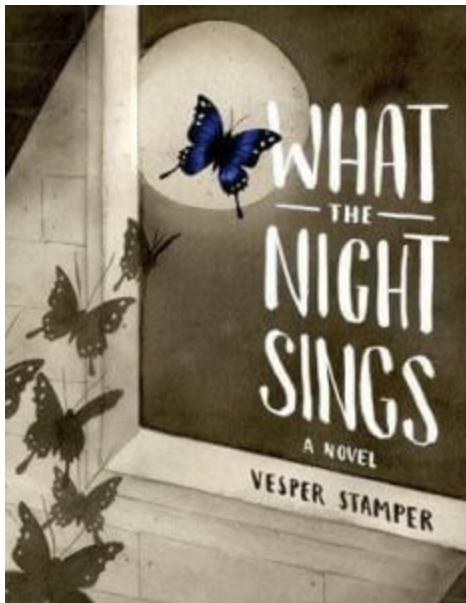
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018. 325 p. 978-1-328-70227-2 \$17.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Bunny Thompson and Nasir have been best friends for years, but now in their sophomore year of high school, Bunny transfers to St. Sebastian's, an elite prep school. He has the basketball talent, and they have the opportunities. But Nasir is left behind at Whitman High, and since Bunny never discussed the change with him, he is feeling more than a little resentful of Bunny's abandonment. "You're looking out for yourself so hard you forget that everyone else exists. So it's nothing to you to leave us behind" (125). Nasir is also concerned about his cousin Wallace, who is about to be evicted and whose bad choices have led him into bad places before. Nasir is disappointed that "[Bunny]'s got the world looking out for him. I'm the only one in Wallace's corner" (139). So Nasir tries to help, but Wallace's attempts to make some fast cash by betting on Bunny's games leads him to severe desperation, so much that Nasir asks Bunny to throw a championship game. Nasir realizes, "I don't know how to help one without hurting the other" (169) and "Maybe it's time for me to do right by both my friends, not just one" (243). But *how* to do that is the challenge. Told alternately from Nasir's and Bunny's point of view, Ribay allows us to see the challenges each of the three young men face and swallow the frustration each one feels about the limits of their lives. Bunny opens the novel by considering the impact of words in a memorial, and Nasir ends the book wishing he'd have been able to find the words to make more of a difference. This power of words, and the question of personal vs. collective responsibility, drive the book.

THOUGHTS | This is a compelling look at limits, perspective, loyalty and compassion, strengthened by the use of dual points of view. A must-have for high school collections.

BOOK TALK | Bunny Thompson and Nasir have been best friends for years, but now in their sophomore year of high school, Bunny transfers to St. Sebastian's, an elite prep school. He has the basketball talent and they have the opportunities. But Nasir is left behind at Whitman High, and since Bunny never discussed the change with him, he is feeling more than a little resentful of Bunny's abandonment. "You're looking out for yourself so hard you forget that everyone else exists. So it's nothing to you to leave us behind" (125). Nasir is also concerned about his cousin Wallace, who is about to be evicted and whose bad choices have led him into bad places before. Nasir is disappointed that "[Bunny]'s got the world looking out for him. I'm the only one in Wallace's corner" (139). So Nasir tries to help, but Wallace's attempts to make some fast cash by betting on Bunny's games leads him to severe desperation, so much that Nasir asks Bunny to throw a championship game.

Does Nasir have to abandon one friend to help the other? It would take a miracle for Nasir to save both Bunny and Wallace, and stay standing himself. What will Nasir do next? And what happens when the unthinkable stops them all?



Historical Fiction
Grades 7 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Book Trailer:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-mByk4MAYM4>
- Author's Web Site:
<http://www.vesperillustration.com/>
- Information about Bergen-Belsen from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/bergen-belsen>
- Information about the Birkenau Women's Camp Orchestra from FacingHistory.org:
<https://www.facinghistory.org/music-memory-and-resistance-during-holocaust/birkenau-womens-camp-orchestra>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- ★ 2019 Sydney Taylor Book Award Winner for Teen Readers
- ★ 2019 William C. Morris YA Debut Award Finalist

Stamper, Vesper. *What the Night Sings*.

