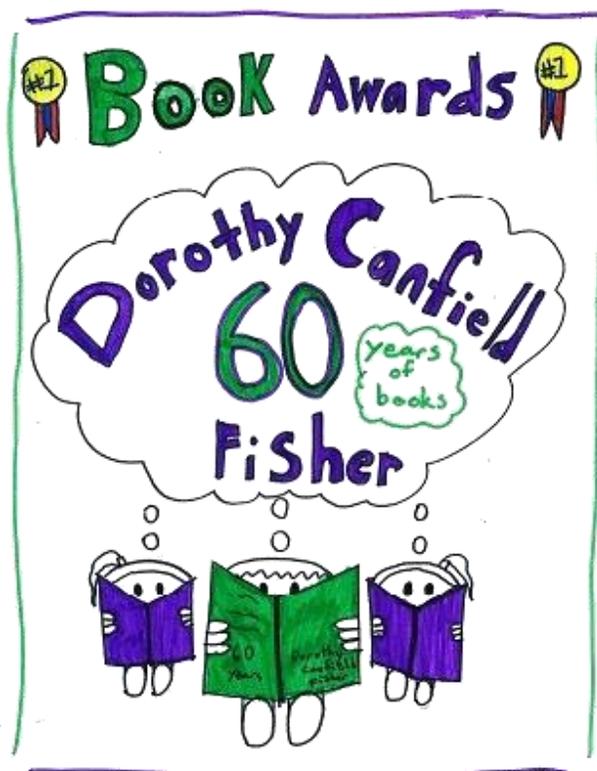


# Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Award



**2017 – 2018**  
*Celebrating 60 Years*

BOOK REVIEWS  
&  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Vermont Department of Libraries  
Montpelier, VT

[http://libraries.vermont.gov/services/children\\_and\\_teens/book\\_awards/dcf](http://libraries.vermont.gov/services/children_and_teens/book_awards/dcf)

## Table of Contents

About This Guide	1
Anderson: <b>Ms. Bixby's Last Day</b>	2
Barnhill: <b>The Girl Who Drank the Moon</b>	4
Bauer: <b>Soar</b>	6
Bayard: <b>Lucky Strikes</b>	8
Brown: <b>The Wild Robot</b>	10
Burg: <b>Unbound: A Novel in Verse</b>	12
Cohen: <b>The Inn Between</b>	15
Crilley: <b>The Drawing Lesson: A Graphic Novel That Teaches You How to Draw</b>	18
Davies: <b>Nothing but Trouble</b>	20
Dumas: <b>It Ain't So Awful, Falafel</b>	22
Gemeinhart: <b>Some Kind of Courage</b>	24
Gidwitz: <b>The Inquisitor's Tale: Or, The Three Magical Children and Their Holy Dog</b>	26
Gratz: <b>Projekt 1065: A Novel of World War II</b>	29
Griffin: <b>When Friendship Followed Me Home</b>	31
Harrington: <b>Mayday</b>	33
Hopkinson: <b>A Bandit's Tale: The Muddled Misadventures of a Pickpocket</b>	35
Kelly: <b>The Land of Forgotten Girls</b>	37
LaFleur: <b>Beautiful Blue World</b>	39
MacLachlan: <b>The Poet's Dog</b>	41
Messner: <b>The Seventh Wish</b>	43
O'Connor: <b>Wish</b>	45
Olson: <b>Lost in the Pacific, 1942: Not a Drop to Drink</b>	47
Reynolds: <b>Ghost</b>	49
Sherman: <b>The Evil Wizard Smallbone</b>	51
Sonnenblick: <b>Falling Over Sideways</b>	53
Sullivan: <b>The Bitter Side of Sweet</b>	55
Sweet: <b>Some Writer!: The Story of E.B. White</b>	57
Weeks & Varadarajan: <b>Save Me a Seat</b>	59
Weiner: <b>The Littlest Bigfoot</b>	62
Wolk: <b>Wolf Hollow</b>	64
Generic Questions	67

## About This Guide

This guide was compiled by members of the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Award Reading Committee. Our intent is to provide a booklet that will support the use of this program in schools and libraries.

For the guide to be most effective, we strongly suggest that the librarian or teacher supervising the program read all the books on the list. Many public libraries will have the new list by the summer, which means you can get a head start before the school year begins. No synopsis can possibly take the place of reading a book; however, we recognize that reading and *remembering* the details of 30 books can be a challenge. It is hoped that the reviews will jog your memory!

Since many readers choose and read books on their own, the intent of the questions is to promote discussion among readers of the Dorothy Canfield Fisher books. This dialogue can take place between student/adult, student/student or in small groups of readers. Most, but not all, of the questions were written to promote critical thinking and to seek opinions, not “right” answers. None of the questions were designed for purposes of assessment.

The generic questions at the end of the booklet can be used in discussions in which readers have read different books. They are taken from Susan Zimmerman's book, *7 Keys to Comprehension: How to Help Your Kids Read It and Get It!* (Three Rivers Press, 2003. ISBN 0-7615-1549-6).

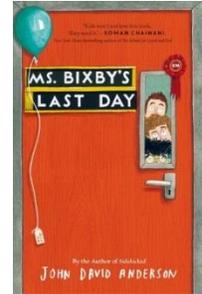
Author websites, if available, are found at the end of the reviews. Some reviews include additional relevant websites. If the author does not have a website, check the website of the publisher of the book. Their author biographies are usually easy to access and often quite informative.

### Compilers:

- Annie Brabazon, *Grand Isle School*
- Caitlin Corless, *Essex Free Library*
- Melissa Curtis, *Pawlet Public Library*
- Jane Knight, *Bear Pond Books (Montpelier)*
- Sacha Krawczyk, *Fletcher Memorial Library (Ludlow)*
- Carole Oglesby, *Malletts Bay School (Colchester)*
- Hannah Peacock- Committee Chair, *Burnham Memorial Library (Colchester)*
- Rebecca Rupp, *Swanton, Vermont*

*Cover Art by Harper Robinson, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Dothan Brook School, Hartford, Vermont*

**John David Anderson**  
**MS. BIXBY'S LAST DAY**  
Walden Pond Press, 2016.  
ISBN: 978-0-06233-817-4  
\$16.99. 320 pages.



Ms. Bixby is a one-of-a-kind teacher who sees the very best in each of her students. Her students love and respect her in return. Steve, Topher, and Brand, especially, know how incredible their teacher is. When their class learns that Ms. Bixby is sick and that she must leave for the rest of the school year to seek treatment, they are devastated. The class plans a special going away party for her, but her health majorly declines before they are able to say goodbye. Steve, Topher, and Brand are determined to give Ms. Bixby the special last day that she deserves, and the friends set off on a wild adventure to say goodbye and to show their teacher how much she means to them.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Language Arts:***

- Is there a special teacher or adult in your life? Write a letter or essay and explain what they mean to you.
- Compile a list of questions and interview your favorite teacher. Learn why he or she became a teacher and what he or she finds most enjoyable about teaching.
- Ms. Bixby recites many quotes to her class. Her students refer to these quotes as “Bixbyisms.” Which Bixbyism is your favorite? What does it mean to you?

#### ***Discussion Questions:***

- John David Anderson wrote *Ms. Bixby's Last Day* using three different perspectives. Why do you think he chose to do this?
- Ms. Bixby said that she once wanted to be a magician. If you could be anything, what job would you choose?
- Ms. Bixby saved Susanna's poems and Topher's drawings. Why?
- What do you think Ms. Bixby loved most about her job?
- Ms. Bixby had a major influence on Steve, Topher, and Brand's lives. What sort of influence did they and her other students have on her life?

- How do each of the boys change as a result of their adventure? How does their friendship change?

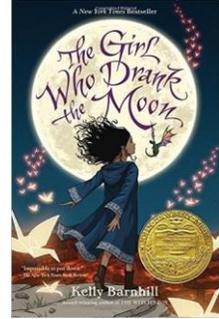
**Author's Website:**

<http://www.johndavidanderson.org>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Federle, Tim. *Better Nate than Ever*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2013.
- Graff, Lisa. *Absolutely Almost*. Philomel Books, 2014.
- Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. *Fish in a Tree*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2015.
- Schmidt, Gary. *The Wednesday Wars*. Clarion Books, 2007.
- Sloan, Holly Goldberg. *Counting by 7s*. Dial Books, 2013.

**Kelly Barnhill**  
**THE GIRL WHO DRANK THE MOON**  
Algonquin, 2016.  
ISBN: 978-1616205676  
\$16.95. 400 pages.



Every year the people of the Protectorate sacrifice the youngest baby to the evil Witch that lives in the woods. The reality is that the town's leaders do not *really* believe that there is a witch, but perpetuate this lie to instill fear in the townspeople. So what is actually happening to these poor infants? But of course there is a witch and she is anything but evil. *The Girl Who Drank the Moon* is the story of a 500-year-old witch, a swamp monster, and a perfectly tiny dragon with delusions of grandeur, who all work together to raise a magical child.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Language Arts:***

- The moon plays an important role in the book. Research the moon in folklore. What does the moon symbolize? Why might an author use the moon to enhance their story? What other stories have you read featuring the moon? Using examples from the text, explain why the moon is important in this particular book.
- *The Girl Who Drank the Moon* is rich with beautiful language. Choose one of the following quotes as an opening line to a short story:
  - "A man with a scratched-up face and a swollen lower lip and bloody bald spots across his skull where his hair had been torn out in clumps met them at the door."
  - "That baby isn't going to sacrifice itself, after all."
  - "*But one day, an evil Witch rode across the sky on the back of the dragon. She wore black boots and a black hat and a dress the color of blood.*"
  - "There is no shame in being a Perfectly Tiny Dragon."
  - "Fancy wasting a pair of Seven League Boots as if they were nothing more than work slippers!"

#### ***Social Studies:***

- Many of the events in the book take place because of a false narrative. What that means is characters react to stories they have heard that are not in fact true. Research a news story, either current or past, that turned out to be false. Discuss what chain of events occurred in reaction to the original event. These reactions could have been performed by an individual, an agency, an organization, or even by a government. Discuss the effect of this reaction and how this could have been avoided.

### Discussion questions:

- When would you have let Luna know about her magic and when would you have let her start to use it?
- Kelly Barnhill is a former Park Ranger. Show examples that indicate she knows a lot about parks and the outdoors?
- Who is the most evil character in the book? The kindest?
- Why is there only one mirror in the entire Protectorate?
- Why is the Protectorate also known as the City of Sorrows?
- Would you like to have magical powers? If so, what would you like to be able to do?
- *The Girl Who Drank the Moon* won the 2017 Newbery medal (<http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal/newberymedal>). Do you agree with this choice? What were your favorite books of 2017?
- The author has said that when you write a book, you write one story for the kids and one for the adults, including relatable characters for each group. With which character did you feel the strongest connection? Who do you think adults will relate to the most?
- Even though this is quite a serious story, there are many silly/funny scenes. Which parts did you find funny?
- *The Girl Who Drank the Moon* is probably going to be made into an animated film. Do you think this story can be adapted into a good movie? Do you think animation is a better choice for this story or would you have preferred a live action film?

### Additional resources:

- Interviews with the author:
  - <http://www.hbook.com/2016/08/talks-with-roger/kelly-barnhill-talks-with-roger/>
  - <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/72584-completely-gobsmacked-kelly-barnhill-on-her-2017-newbery-medal.html>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3JXsIk3kJ4>

### If you loved this, you'll like:

- Barnhill, Kelly. *The Witch's Boy*. Algonquin Young Readers, 2014.
- Cushman, Karen. *Grayling's Song*. Clarion, 2016.
- Farrey, Brain. *The Secret of Dreadwillow Carse*. Algonquin Young Readers, 2016.
- Lin, Grace. *When the Sea Turned to Silver*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2016.
- Maguire, Gregory. *Egg and Spoon*. Candlewick, 2014

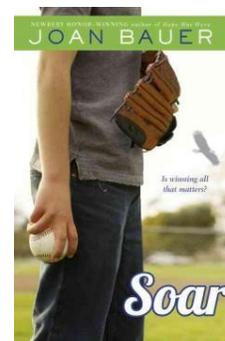
**Joan Bauer**

**SOAR**

**Viking, 2016.**

**ISBN: 978-0-45147-034-8**

**\$16.99. 297 pages.**



Jeremiah Lopper is possibly the world's biggest baseball fan and he knows just about everything there is to know about his favorite sport. Due to a weak heart, Jeremiah is unable to step onto the diamond and play the game he loves. When his father is transferred to a baseball loving town in Ohio, Jeremiah believes that only good things can be in store. Not soon after their arrival, the town's revered high school baseball team is rocked by a scandal that could put the light out on baseball in Hillcrest forever. Jeremiah becomes determined to restore faith and hope to a shattered town through the creation of a middle school ball team. With much grit, determination, and tenacity, Jeremiah teaches a town what it really means to soar.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***History:***

- Does your town or a surrounding town have a high school baseball team? Have students investigate how long it's been in existence. Who were some of the first coaches? Borrow old yearbooks to see what uniforms looked like through the years. Has the team name changed at all? Who was allowed to play? Were there ever co-ed teams?

#### ***STEM (Science-technology-engineering-mathematics):***

- Jeremiah's dad is an engineer that builds robots. Consider a short unit on robotics. Here are a few great websites to get you started:
  - <http://www.bristlebots.org/bristlebots-kit>
  - <https://robotics.nasa.gov/edu/k-5.php>
  - <http://www.gettingsmart.com/2016/01/how-robotics-is-transforming-stem-education-in-elementary-schools/>
- Jeremiah's favorite animal is the eagle. Invite a guest speaker or visit:
  - VINS (Vermont Institute of Natural Science) <http://www.vinsweb.org/>
  - Southern Vermont Museum of Natural History <http://www.vermontmuseum.org/>

#### ***Literature:***

- Encourage students to explore biographies of famous baseball players, coaches, scientists, or doctors.

- Do an author study of Joan Bauer and her other great books. <http://joanbauer.com/>
- Using **Wordle** (<http://www.wordle.net/>) have students create a poster of adjectives to describe characters in *Soar*.

***Health:***

- Invite the school nurse or other local medical professional to talk to students about the consequences of using performance enhancing drugs.

***Physical Education:***

- **Baseball player or coach visit:** Depending on your area, invite members of the **Vermont Lake Monsters** or the **Vermont Mountaineers** to speak to your class about teamwork and good sportsmanship on and off the field.  
<http://thevermontmountaineers.pointstreaksites.com/view/thevermontmountaineers/home-page-1073> (Mountaineers), <http://www.milb.com/index.jsp?sid=t462> (Lake Monsters)

***Discussion Questions:***

- Jeremiah is only 11-years-old, yet he coaches a team of kids his own age. Why do you think the other kids listen to him? Do you think he is a good coach?
- How would you feel if you were unable to do something you love? Have you ever had to give anything up that you didn't want to? What was the reason?
- Some of the adults in this story are not happy about Hillcrest having a middle school baseball team. One man insults the team and calls them "turkeys." Do you think Jeremiah was right to stand up for his team and ask the man to stop? Would you have done the same thing if you were in Jeremiah's shoes?
- In the epilogue readers learn that Coach Perkins will stand trial for second degree murder for the death of Hargie Cantwell. Do you think this is fair? Should he go to jail?

**Book trailers:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xFebt-NIU0> (Joan Bauer- Intro)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2meh6h7BaE>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Bishop, Jenn. *The Distance from Home*. Alfred A. Knof, 2016.
- Lupica, Mike. *Heat*. Philomel Books, 2006.
- Robinson, Sharon. *Safe at Home*. Scholastic, 2007.
- Sonnenblick, Jordan. *After Ever After*. Scholastic, 2010.

**Louis Bayard**  
**LUCKY STRIKES**  
**Henry Holt and Co., 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-1-62779-390-2**  
**\$16.99. 320 pages.**



When fourteen-year-old Melia’s mother Brenda dies, resourceful Melia is determined to survive the tough days of the Depression in rural Virginia. Not only does she run Brenda’s Oasis, the family auto repair shop and gas station, but she also cares for her younger siblings Earle and Janey and fights to stave off villainous Standard Oil entrepreneur Harley Blevins, who is plotting to take over Melia’s business. To ward off the Warren County Juvenile Court and the specter of foster homes, however, underage Melia needs an adult parent – so she makes a deal with Hiram Watts, a drunken hobo who has fallen off a coal truck, to act as their father. The unpromising Hiram turns out to be a wise advisor and a brilliant player in the battle with Blevins. A terrific cast of characters, a fast-moving plot, and the gutsy and outspoken Melia combine to make this a wonderful read.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Social Studies:***

- *Lucky Strikes* takes place in 1934 during the Great Depression. What was life like during the Depression? How did the Depression impact Melia’s town of Walnut Ridge?
  - Mullenbach, Cheryl. *The Great Depression for Kids: Hardship and Hope in 1930s America, with 21 Activities*. Chicago Review Press, 2015.
  - The Great Depression for Kids  
[http://www.ducksters.com/history/us\\_1900s/great\\_depression.php](http://www.ducksters.com/history/us_1900s/great_depression.php)
  - Children and the Great Depression  
[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active\\_learning/explorations/children\\_depression/depression\\_children\\_menu.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/children_depression/depression_children_menu.cfm)
- During the Great Depression, 3 million children left school to go to work and over 2 million men, now homeless and jobless like Hiram, took to the road. What was life like as a hobo? Check out the hobo code [here](#) and learn some hobo lingo.  
<http://www.acontinuouslean.com/2009/01/29/the-hobo-code/>
  - Riding the Rails: Hoboes During the Great Depression  
<http://www.allday.com/riding-the-rails-hobos-during-the-great-depression-2180792027.html>

#### ***Art:***

- Hiram and Earle sell some junk from Earle’s Great Heap o’ Treasures and trade a month of Hiram’s elocution lessons to buy a new porcelain enamel sign for Brenda’s Oasis. Design a Brenda’s Oasis sign of your own.

***Discussion Questions:***

- Why is the book called *Lucky Strikes*?
- What kind of person was Brenda Hoyle?
- Why are the Hoyles called the “Gas Station Pagans?”
- Why doesn’t Hiram think Melia’s name should be shortened?
- What did Hiram mean by saying “If your enemy’s forces are divided, separate them” when Melia first goes to meet Dudley?
- What’s the significance of the redbird who we first meet fighting his reflection in the Oasis window?
- How do Crazy Ida Folsom and Mina Gallagher change over the course of the book? Are these women alike? Different?
- What did you think of the ending?

**Author website:**

<http://www.louisbayard.com/>

**If you loved this, you’ll like:**

- Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Bud, Not Buddy*. Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2001.
- Hesse, Karen. *Out of the Dust*. Scholastic Press, 1997.
- Peck, Richard. *A Long Way From Chicago*. Puffin Books, 2004.
- Peck, Richard. *A Year Down Yonder*. Puffin Books, 2002.
- Vanderpool, Claire. *Moon Over Manifest*. Yearling, 2011.

**Peter Brown**

**THE WILD ROBOT**

**Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2016.**

**ISBN: 978-0-316-38199-4**

**\$16.99, 288 pages.**



This story begins when Roz, a robot, is washed up on a remote island. Determined to survive, Roz explores her new surroundings using her sense of sight, sound and smell to adapt to her environment. Along the way Roz encounters and ultimately befriends the wild animals inhabiting the island. She learns the ways of the wild from the animals and this serves Roz well as she cares for an orphaned gosling. Roz discovers that adaptation and interdependence are critical to survival. When the island experiences a harsh winter, Roz’s programmed purpose “to help” is called upon to aid her animal companions. And when Roz leaves her island home she realizes this experience and all she discovered about herself and the world has changed her in profound ways. Roz’s adventure captivates from the start and raises questions about community, survival and the intersection of technology and the natural world.