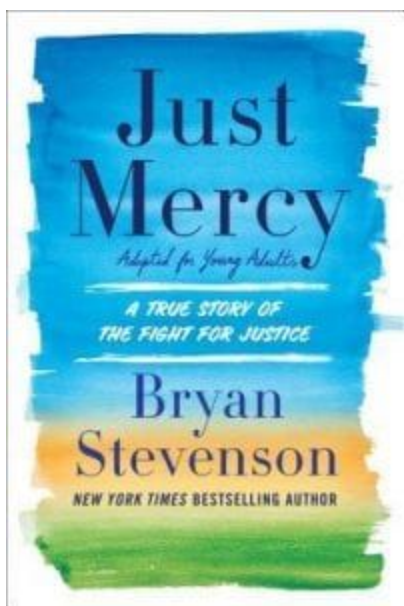
Alfred A. Knopf, 2018. 978-1524700386. 266 pp. \$19.99.

BOOK REVIEW | *What the Night Sings* is a haunting illustrated novel of the Holocaust that focuses on the years between the end of World War II and the founding of the modern state of Israel. Gerta, the only surviving member of her small family, is sixteen when Bergen-Belsen is liberated in April of 1945. Her musician father perished at Auschwitz, where Gerta's ability to play his viola saves her life by way of a seat with the Women's Orchestra (which played music for arriving transports). After Liberation, Gerta — now a free but "displaced person" — struggles to regain her health and identity in a changed world. She befriends Lev, another teen in the camp who seeks a commitment from Gerta, but she chooses to focus on her music and recovering her singing voice. Another displaced person, Michah, tries to sweet-talk her into relocating to Palestine. Ultimately, Gerta must answer one key question for herself: When all is stripped away, who am I? Her journey reveals her deep desire to not just survive, but to fully live and love. Stamper's emotionally rich ink wash illustrations complement her spare, poetic narrative.

THOUGHTS | *What the Night Sings* belongs in every library serving teens, and will be an especially important addition to Holocaust literature collections. Don't skip over the Author's Note, which includes insight into Stamper's artistic process, research for the novel, and personal connections to Gerta's story.

BOOK TALK | When all is stripped away, who am I? Gerta is just sixteen when Bergen-Belsen concentration camp is liberated in 1945. She is the only surviving member of her small family; her musician father has died at Auschwitz. Her ability to play his viola saved her life when she was assigned to the Women's Orchestra, which played music for arriving transports full of Jewish people. Now that Gerta is free, she struggles to regain her identity in a changed world. She befriends Lev, another teen in the camp who falls in love with her, but she chooses to focus on music and recovering her singing voice. Another displaced person, Michah, tries to sweet-talk her into relocating to Palestine. Ultimately, Gerta's journey beyond liberation reveals her deep desire to not just survive, but to live fully. Vesper Stamper's haunting ink wash illustrations complement this poetic novel of the end of WWII and the founding of Israel.

Amy V. Pickett
Ridley School District



340 (Criminal Justice Reform) Grades 9 and up

CONNECTIONS

- Author's Website:
<https://ejj.org/bryan-stevenson>
- Equal Justice Initiative Website:
<https://ejj.org/>
- Interview with Bryan Stevenson on CBS This Morning:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxhjS1vLxU0>

STARRED REVIEWS

- ★ *Booklist*
- ★ *Kirkus*
- ★ *School Library Journal*

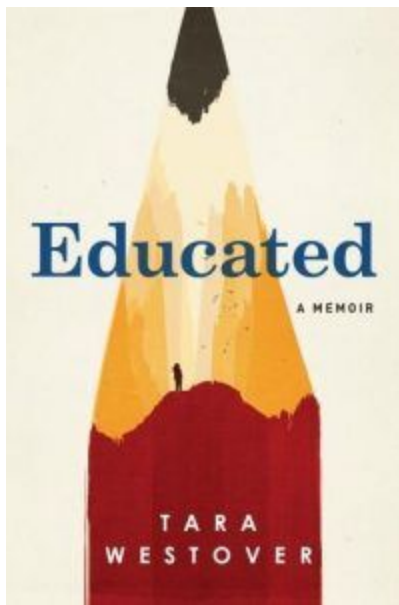
Stevenson, Bryan. *Just Mercy, Adapted for Young Adults: A True Story of the Fight for Justice*.
Delacorte Press, 2018. 978-0-525-58003-4, 244 p. \$18.99.

BOOK REVIEW | Bryan Stevenson has adapted his pivotal 2014 book on America's criminal justice system for teen readers! As with other YA adaptations such as *Unbroken* and *The Boys in the Boat*, this version of *Just Mercy* has a streamlined narrative, fewer pages, and slightly modified vocabulary, broadening its appeal to a younger audience. The overall structure of the book is unchanged, though. Stevenson interweaves the story of Walter McMillian (an Alabama man unjustly sentenced to death for a murder he did not commit) with the stories of other clients on death row, prisoners with intellectual and physical disabilities, and children incarcerated in the adult prison system. Throughout, he shines a light on the pervasive racial bias, discrimination against the poor, and abuses of power that mar our criminal justice system. By portraying the incarcerated as people and not just criminals – and reminding readers that “each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done” – Stevenson makes a strong case for mercy. Walter McMillian’s chapters take the reader through the labyrinthine appeals process, adding suspense as Walter’s legal team fights to exonerate a condemned man before the state schedules his execution.