**Curriculum Connections**

***Science and Technology:***

- When Roz loses one of her feet the animals plan and design a prosthetic using the resources from their environment. This is a great example of the design engineering Next Generation Science Standard. Identify something that is a problem or could be improved by design engineering and develop a prototype, test it out.
- Throughout the story Roz observes the survival skills and adaptations of the animals on the island. Research the adaptations of the animals Roz encounters on the island and in your local environment.
- The island Roz lands on in *The Wild Robot* reflects the effects of climate change and rising sea levels. Investigate the climate in your region by developing questions about climate and collecting and gathering data such as rainfall, lake levels and temperature to answer your questions. (NGSS standard)

***Language Arts:***

**Writing Prompts:**

- On his website, Peter Brown describes his writing and art process. The question he wanted to answer through this story is, “*What would an intelligent robot do in the wilderness?*” Use this question as a writing prompt. Change the environment from the wilderness to space, another country, your school, etc.
- The book concludes with a cliffhanger: “She would get the repairs she needed. She would

escape from her new life. She would find her way back home."  
Write short stories or the first chapter to the sequel about what will happen next!

### ***Art and Design:***

- In a blog post “The Wild Robot Lives” Peter Brown describes his writing process and shares sketches of his robot and his thinking behind the development of Roz. Design your own Robot on paper or in another art form. Explain the reasons for your design and the purpose for your robot. [http://www.peterbrownstudio.com/uncategorized/the-wild-robot/#.WOWUr\\_krIaE](http://www.peterbrownstudio.com/uncategorized/the-wild-robot/#.WOWUr_krIaE)

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- On Page 192 Swooper tells Roz about the purpose of things, “Everything has a purpose . . . The sun is meant to give light. Plants are meant to grow. We owls are meant to hunt.” In your opinion, what is Roz’s purpose? What is yours?
- Robots are not programmed to have emotions. What are some examples from the story that confirm or challenge this statement?
- How do Roz and the animals go from being fearful to trusting one another?
- What examples in the book show the ways in which nature and technology conflict with one another and where they compliment one another.
- How did Roz learn to survive in the wilderness?
- Roz becomes mom to a baby gosling. What are some examples that show she is a good parent?
- Do you agree with Roz’s decision to leave the island? Why or why not?
- What does this story teach us about the meaning of family and community?

### **School Library Journal discussion and activity guide by Marianne Cappiello:**

<http://www.theclassroombookshelf.com/2016/03/the-wild-robot/>

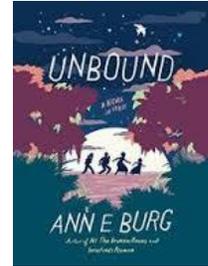
### **Author’s Website:**

<http://www.peterbrownstudio.com/>

### **If you loved this, you’ll like:**

- Appelt, Kathi. *The Underneath*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. 2008.
- Pennypacker, Sara. *Pax*. Harper Collins. 2016.
- Perkins, Lynne Rae. *Nuts to You*. Greenwillow Books, 2014.
- Morgan, Clay. *The Boy Who Spoke Dog*. Dutton Children’s Books, 2003.

**Ann E. Burg**  
**UNBOUND: A NOVEL IN VERSE**  
Scholastic Press, 2016.  
ISBN 978-0-545-93427-5.  
\$16.99, 345 pages.



Grace's mamma makes her promise to "keep her eyes down and her mouth closed" when she leaves their slave cabin to work at the big house in Virginia in the 1830s. Grace cannot remain silent as she witnesses the cruel treatment of slaves at the hands of a heartless missus and master. Her spoken thoughts trigger a series of events which force Grace to lead her family to the Great Dismal Swamp in search of freedom. Through this brave and frightening journey Grace realizes "*freedom's not jus a place you find on a map.*" Strong, brave and thoughtful, Grace genuinely and fiercely confronts big questions, calls out the injustices of slavery, and gives voice to this important and little known part of the history of slave resistance.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Science:***

- Ecosystem, plant and animal research - The swamp that served as a refuge for Grace and her family is now The Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge established as a result of The Dismal Swamp Act of 1974. This Refuge protects an ecosystem that is home to a diversity of plant and animal life. The Refuge's website has links to PDF brochures listing the plant and animal life with their common and scientific names. This is a great resource for studying ecosystems and wildlife. Choose a plant or animal to research.  
[https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Great\\_Dismal\\_Swamp/wildlife\\_and\\_habitat/index.html](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Great_Dismal_Swamp/wildlife_and_habitat/index.html)
- Great Dismal Swamp Archeological Discoveries. Listen to this NPR interview with Archeologist Daniel Sayers to learn what evidence he's uncovered of escaped slave settlements and read this online article with great images from Smithsonian.com.
  - <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/deep-swamps-archaeologists-fugitive-slaves-kept-freedom-180960122/>
  - <http://www.npr.org/2014/12/28/373519521/fleeing-to-dismal-swamp-slaves-and-outcasts-found-freedom>

#### ***Language Arts:***

- Craft and Structure: *Unbound* is a novel written in verse and would be a good choice for examining and teaching about craft and structure, point of view and language. The following Common Core anchor standards are relevant:  
*-Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.*

-Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.  
-Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

- Writing: Write a short story in verse from the first person point of view and practice incorporating dialogue into verse like Ann Burg does in *Unbound*.
- Poetry: Read aloud *The Slave in the Dismal Swamp*, a poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and *Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives and Dreams Brought to Life* by Ashley Bryan. Compare and discuss what and how these different forms of poetry communicate the experiences of slaves.
  - Link to Wadsworth Poem  
[http://www.hwlongfellow.org/poems\\_poem.php?pid=99and the Slave](http://www.hwlongfellow.org/poems_poem.php?pid=99and%20the%20Slave)

### ***Social Studies:***

- Research Plantation economy- Plantation owners used enslaved African adults and children to work their fields and mass produce agricultural products. Grace and her family lived and worked on a tobacco plantation and the conditions were grueling and inhumane. Have students research tobacco and other plantations like cotton, sugar cane and indigo and compare their findings.
- Maroon Colonies-The Great Dismal Swamp encampment that many slaves fled to was known as a maroon community (maroon taken from the French *marronage* meaning *to flee*). The Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge has a link to a PDF brochure that gives a brief introduction to life in the swamp:  
[https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Great Dismal Swamp/about.html](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Great_Dismal_Swamp/about.html)
- Resistance- Research the different forms of slave resistance including uprisings and rebellions, running away, keeping their culture and tradition alive.

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- Grace's favorite word is FREEDOM and through much of the story she contemplates and tries to understand why some people have it and others do not. At the very end of the story (p. 345) Grace comes to some realizations about freedom. Read her thoughts and discuss. Some more questions about freedom:
  - What is freedom and what does freedom mean to you?
  - What does Grace come to realize about freedom?
  - Were Grace and her family free when they reached Dismal Swamp? What about Grace's grandmother?
- What were some of the ways the characters resisted or rebelled against slavery?
- What were the risks of speaking out or resisting the rules of the Master and Missus?

- What is something important to you that you find it hard to keep silent about?

**Author website:**

<http://www.annburg.com/>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Bryan, Ashley. *Freedom over me : eleven slaves, their lives and dreams brought to life*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2016.
- Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Elijah of Buxton*. Scholastic, 2007.
- Draper, Sharon. *Copper Sun*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006.
- Lai, Thanhha. *Listen, Slowly*. HarperCollins Publishers, 2015.
- McGill, Alice. *Way Up Over Everything*. Houghton Mifflin, 2008.

**Marina Cohen**  
**THE INN BETWEEN**  
**Roaring Brook Press, 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-1-62672-202-6**  
**\$16.99, 208 pages.**



Eleven-year-old Quinn has a lot on her plate. Her younger sister, Emma, has vanished, leaving behind an orange backpack and a devastated family; Quinn has been caught cheating at school; and her best friend Kara is moving away. While accompanying Kara and family on their trip from Colorado to their new home in California, Quinn and all end up at the mysterious Inn Between in the desert where Persephone, at the reception desk, greets them with “We’ve been expecting you.” Peculiar guests, a strange elevator that conveys people up (or down), never to return, and a creepy swimming pool with unsuspected depths all add to the unsettling atmosphere – and when Kara’s parents and brother abruptly disappear, the girls decide that it’s time to make a run for it. This eerie and multi-layered mystery, while dealing with dark issues, is an intriguing and addictive read.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Social Studies:***

- Quinn and Kara and family are traveling from Denver, Colorado, to Santa Monica, California. En route, they pass through the Mojave Desert. Check out their route on a map. Where do you think the Inn Between might – just possibly – be?
- To reach the Inn Between, Kara’s father turns off the highway at Exit ZZZZ. While you might have a hard time finding ZZZZ, travelers across the Mojave today can visit Zzyzx (pronounced Zye-zex) – once Soda Springs, and now the last entry in the atlas. Learn about it at <http://www.roadsideamerica.com/story/21414>.

#### ***Science:***

- The Mojave Desert – the smallest of the [four North American deserts](#) - is home to scorpions, snakes, creosote bushes, turkey vultures, and Joshua trees. Learn about the animals and plants that Quinn and Kara might have encountered.
  - Mojave Desert  
[http://www.blueplanetbiomes.org/mojave\\_desert.htm](http://www.blueplanetbiomes.org/mojave_desert.htm)
- Joe and his brother Adam, while camping in the Mojave, hiked to the [Kelso Dunes](#), home of the famous “singing sands” or “booming dunes.” Listen to some singing sand and learn the science behind it at <https://ww2.kqed.org/quest/2012/10/25/more-clues-about-singing-sand/>. BONUS: This sand won’t sing – but it makes for a fun science experiment.

Mix up this recipe for [kinetic sand](#) and learn this science behind it [here](#).

<http://www.babyfirstblog.com/diy-beach-sand/>

- <http://www.isciencetimes.com/articles/6100/20130920/silly-putty-sand-kinetic-new-toy-stress.htm>

### ***Literature:***

- The name Persephone comes from a Greek myth about the origins of the changing seasons. Read her story at <http://www.ancient.eu/persephone/> or see Sally Pomme Clayon's *Persephone* (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2009).

### ***The Arts:***

- The Inn Between is an example of a Victorian mansion. Find out more about Victorian architecture and try designing your own – strange? - Victorian hotel.
  - American Victorian Architecture  
<https://www.thoughtco.com/victorian-house-styles-1840-to-1900-178210>
  - We often think of Victorian houses as creepy – why? Look up some images of haunted houses. How many are Victorian?
  - Why Are Victorian Houses So Creepy?  
<https://www.fastcodesign.com/3037796/why-are-victorian-houses-so-creepy>
- Quinn and Kara wear friendship bracelets to show that they are best friends. Make your own friendship bracelet.
  - How to Make a Friendship Bracelet  
<http://www.instructables.com/id/how-to-make-a-friendship-bracelet-1/>
- Quinn remembers the bedroom that she shared with her sister Emma, with Emma's photo collages decorating the wall. Try making your own photo collage, either by hand or with an online digital collage maker tool.
  - How to Make a Photo Collage  
<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Photo-Collage>
  - Digital Collage in the Classroom  
<http://www.technokids.com/blog/apps/digital-collage-in-the-classroom/>

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- Was Emma's disappearance Quinn's fault?
- What are the signs that the Inn Between isn't just an ordinary hotel? What *is* the Inn Between anyway?

- What is the significance of the Inn employees' names? Persephone? The doorman Mr. Aides? Sharon the elevator operator?
- Why is Emma at the Inn Between?
- Why does Emma tell Quinn to let Kara go?
- Why does Quinn bury the friendship bracelet?
- What do you think happens to Quinn and Emma at the end?

**Author Website:**

<http://marinacohen.com/>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

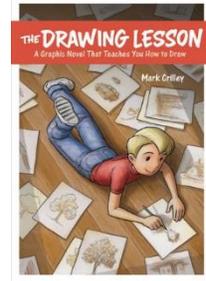
- Auxier, Jonathan. *The Night Gardener*. Harry N. Abrams, 2014.
- Boston, L.M. *The Children of Green Knowe*. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2002.
- Hahn, Mary Downing. *The Old Willis Place*. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2007.
- O'Dell, Kathleen. *The Aviary*. Yearling, 2012.

**Mark Crilley**  
**THE DRAWING LESSON: A GRAPHIC**  
**NOVEL THAT TEACHES YOU HOW**  
**TO DRAW**

**Watson-Guptill, 2016.**

**ISBN: 978-0-38534-633-7.**

**\$18.99, 144 pages.**



When David sees Becky, a talented artist, drawing in the park, he approaches her and asks her to teach him how to draw. What begins as a quick lesson on a park bench turns into a summer full of drawing lessons and a friendship. A combination of graphic novel and instructional book, *The Drawing Lesson* is more than just the story of how a young boy learns to draw. It serves as an entertaining and accessible teaching tool for its readers. As Becky teaches David the fundamentals of drawing, the reader follows along and is encouraged to complete the exercises at the end of each chapter. When Becky moves away, her drawing lessons with David come to an end. But Becky's influence on David and David's passion for art remain. *The Drawing Lesson* beautifully illustrates the importance of friendship and the great influence a mentor can have on a person.

**Curriculum Connections**

***Art:***

- Read through the book and follow the instructional suggestions at the end of each section.

***Language Arts:***

- Write a letter to someone who has helped you pursue your dreams and who has played an important role in your life.

***Discussion Questions:***

- Have you ever had a mentor? What did they or do they teach you?
- Becky acts as David's mentor and helps him to develop many new drawing skills. Do you think David teaches Becky any important lessons in return? Do you think teachers ever learn from their students?
- What does it mean to be a good mentor? What does it mean to be a good student?
- Becky tells David that artists learn by copying others. Do you agree?
- What sort of effect do David and Becky have on each other's lives?
- When we see David as an adult, he is still drawing. What do you imagine Becky did with her life after she moved away?

- Did you find the exercises at the end of each chapter to be challenging? Which exercises did you enjoy most?
- Do you consider yourself an artist? Why or why not? What makes an artist an artist?

**Author's Website:**

<http://www.markcrilley.com/>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

-Graff, Lisa. *Absolutely Almost*. Philomel Books, 2014.

-Hatke, Ben. *Mighty Jack*. First Second, 2016.

-Larson, Hope and Rebecca Mock. *Compass South*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016.

-Say, Allen. *Drawing from Memory*. Scholastic Press, 2011.

-Temple, Kathryn. *Art for Kids: Drawing: The Only Drawing Book You'll Ever Need to Be the Artist You've Always Wanted to Be*. Sterling Children's Books, 2014.

**Jacqueline Davies**  
**NOTHING BUT TROUBLE**  
**Katherine Tegen, 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-0-06236-988-8**  
**\$16.99, 320 pages.**



Sixth-grader Maggie Gallagher is a hacker- but her target isn't computers. She takes after her late father, who while attending MIT learned to “hack”—to pull wildly elaborate practical jokes. Stuck in the stagnant small town of Odawahaka, Maggie imagines conversations with him while living and breathing by his notebook, *The Hacker's Bible*. Not surprisingly, Maggie is ‘nothing but trouble’, especially after she teams up with a new girl in town named Lena. Their dilapidated school is about to be demolished, so the pair concoct a scheme to have a mascot mouse be elected class president, in honor of the fabled mice that live within the school's walls. This is indeed the story of a mouse that roared, as what begins as a prank turns into a movement, empowering not only Maggie and Lena, but all of their classmates to stand up against the dictatorial new principal, Mr. Shute.

### **Curriculum Connections**

*\*Be sure to take advantage of the physics and art related activities at the back of the book. Here are a few more!*

#### ***Visual Arts:***

- Dadaism is not only an irreverent artistic aesthetic, it is a powerful political statement, born of a reactionary movement against the nationalism that led to World War I. Harnessing the resistance that Maggie and Lena lead against Principal Shute, have kids create their own resistance pieces to an injustice they see in their own world. Use the Dada poem generator (at the back of the book) to produce ideas that can also be transferred to posters, film, music or slam poetry. Here is a video primer on Dadaism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oB2e9CNsId4>

#### ***Science and Technology:***

- Take a look at some of MIT's finest hacks, and then brainstorm some of your own. Evaluate their goals, procedure and potential pitfalls. Do any of them employ Sir Isaac Newton's Laws of Motion? Or any other laws of physics that they know of? Here are some useful articles and videos about hacking to get you started:
  - Basic Laws of Physics: Physics for Kids: 4 Physics Experiments: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrvmAT9T5FA>
  - MIT Hacker Gallery: <https://www.boston.com/uncategorized/noprimarytagmatch/2012/09/17/hackers->

[delight-a-history-of-mit-pranks-and-hacks](#)

- Why is hacking educational? The Importance of the MIT Hacks:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9B586ah\\_BE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9B586ah_BE)

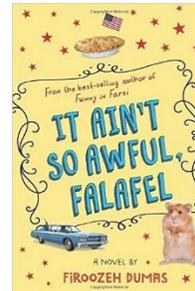
***Discussion Questions:***

- Maggie's father wrote a Ten Commandments to hacking that she feels duty bound to follow. However, his unbidden advice, or life hacks, tend to pop up at various crucial moments throughout the story. Besides the fact that they both loved physics, why is Maggie so desperate to be connected with her father? And what changes when she tells herself near the end, "Maybe I should stop taking advice from a dead guy?"
- When Maggie first meets Lena, she tells her "Come on! We don't have time for art!" to which Lena replies, "You might as well say there isn't time for life!" How do the girls overcome their differences and rely on one another not only to pull off their pranks, but help each other through some difficult family stuff?
- What does the mouse symbolize in the story? Why is the scene later in the book where the kids stand up and say "Mus, sum" so important?

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Bertman, Jennifer Chambliss. *Book Scavenger*. Henry Holt and Co., 2015.
- Clements, Andrew. *Troublemaker*. Atheneum, 2011.
- Condie, Allie. *Summerlost*. Dutton, 2016.
- Fitzgerald, Laura Marx. *Under the Egg*. Dial, 2014.
- Mass, Wendy. *The Candymakers*. Little, Brown, 2015.

**Firoozeh Dumas**  
**IT AIN'T SO AWFUL, FALAFEL**  
**Clarion Books, 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-0-54461-231-0**  
**\$16.99, 370 pages.**



Zomorod, a 6th grade girl whose family is from Iran, has a plan to fit in at her new middle school in ritzy Newport Beach, California. Her name, which means “emerald” in Persian, is too hard for Americans to pronounce, so she changes it to “Cindy”— like on *The Brady Bunch*. She dreams of joining the Girl Scouts, making American friends, and having a beanbag chair. It’s the late 1970s, and fitting in becomes more difficult as Iran makes headlines with protests, a revolution, and finally the taking of American hostages.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Language Arts:***

- The author uses similes to create certain images. For example, “There are trees everywhere and the city looks like it has just come back from a visit to a beauty salon” (p. 1). Find other examples of simile in the novel. How does the use of figurative language contribute to the literary quality of the story?
- What are the differences between an autobiography, a memoir, and fiction based on fact? After reading the Author’s Note, write a short essay discussing the genre to which this book belongs. Support your views by making specific references to the book.

#### ***Social Studies:***

- As a pre-reading activity, use books in the library or Internet sites to gather facts about Iran. The following website is helpful: [www.atozkidsstuff.com/iran](http://www.atozkidsstuff.com/iran). Write a short paper or design a presentation to introduce Iran to other children.
- Cindy’s mother has a difficult time adjusting to American culture. Compare and contrast American and Iranian cultures. Create a Venn diagram charting the similarities and differences between life in Newport Beach and life in Iran.
- The First Amendment of the United States Constitution is the free-speech amendment. Cindy says no one in Iran can complain about the shah because there is no free-speech protection. Find out and explain why the First Amendment is the basis of a democracy.
- Research the Iranian Hostage Crisis. The following website is helpful: [www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/carter-hostage-crisis/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/carter-hostage-crisis/).

- Write an article that Carolyn might write for the Lincoln Junior High School newspaper that puts the issue in simple terms for the students. Remember to include who, what, when, why, and how. Include a quote from Cindy and her father.

***Discussion Questions:***

- How do Cindy’s interactions with her parents compare to your interactions with your own parents? What is the importance of the family in American society?
- What is Cindy’s first impression of Lincoln Junior High School? She’s been taught that studying and learning are important. Why do some American students think that it isn’t “cool” to be smart?
- Everyone has a need to belong. Why is it especially difficult for someone like Zomorod to fit in? Discuss why Zomorod feels that changing her name will help her blend in when she moves to Newport Beach.
- Define stereotype. What are the stereotypes that the students at Lincoln Junior High School have of Iranians? How do prejudices grow out of stereotypes?
- How do the characters change over the course of the story? How do they stay the same?
- How does Firoozeh’s interaction with her many relatives compare to your involvement with your extended family? To what extent is the idea of family defined differently by each culture? How might the importance of family in American society be measured?