THOUGHTS | In his Acknowledgments, Stevenson writes that he is “honored to share my work with young people, whose understanding of these issues is crucial if we are to create a more just society” (263). He has succeeded in creating an adaptation that is both accessible and appealing to a teen audience. *Just Mercy* would pair well with fiction from *To Kill a Mockingbird* to *The Hate U Give*, as well as nonfiction such as the *March* trilogy by John Lewis or [Season Two](#) of the *In the Dark* podcast, which covers much of the same thematic territory. It deserves a place in every library for teens. Stevenson’s nonprofit organization, the [Equal Justice Initiative](#), continues to provide legal representation for poor people, challenge wrongful convictions, and fight to end abusive sentences for minors.

BOOK TALK | Imagine spending a night in a five-by-seven foot cell on death row for a terrible crime ... a crime that you did not commit. One night becomes a month, a month becomes a year, and one year becomes five years. Can you prove your innocence and clear your name before it is too late? This waking nightmare became reality for Walter McMillian, an Alabama man unjustly sentenced to death for a brutal murder. Luckily for Walter, lawyer Bryan Stevenson took his case and fought tirelessly to clear his client’s name. But the appeals process is slow and complicated, and the clock is ticking ... In *Just Mercy*, Stevenson alternates Walter’s story with the stories of other clients on death row, prisoners with disabilities, and children locked up in adult prisons. He also reminds readers that “each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done.” This book is a perfect choice for fans of nonfiction, true crime, and *The Hate U Give*.

Amy V. Pickett
Ridley School District



Biography
Grades 10 and up

CONNECTIONS

- CBS This Morning's Interview with Tara Westover:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLK5AEVCEc>

AWARDS

- ★ National Book Critics Circle Award in Autobiography, Finalist
- ★ 2019 Nominee, PEN/Jean Stein Award
- ★ Amazon Editors' #1 Pick, Best Book of 2018

Westover, Tara. *Educated: A Memoir*.

Random House, 2018. 978-0-399-59050-4. 334 pp. \$28.00.

BOOK REVIEW | In her memoir, debut author Tara Westover brings readers along on her journey from her childhood as “an ignorant girl who’d crawled out of a scrap heap” to the upper echelons of academia. She grew up on a mountain in rural Idaho called Buck’s Peak, the youngest of seven children in a family headed by her survivalist father and midwife mother. Her parents were so dedicated to staying off the grid that their younger children had no birth certificates, no visits to the doctor (despite several severe injuries), and no formal schooling. Tara’s homeschooling experience was unstructured at best, and she spent most of her childhood lending a hand at her father’s scrapyard. Eager to escape an abusive older brother, Tara began to eye college as a possible route to a different kind of life. After four years at Brigham Young University, where she often felt like a fish-out-of-water, Tara began graduate studies at Cambridge in England. Through education, her worldview expanded exponentially: “I felt an animating surge of adrenaline, of possibility, of a frontier being pushed outward.” Tara Westover is a gifted writer, vividly depicting her early years on Buck’s Peak, her adolescence, and her journey into a future that is different from her past. She also takes a loving, nonjudgmental approach in portraying her extremist parents, even as she rejects the pain and violence associated with their way of life.

THOUGHTS | This is a top-notch choice for a school-wide read, and it’s a must-have for every library’s biography section!

BOOK TALK | You have grown up on an isolated mountain in rural Idaho called Buck’s Peak, the youngest of seven children. Your survivalist parents are so dedicated to staying off the grid that you have no birth certificate, no doctor’s visits, and no formal education. Most of your childhood has been spent helping out in your father’s scrapyard. But one of your older brothers has become physically abusive, and you have begun to think of school as a route to a different, possibly better kind of life. What do you do now? This is the true story of Tara Westover, whose debut memoir *Educated* brings readers along on her journey from “an ignorant girl who’d crawled out of a scrap heap” to achieving a PhD in History from Cambridge. She vividly depicts her early years on the mountain, feeling like a “fish out of water” in college, and how she reconnected with her family after rejecting their way of life. It’s no accident that *Educated* was Amazon.com’s #1 pick for the best book of 2018! Read it to experience Tara Westover’s phenomenal story for yourself.

Amy V. Pickett
Ridley School District

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