**Educator’s Guide:**

<http://firoozehdumas.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ItAintSoAwfulFalafelguide.pdf>

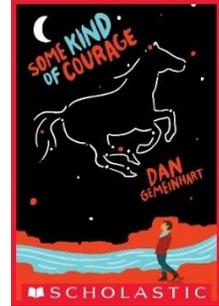
**Author’s Website:**

<http://firoozehdumas.com/>

**If you loved this, you’ll like:**

- Cervantes, Angela. *Gaby, Lost and Found*. Scholastic. 2013.
- Lord, Cynthia. *Rules*. Scholastic. 2008.
- Nye, Naomi Shihab. *Habibi*. Simon Pulse. 1999.
- Senzai, N.H. *Shooting Kabul*. Simon & Schuster. 2011.
- Yousafzai, Malala. *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*. Little, Brown and Company. 2013.

**Dan Gemeinhart**  
**SOME KIND OF COURAGE**  
Scholastic, 2016.  
ISBN: 978-0-54566-577-3  
\$16.99, 240 pages.



Twelve-year-old Joseph Johnson has experienced more than his fair share of loss in his short life. When his beloved horse Sarah is stolen and sold, there is nothing that Joseph won't do to get her back. Joseph embarks on an unforgettable, heart-pounding adventure through the 1870's wilderness of Washington State in hopes of being reunited with the only family he has left.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Literature:***

- Introduce students to “Book Snaps” as a way of chronicling their reading journeys (<http://www.thebooksomm.com/home/some-kind-of-courage>) This site also contains excellent links to other curriculum connections.
- Compare and contrast urban life in NYC in the 1870's as depicted in *A Bandit's Tale* to Joseph's experiences in undeveloped Washington State during the time of the Westward Expansion.
- Using the website **Prezi** have students create an interactive slideshow that demonstrates their understanding of the main characters, plot, etc. See this example: <https://prezi.com/hdvd2wpqnpyx/some-kind-of-courage-by-dan-gemeinhart/>

#### ***Social Studies:***

- Explore life in the 1870's in Washington State, especially that of Chinese immigrants. <http://www.washington.edu/uwired/outreach/cspn/Website/Classroom%20Materials/Pacific%20Northwest%20History/Lessons/Lesson%2015/15.html>
- Visit the site [www.washingtontribes.org](http://www.washingtontribes.org) to learn more about the history of Native American tribes that Joseph encountered on his journey.

#### ***STEM (Science, technology, engineering, mathematics):***

- Have students participate in a raft building STEM challenge. <http://kidscraftroom.com/stick-raft-building-stem-project/>

***Discussion Questions:***

- Joseph and his new friend Ah-Kee do not speak the same language, but they are able to communicate. Why do you think they are able to become friends and trust each other?
- What do you think the biggest hurdle was that Joseph had to face in order to get Sarah back?
- At the climax of the story Joseph is faced with a life-or-death decision. Do you think he made the right choice?
- Were you surprised by what ultimately happens to Sarah and Joseph? Were there any clues that the author gave that foreshadowed the ending?

**Author Website:**

<http://dangemeinhart.com/>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

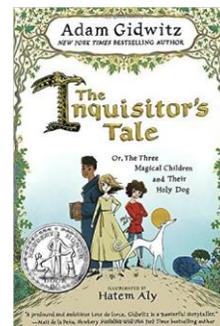
- Timberlake, Amy. *One Came Home*. Knopf, 2013.
- McCully, Emily. *Wonder Horse*. Henry Holt, 2010.
- Haas, Jessie. *Chase*. Greenwillow Books, 2007.
- Hobbs, Will. *Jason's Gold*. Harper Collins, 2000.

**Adam Gidwitz**  
**THE INQUISITOR'S TALE: OR, THE THREE**  
**MAGICAL MAGICAL CHILDREN AND**  
**THEIR HOLY DOG**

**Dutton Children's Books, 2016.**

**ISBN: 978-0-52542-616-5**

**\$17.99, 368 pages.**



It is 1242 and we find ourselves at the Holy Cross-Roads Inn. The story of the most famous and most wanted children in France begins with the Brewster's Tale. Here we first learn about the peasant baby, Jeanne, and her dog Gwenforte. The greyhound is left to babysit the child, an adder enters the home, Gwenforte defends the child and the misunderstandings begin. William's story begins at the Monastery Saint-Marten. As the Librarian recounts, William was brought there as a baby and is now 11 years old. Here we first bear witness to both his amazing strength and his brilliant philosophical mind. Skip ahead several chapters to the Butcher's Tale and Jacob. We meet him on the night his village is burned to the ground by Christian peasants and he is told by his parents to run away and escape the fire. As the threads of the story continue to be picked up by dueling narrators, we are caught up in their fantastic journey. Are they good? Are they evil? Are they performing miracles and what will happen to them as their story reaches its end?

**Curriculum Connections**

***Social Studies:***

- As in stated in the "Author's Note", many of the characters and tales in the book are based on real people and real events. Choose a part of the story or a character and research their existence. Some possibilities:
  - The story of Gwenforte and the snake
  - The burning of the Jewish texts
  - The farting dragon
  - A part of the plot or a character of your choosing.

***Language Arts:***

- Read selections from Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Discuss why comparisons are being made between the two books. There are many adaptations for children (versions by Barbara Cohen, Geraldine McCaughrean, etc.). Older children can certainly work with the original text.

***Art:***

- Read "About the Illuminations" (found at the beginning of the book). Do you like Hatem Aly's drawing style? Find and discuss the following: an illustration that reflects the action, an illustration that contradicts the text and a random doodle. Choose a section and

illustrate it in your own style.

***Discussion questions:***

- What are the themes of *The Inquisitor's Tale*?
- Why do the children find each other and stay together?
- Did you like discovering the truth about the narrator's identity? Why do you think Mr. Gidwitz included this twist?
- There is a good amount of humor in the book. Which scenes do you find funny? Do you think the humor takes away from the serious tone or is it necessary?
- What is a heretic? Do you believe the children are heretics?
- Describe each of the children. What makes them magical?
- Gender, race and economic situation play a huge role in how people are perceived and treated. Give examples from the text that show this.
- What are the social distinctions between peasants, artisans, landowners, and royalty?
- What role does religion play in the book?
- Can a dog be a Saint?

**Additional resources:**

- Educator's guide: <http://www.penguin.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/IQ-guide-2.pdf>
- Teaching Ideas and Invitations from School Library Journal's *Classroom Bookshelf*: <http://www.theclassroombookshelf.com/2016/10/the-inquisitors-tale/>

**Author website:**

<http://www.adamgidwitz.com>

**Illustrator website:**

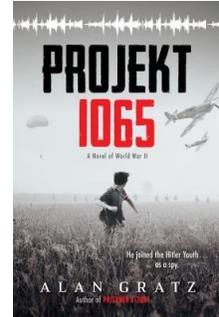
<http://www.metahatem.com/>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Avi. *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* (series). Hyperion Books for Children, 2002.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. Adapted by Geraldine McCaughrean. Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Cushman, Karen. *Will Sparrow's Road*. Clarion Books, 2012.
- Erskine, Kathryn. *The Badger Knight*. Scholastic, 2014.
- Farmer, Nancy. *The Sea of Trolls* (series). Atheneum, 2004.

-Schlitz, Laura Amy. *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!: Voices from a Medieval Village*.  
Candlewick, 2007.

**Alan Gratz**  
**PROJEKT 1065: A NOVEL OF WORLD WAR II**  
Scholastic, 2016.  
ISBN: 978-0-54588-016-9  
\$16.99, 320 pages.



Michael O'Shaunessey may be the son of the Irish ambassador to Germany, but in 1943- with his flawless German and ambition- he embodies the perfect Hitler Youth and quickly climbs the organization's ranks. However, Michael is living a lie; he despises the Nazis and all they represent. He enlists in the Hitler Youth in order to infiltrate Nazi hierarchy and access information that will assist his parents in spying for the Allies. When a friend shows him plans for the new jet airplane the Nazis are developing, Michael's photographic memory comes in handy for remembering enemy codes and formulas, and his covert activities turn deadly serious.

### **Curriculum Links**

#### ***Social Studies:***

- Research which particular countries were neutral during WWII. Find instances in which their neutrality looked more like Ireland's involvement.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/1997/01/26/weekinreview/the-not-so-neutrals-of-world-war-ii.html>
- Operation Paperclip and The Manhattan Project are both mentioned in the novel. These were real programs that existed in the World War II era. What are these programs?
- In what additional ways have children played important roles (for better or worse) in wars throughout history?  
<http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/10-ways-children-took-part-in-the-first-world-war>  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/0/ww1/25307615>

#### ***Discussion Questions:***

- The title of the novel is based on a real historical fact. What was the actual Projekt 1065? Why was it so important to the warring countries? How did its pursuit during World War II influence and affect the outcome of the war?
- How does the Hitler Youth and the SRD motivate the boys to act on behalf of the Nazi Regime? What kinds of tactics do they use? Why do you think Fritz is so susceptible to them? Are any of these tactics similar to bullying or peer pressure that happens in kids' lives today?

- Herr Professor Doktor Major Melcher seems to be friendly to the Nazi regime. What triggers his students to turn on him? How does this power shift affect the students?
- Bonus question! What is a funicular?

**Author Interview:**

<https://lilbooklovers.wordpress.com/2017/01/04/alangratz/>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow*. Scholastic, 2005.
- Boyne, John. *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain*. Henry Holt, 2016.
- Freedman, Russell. *We Will Not Be Silent: The White Rose Student Resistance Movement That Defied Adolf Hitler*. Clarion, 2016.
- Hesse, Monica. *Girl in the Blue Coat*. Little, Brown, 2016.
- Preus, Margi. *Shadow on the Mountain*. Abrams, 2012.
- Rauch, Georg. *Unlikely Warrior: A Jewish Soldier in Hitler's Army*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015.
- Skrypuch, Marsha Forchuk. *Making Bombs for Hitler*. Scholastic, 2017.

**Paul Griffin**  
**WHEN FRIENDSHIP FOLLOWED ME HOME**  
**Dial Books for Young Readers, 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-0-80373-816-4**  
**\$16.99, 247 pages.**



Ben Coffin has never felt like he fits in. A former foster kid, he keeps his head down at school to avoid bullies and spends his afternoons reading sci-fi books at the library. All that changes when he finds a scruffy abandoned dog named Flip, who leads him to befriend fellow booklover Halley. For the first time, Ben starts to feel like he belongs. But as their story unfolds Ben's life begins to unravel, and he must discover for himself the truth about friendship and the meaning of home. Equal parts heartbreaking and heartwarming, *When Friendship Followed Me Home* is a breathtaking story about life, loss and the meaning of family.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Language Arts:***

- What is the difference between chance and fate? How would you classify events in the novel? For example, was it chance or fate that brought Halley and Ben together?
- Research and do a project on R.E.A.D dogs.
- Imagine you are one of Ben's reading students in the library. Re-tell the first visit to the library from their point of view. What was it like to meet Flip? How did it feel to become a better reader?

#### ***Art:***

- Draw or paint a picture of what Halley and her crazy colored clothes look like.
- Design a cover for the story Halley and Ben write together.

#### ***Discussion Questions:***

- How many losses has Ben experienced? Have you had loss in your life? How has it affected you?
- How does Flip help Ben? Do you have a pet that you love? Describe the roles that pets play in people's lives.

- How does Flip help the kids who are learning to read? Have you ever met a reading dog? If so, when and where?
- How do the characters change over the course of the story? How do they stay the same?

**Author's website:** <http://paulgriffinstories.com/>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Conklin, Melanie. *Counting Thyme*. G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, 2016.
- Green, John. *The Fault in Our Stars*. Dutton Books, 2012.
- Loftin, Nikki. *Wish Girl*. Razorbill, 2015.
- Woodson, Jacqueline. *Locomotive*. G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, 2003.

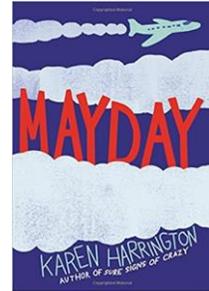
**Karen Harrington**

**MAYDAY**

**Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2016.**

**ISBN: 978-0316298018**

**\$16.99, 352 pages.**



The story is divided into BEFORE and AFTER- before Wayne and his mother are in a plane crash while returning home from Uncle Reed's funeral, before Wayne lost his voice, before Grandpa moves in with them. In both BEFORE and AFTER Wayne is a sweet, nerdy, odd, fact-filled middle-schooler. In AFTER, Wayne has to negotiate his new life after the crash. There are people who will help him and those who won't, including his grade-A jerk of a dad, unaffectionately nicknamed the Flee and his drill-sergeant Grandpa. The plane crash has changed Wayne physically; the road to recovery changes everything else about him, as losing his voice allows him to find his real voice.

**Curriculum Connections**

***Music:***

- On the author's blog (<http://scobberlotch.blogspot.com/>), she mentions that she had a playlist she used while writing *Mayday*. When you write, draw or do something else creative, what is your playlist and why?

***Language Arts:***

- Wayne loves to share facts. Choose 10 interesting facts that you learned from Wayne. "Did you know more people die each year from shaking a vending machine than from shark attacks?"
- *Mayday* is a very character driven novel. Starting with Wayne himself all the way to down to minor characters, the author manages to make everyone we meet important and relevant to the framework of the story. Write an in-depth character study of your two favorite people in the book. Think about their personalities, what makes them likable or unlikable, why they are important to the novel, and why their inclusion is necessary to the success of Wayne's story.
- Plan a trivia contest in your class. Make sure everyone has a role- question writers, fact checkers, judges, scorekeepers, and contestants.
- Wayne's father is not a good parent to Wayne. He continually lets him down and negatively affects his ability to move forward and to heal. There are other people, although some of them have their own unique & wonderful flaws, who have the opposite effect on Wayne's growth. Write a personal reflection on someone who has had a huge impact on your life,

either in a negative or a positive way.

**Discussion questions:**

- Why does Wayne constantly spew out facts?
- Should Wayne forgive his dad?
- Why do you think the author decided to have Wayne lose his ability to speak?
- Explain the significance of running in the novel.
- Do you think Wayne will follow his Uncle and Grandpa's footsteps' and join the military? Why or why not?
- Describe Wayne's relationship with his mom.
- Why is Wayne's relationship with his Grandpa so important? Describe how it grows and changes.
- Why is the search for the flag so important to Wayne?
- Quote from the author: “My husband says now I’ve written a book that’s guaranteed not to be in airport bookstores.” Would reading this book on a plane make you worry about crashing? What topics that you have read about that make you worry in real life?
- When Wayne regains his ability to speak, compare how he uses his voice now to how he used it before the crash.

**Additional resources:**

- Interviews with the author:
  - <http://www.kidliterati.com/2016/05/author-to-author-interview-with-mayday.html>
  - <https://bookpage.com/interviews/19886-karen-harrington-.WO4o3Y61vGI>
- Information about plane crashes:  
<http://www.planecrashinfo.com/>

**Author website & blog:**

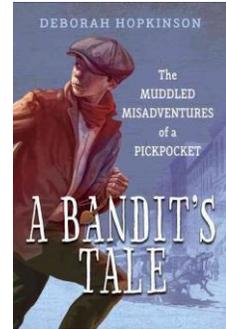
<http://www.karenharringtonbooks.com/> & <http://scobberlotch.blogspot.com/>

**If you loved this, you'll like**

- Gebhart, Ryan. *There will be Bears*. Candlewick, 2014.
- Koertge, Ronald. *Shakespeare Bats Cleanup*. Candlewick, 2003
- Stead, Rebecca. *Goodbye Stranger*. Wendy Lamb Books, 2015.
- Van Draanen, Wendelin. *The Running Dream*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2011.

**Deborah Hopkinson**  
**A BANDIT'S TALE: THE MUDDLED MISADVENTURES OF**  
**A PICKPOCKET**

**Alfred A. Knof, 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-0-38575-499-6**  
**\$16.99, 290 pages.**



In March of 1887, 11-year-old Rocco Zaccaro arrives alone to New York City from Cavello, Italy. His family, poor and in need of money, sign a contract with an unscrupulous padrone in the hopes that Rocco will be able to work in America and send cash home to his family. Unfortunately, the padrone has less savory plans in store for Rocco and other immigrant boys like him and he finds himself forced into a life of child labor. Not willing to settle with the hand he is dealt, Rocco meets the boys of the infamous Bandits' Roost, who teach him the art of pickpocketing. Rocco embraces his new life of crime, but when he meets Meddlin' Mary, a strong-hearted Irish girl who's determined to help the horses of New York City, things begin to change. Rocco begins to reexamine his life—and take his future into his own hands.

**Curriculum Connections**

- *School Library Journal* has an excellent article outlining in-depth curriculum connections.  
<http://www.theclassroombookshelf.com/2016/05/a-bandits-tale-the-muddled-misadventures-of-a-pickpocket/>

***Language Arts:***

- Have students compare and contrast child labor practices in the late 1800's to those detailed in Tara's Sullivans book, *The Bitter Side of Sweet* (best suited for grades 7+). How are Rocco's and Amadou and Saydou's experiences similar/different? Research ways child labor has changed in the past 100 years.  
<http://www.history.com/topics/child-labor>
- The late 1800's-early 1900's was a time of great change in the US. Have students choose an important figure from that time period to research with the culminating event being a "Wax Museum" night for students to share what they have learned with friends and family.  
<http://the-teacher-next-door.com/index.php/blog/65-blog-other/181-wax-museum-biography-research-report-and-event>

***Social Studies/ Geography:***

- Create a map that shows Rocco's travels from Italy to the US.

- Introduce students to some basic Italian words and phrases- have students create personal English/Italian dictionaries.
- Visit the site <https://www.moma.org/artists/4928> and allow students to explore photographs of life in NYC circa. 1880.
  - Students could then use digital cameras, phones, tablets, etc. to shoot photos of their everyday lives using black & white or sepia tone filters to recreate the old-fashioned style of photography.
- Visit the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals website ( <https://www.asPCA.org/>) and see what contributions can be made to help today's animals in need.

**Music:**

- Invite students to listen to music from the late 1800's. Allow them to experience the instruments that Rocco and other boys were supposed to learn how to play. (Triangles, horns, drums, violins etc.)

**Discussion Questions:**

- Were you surprised when you learned that Rocco had been sold by his parents to a padrone (an employer, who exploits immigrant workers)? Do you think this is still happening in the world today?
- For an 11-year-old, Rocco has lived an amazing life. If you were able to have a conversation with Rocco, what is one question would you ask him?
- Meddlin' Mary cares deeply about the horses of NYC. What is one cause that you care deeply about and why?
- In order to survive, Rocco is forced to break the law and steal from people he meets in the streets. Is there ever a time that stealing is ok? Why or why not?

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Avi. *City of Orphans*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2012.
- Hesse, Karen. *Letters from Rifka*. Henry Holt, 1992.
- Giff, Patricia Reilly. *House of Tailors*. Wendy Lamb Books, 2004.
- Murphy, Jim. *Blizzard: the Storm That Changed America*. Scholastic, 2000.
- Napoli, Donna Jo. *The King of Mulberry Street*. Yearling, 2007.

**Erin Entrada Kelly**  
**THE LAND OF FORGOTTEN GIRLS**  
Greenwillow Books, 2016.  
ISBN: 978-0-06223-864-1  
\$16.99, 320 pages.



Soledad and Ming, two sisters from the Philippines, live in Louisiana with their evil stepmother, Vea. All Sol and Ming have is each other, their stories, and lively imaginations they inherited from their mother, Mei-Mei. When she was alive, Mei-Mei wove enthralling tales about her magical sister, Jove, who traveled around the world. Sol worries for her younger sister as Ming begins to believe Auntie Jove is a reality, blurring the lines between fact and fiction. Always the protective older sister, Sol desperately searches to shield her sister from their harsh existence, and finds help in surprising and uncommon places.

### **Curriculum Links**

#### ***Visual Arts:***

- In the story, Sol wants to build a treehouse for Ming. Have students create their own “tree house” for Ming. They can draw or build a three-dimensional tree house, but have them include things that are important to the sisters in the story. They can include words in their creations, like “stories” or “hope” or “resilience”. Encourage them to think of the tree house as the home that Ming and Soledad would create if they had the means to do so. What would they fill it with? Is it similar to what you would fill it with?

#### ***Social Studies:***

- Introduce/discuss the concept of immigration with students and talk about push/pull factors in immigrants’ experiences as they might relate to Sol and Ming’s own experience. [Education World \(http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_sites/sites053.shtml \)](http://www.educationworld.com/a_sites/sites053.shtml) links to many great websites. Or pair this novel with other books about the immigrant experience:  
<http://nymag.com/thecut/2017/02/best-kids-books-about-immigration-and-refugees.html>  
<http://bookriot.com/2016/11/16/childrens-books-about-the-immigrant-experience/>

#### ***Language Arts:***

- Most of us have heard stories about family members that have taken on a mythical quality as they get passed down generation to generation, like the stories about Auntie Jove. Have students write stories about one of their most interesting family members. Have them write one true story about this person and one ‘tall tale’ about them. For help with writing family stories see Natalie Kinsey-Warnock’s [Storykeepers website](http://storykeepersinourschools.com/).  
<http://storykeepersinourschools.com/>

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- Why is it important for Sol and Ming to repeat and carry on the stories told to them by their mother?
- Why does Ming cling so tightly to her belief that Auntie Jove will show up to take the girls with her?
- Soledad's imagination is one of the characteristics that helps her and her sister, Ming, survive their extreme loss. There are at least two physical spaces in the story where she feels safe. What are they and what makes her feel safe there?
- Sol is not very kind to Caroline when they first meet. Why do you think Sol becomes interested in pursuing a friendship with her?
- What do you think the canoe symbolizes for Sol and Ming?

### **Interview with the Author:**

<https://bookpage.com/interviews/19550-erin-entrada-kelly#.WOA7DDvEyrU>

### **If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Lai, Thanhha. *Inside Out and Back Again*. HarperCollins, 2011.
- Lin, Grace. *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*. Little, Brown, 2009.
- Ryan, Pam Munoz. *Esperanza Rising*. Scholastic, 2000.
- Sloan, Holly Goldberg. *Counting by 7s*. Dial, 2013.
- Woodson, Jacqueline. *Brown Girl Dreaming*. Nancy Paulsen, 2014.

**Suzanne LaFleur**  
**BEAUTIFUL BLUE WORLD**  
**Wendy Lamb Books, 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-0-38574-300-6**  
**\$16.99, 210 pages.**



The country of Sofarende is at war. The army is recruiting children and paying their families for their services. Mathilde and Megs, both 12, are best friends. Although they are both old enough to take the army aptitude test, only Mathilde passes. She has to leave behind Megs, her parents, and her two little sisters and live in a remote mansion where about 80 children are housed with soldiers and other adults. The children there are tracking the progress of the war, monitoring transmissions, and producing intelligence used to stop the progress of the enemy. Mathilde, on the other hand, is assigned a different task. She is sent to talk to Rainer, a prisoner of war, with whom she soon develops a close relationship. This book is both moving and suspenseful. It teaches us that kindness can be used as a weapon, and that children have the power to see what adults cannot. It ends on a tense cliff-hanger, but don't worry, a sequel is planned.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Social Studies:***

- The situation between Sofarende and its enemy Tyssia is similar to England and Germany in World War II. Research and discuss the similarities and differences.
- Rainer feels a strong sense of nationalism. Define nationalism. Explain how it can be both a good thing and a bad thing.

#### ***Language Arts:***

- Create your own nation including an emblem, flag, slogan and pledge of allegiance.
- Write a peace proposal that could end the war between Sofarende and Tyssia.
- There is a sequel planned for *Beautiful Blue World*. Write your own first chapter of this sequel.
- Pretend you are Mathilde and it is the first night at the mansion. Write a letter to Megs telling her about it.

#### ***Discussion Questions:***

- If you were a twelve-year-old growing up in Sofarende, would you take the army aptitude test? Why or why not?

- Do you think Mathilde made the right decision when she chose to free Rainer? What would you have done?
- Why do you think the author created her own countries for this book, rather than using countries that already exist?

**Author's Website:** <http://suzannelafleur.com/index.html>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker. *The War That Saved My Life*. Dial Books, 2015.
- Holm, Jennifer. *Full of Beans*. Random House, 2016.
- Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. *Fish in a Tree*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2015.

**Patricia MacLachlan**  
**THE POET'S DOG**  
**Katherine Tegen, 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-0-06229-262-9**  
**\$14.99, 96 pages.**



During a violent snow-storm an Irish wolfhound named Teddy rescues 2 young children, Flora and Nickel, from their car. The children are not surprised to discover that the dog can speak human words. Patricia MacLachlan has already explained this to us in the epigraph: "Dogs speak words, but only poets and children hear." Teddy's owner Sylvan, a poet, has recently passed away and the dog is living alone in his cottage in the woods. The children and the dog have found each other at the perfect time. A simply magical and gentle story about love, family and grief.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Creative Writing:***

- As Teddy keeps the siblings safe during the storm, the story flashes back to his life with Sylvan. Write a short story looking back at a relationship that meant (or still means) a lot to you. It can be about anyone- a pet or a person.
- Write a poem about a big storm.
- Flora records everything that happens in her journal. Keep a journal for a week.

#### ***Art:***

- The cover is the only color picture in the book. Do you notice anything in the picture that doesn't match the author's description of the kids, the dog, or the setting? Redraw the cover picture, correcting any inconsistencies you may have found.

#### ***Discussion questions:***

- Would you like to be able to talk to dogs?
- *The Poet's Dog* has been described as a slim or spare novel. Was it long enough for you?
- Teddy is not just special because he can speak- what else makes him special?
- Describe the relationship between Teddy and the kids in the novel.

- Describe the relationship between Teddy and Sylvan.
- Was it weird that the mother left the kids in the car? What would you have done if faced with the same situation?
- What thoughts does *The Poet's Dog* leave you with? What message do you think the author was trying to get across?
- The illustrator's name is not listed prominently anywhere. Why do you think that is?

**Publisher's Patricia MacLachlan page:**

<https://www.harpercollins.com/cr-100342/patricia-maclachlan>

**Publisher's *The Poet's Dog* page:**

<https://www.harpercollins.com/9780062292629/the-poets-dog>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Creech, Sharon. *Love that Dog*. HarperCollins, 2001.
- Cuevas, Michelle. *Confessions of an Imaginary Friend: A Memoir by Jacques Papier*. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2015.
- DiCamillo, Kate. *Because of Winn-Dixie*. Candlewick, 2000.
- Griffin, Paul. *When Friendship Followed Me Home*. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2016.
- MacLachlan, Patricia. *Waiting for the Magic*. Atheneum, 2011.
- O'Connor, Barbara. *Wish*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016.

**Kate Messner**  
**THE SEVENTH WISH**  
Bloomsbury, 2016.  
ISBN: 978-1-61963-376-6.  
\$16.99, 228 pages.



Charlie feels like she's always coming in last. Between her Mom's new job and her sister's life away at college, everything else seems more important than Charlie's upcoming Irish dance competition, her science project, or how much she misses her sister. One day, while ice-fishing, Charlie makes a discovery that changes everything. A strange fish offers to grant her a wish in exchange for its freedom. Charlie can't believe her luck - but soon realizes that this fish has an odd way of granting wishes, as even her best intentions go awry. When her family faces the challenge of her older sister's heroin addiction, Charlie wonders if some things might be too important to risk on a wish fish.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Language Arts:***

- As the book opens, Charlie is remembering a winter day when she was six and her sister, Abby, was twelve. Abby brought her to see ice flowers on the lake before they melted away. Notice the techniques Messner uses on the first two pages to paint a picture of the wintry scene: sensory details, powerful action verbs, dialogue, internal thinking, variety of sentence type and length. How do these small scenes add up to big themes about family relationships, life's struggle, the importance of self-reliance, etc?
- Texting between Charlie and Abby help place the story in today's world. How is the language used when communicating by text different from both spoken and traditional written language? Experiment with writing text conversations for Charlie and Abby, or by adding a text conversation to a piece of your own narrative writing.
- Charlie's English class is reading stories about wishes, and imagines what they would have done differently if they were characters in these stories. Read one or more of these stories, linked here: "[The Monkey's Paw](#)" by W.W. Jacobs, "[The Rocking-Horse Winner](#)" by D.H. Lawrence, and "[The Fisherman and his Wife](#)" retold by the Brothers Grimm. What are the overarching lessons in each story? How did Kate Messner draw from these and other traditional tales to craft *The Seventh Wish*?

Links to stories:

<https://americanliterature.com/author/w-w-jacobs/short-story/the-monkeys-paw>

<http://www.classicshorts.com/stories/rockwinr.html>

[http://germanstories.vcu.edu/grimm/fischer\\_e.html](http://germanstories.vcu.edu/grimm/fischer_e.html)

### ***Social Studies:***

- The lake outside her upstate New York home is central to the story. What do you know about the setting thanks to Messner's descriptions? In what ways would the story change if it took place somewhere else? How would you describe your own home community?

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- The ice flowers that formed on the lake when Charlie was six are mentioned often throughout the story. What do you think they symbolize? Have you noticed repeated symbols in your other reading choices?
- Charlie's family plays a game where one person thinks of a word and everyone else guesses what it might be. The winner is the one whose answer is most logically associated with the original word. Try this out!
- Do you think that - in the story - the magic fish is real, or that Charlie invents the fish later as a way to explain confusing elements of her life to herself?
- If you were in Charlie's place when she found the fish, what would you wish for first? What would you wish for if you had already seen how some of her wishes had turned out?
- What might you want to say to her if Abby were your older sister?
- What consequences does Abby pay for her addiction? What consequences do Charlie and her family face?

### **Educator's Guide:**

<http://media.bloomsbury.com/rep/files/TheSeventhWishK.MessnerEducatorsGuide.pdf>

### **Author's Website:**

<http://www.katemessner.com/>

### **If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Applegate, Katherine. *Crenshaw*. Feiwel & Friends, 2015.
- Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. *Fish in a Tree*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2015.
- King, Amy Sarig. *Me and Marvin Gardens*. Arthur A. Levine, 2017.
- Legrande, Claire. *Some Kind of Happiness*. Simon & Schuster, 2016.
- Scanlon, Liz. *The Great Good Summer*. Beach Lane Books, 2015.

**Barbara O'Connor**

**WISH**

**Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2016**

**ISBN: 978-0-37430-273-3**

**\$16.99. 227 pages.**



Charlie Reese has been making the same secret wish every day since the fourth grade. But when she is separated from her older sister and sent to live with family she barely knows, it seems unlikely that her wish will ever come true. With the help of a stray dog, a plucky neighbor and a big-hearted family, Charlie discovers that what she thought she wants may not be what she needs in order to find happiness.

**Curriculum Connections**

***Language Arts:***

- Research superstitions and various ways to make wishes.  
[https://www.amazon.com/Wish-Wishing-Traditions-Around-World/dp/0811857166/ref=sr\\_1\\_6?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1490818246&sr=1-6&keywords=wishes](https://www.amazon.com/Wish-Wishing-Traditions-Around-World/dp/0811857166/ref=sr_1_6?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1490818246&sr=1-6&keywords=wishes)
- Read *The Seventh Wish* by Kate Messner. How is the theme of wishes different between the two stories?
- Have students choose a part of the story to re-write from Wishbone's point of view.
- Make Story Map Wind Socks - Have students draw a picture of their favorite part of the story on a piece of paper that will be rolled into the cylindrical portion of the wind sock. Then attach 5 paper streamers, each describing a part of the story: title, characters, setting, problem, and solution.  
[https://www.pinterest.com/pin/ARC6PY5w6JPP6vwnAWAFCpbUtcptgkpS2VZVXVh6UTw\\_i7-u8a6igXk/](https://www.pinterest.com/pin/ARC6PY5w6JPP6vwnAWAFCpbUtcptgkpS2VZVXVh6UTw_i7-u8a6igXk/)

***Social Studies/Geography:***

- Colby, North Carolina is not a real place, but Raleigh, NC is. Have students find it on a map and calculate the distance from their hometown. Explore sites about Raleigh online and make a Venn diagram describing the two towns.

***Art:***

- Create a “Wish Tree” in your classroom. Have students decorate the tree with colorful leaves depicting some of their most treasured wishes.

***Community Connections:***

- Visit the local humane society and read to the shelter dogs. Have a pet supply drive for items to donate.
- Find out if your town has a local chapter of the “Make-A-Wish” foundation. Have students learn about the organization and ways they could help.

***Discussion Questions:***

- Charlie has a quick temper and gets mad easily. Howard teaches her to say “pineapple” anytime she starts to feel like she is losing control. Do you have any methods to calm down when you are upset? What are they?
- The name of this story is *Wish* and wishes are a theme that runs throughout the book. Do you think Charlie believes her wishes will ever come true? Do her wishes change throughout the story? If so, how?
- Why do you think Howard continues to be friends with Charlie, even after she is not very nice to him?
- Why is Wishbone so important to Charlie? Do you think Charlie and Wishbone have anything in common?
- Why is Charlie mad at her sister, Jackie? Who do you think she should be most mad at? Why?

**Quick interview with Barbara O’Connor about *Wish*:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51EQVS5Xkoo>

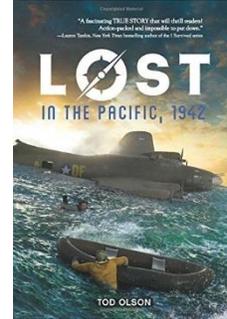
**Author Website:**

<http://www.barboconnor.com/>

**If you loved this, you’ll like:**

- Nuzum, K.A. *The Leanin’ Dog*. Joanna Cotler Books, 2008.
- Resau, Laura. *Star in the Forest*. Delacorte Press, 2010.
- Pyrton, Bobbie. *A Dog’s Way Home*. Katherine Tegen Books, 2011.
- DiCamillo, Kate. *Because of Winn-Dixie*. Candlewick Press, 2000.

**Tod Olson**  
**LOST IN THE PACIFIC, 1942:**  
**NOT A DROP TO DRINK**  
**Scholastic, 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-0-54592-811-3**  
**\$12.99. 168 pages.**



On October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1942, a B-17 bomber carrying an eight-member crew was unable to locate its refueling station and was forced to land somewhere in the middle of the 68-million square miles of the Pacific Ocean. After heroically surviving the seemingly impossible landing, the crew then began their struggle to survive aboard three small life rafts. The men faced 22 days of dehydration and hunger as they floated on shark infested waters. With seven out of eight members surviving the ordeal, this thrilling account shows the remarkable perseverance and determination of the men aboard the B-17.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Social Studies:***

- On December 7, 1941, the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japanese planes. Research Pearl Harbor and read accounts of the attack.
- The author briefly mentions the disappearance of another famous pilot in the Pacific. Read and learn about Amelia Earhart.

#### ***Science:***

- Sharks circled the crew’s rafts. What are some qualities of tiger sharks? How dangerous are they and what is the likelihood of an attack? Was the crew right to be scared?

#### ***Technology:***

- The crew used an octant, a device which determines your position by measuring your relationship to the sun or the stars. What sorts of technology are used today?

#### ***Discussion Questions:***

- Was Rickenbacker a hero? Were the other members of the crew heroes? What makes someone a hero?
- The author states that Rickenbacker wasn’t thrilled with the crew when he first met the men. He thought Whittaker was too “broad-shouldered and rugged,” Cherry was too casual, and the others were “green.” What do these descriptions mean? Do you think that Rickenbacker judged them unfairly? Why or why not?

- What would you have grabbed from the plane?
- Does an experience like this create a lasting bond between people?
- Was the crew's separation a good idea? If the rafts had separated sooner, do you think they would have been rescued earlier? Why or why not?
- In the Author's Note, he says that in some of his research he found conflicting information. Different men had different accounts of some of the events. Why do you think the men may have remembered some events differently?

**Author's Website:**

[www.todolson.com](http://www.todolson.com)

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Brown, Daniel James. *The Boys in the Boat (Young Readers): The True Story of an American Team's Epic Journey to Win Gold at the 1936 Olympics*. Viking Books, 2015.
- Fleming, Candace. *Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart*. Schwartz & Wade, 2011.
- Hillenbrand, Laura. *Unbroken (The Young Adult Adaptation): An Olympian's Journey from Airman to Castaway to Captive*. Delacorte Press, 2014.
- Sheinkin, Steve. *Bomb: The Race to Build – and Steal – the World's Most Dangerous Weapon*. Flash Point, 2012.

**Jason Reynolds**

**GHOST**

**Atheneum, 2016.**

**ISBN: 978-1-48145-015-7**

**\$16.99, 180 pages.**



Castle Crenshaw (nicknamed “Ghost”) learned how fast he could run the night his father was arrested. Running is never something he plans to do, just like he never plans to get into altercations at school. Running just happens. Then, one day, Ghost comes across a practice in the park and decides to race one of the sprinters, a decision that leads him to join Coach Brody’s elite track team: the Defenders. Coach Brody takes a chance on Ghost and gives him a future to run toward, but only if Ghost can learn to let go of the things he’s been running from.

**Curriculum Connections**

***Language Arts:***

- Ghost has a number of adults who act as advocates for him: Mr. Charles, Coach, his mom, and even Principal Marshall. What is the importance of each of these figures in Ghost’s life? Write about a trusted adult in your own life. Why do you trust this person?
- Consider the different meanings of the word defender. What does it mean to be a defender? Many of the characters in the novel play the role of defenders. Choose a character and explore the ways that they embody the idea of being a defender. Why is this an appropriate name for Coach Brody’s track team?
- Reread the last few pages of Chapter 5 and the beginning of Chapter 6, paying attention to the author’s use of figurative language. How does Ghost’s flashback help develop his character and internal conflict?
- Consider the ways that Jason Reynolds contrasts Glass Manor with Sunny’s neighborhood in Chapter 7. How does this contrast help you understand Ghost?
- Read the scene in Chapter Five that takes place at Everything Sports. Rewrite this scene from Tia’s point of view. What do you think happened when she realized that Ghost stole the shoes? How would she have felt when Ghost returned with Coach to apologize?

***Art/Dramatic Art:***

- Jason Reynolds uses world records as a framing motif in the novel. Research world records and create a poster about some of the most interesting records that you find. If you were going to try to break a world record, which one would you attempt?

- Working with a group, try to adapt a film version of part of *Ghost*. Which aspects of the book would translate especially well to film (dialogue, setting, character, conflict)? You could create a book trailer, or adapt a scene into a screenplay and film it.

***Physical Education:***

- Work with your physical education department to organize a *Ghost*-inspired class, trying out some of the training exercises and races. How did this experience enrich your understanding of Reynolds's novel?

***Discussion Questions:***

- The cover of *Ghost* includes this question: Running for his life, or from it? Explain the role that running plays in Ghost's life. Why does he start running? How does his reason for running change?
- How did Castle get his nickname? Why do you think he likes the name Ghost better than his given name? Which name do you think suits him best: Ghost or Castle? If you gave yourself a nickname, what would it be? Have others given you a nickname? If so, does it properly reflect who you are?
- *Ghost* ends with a cliffhanger. What do you think the outcome of the race will be? This is the first book in the Track series: What conflicts do you think Ghost is going to face in the next book?
- Coach tells Ghost that he wants to show him, "You can't run away from who you are, but what you can do is run toward who you want to be." How does Castle try to run from who he is? What kind of person does he want to be? How has finding his team helped him start to become that person? Try applying Coach's advice to your own life: What kind of person do you want to be? What could help you become that person?

**Author Website:**

<http://www.jasonwritesbooks.com/>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Alexander, Kwame. *Crossover*. HMH Books, 2014.
- Booth, Coe. *Kinda Like Brothers*. Scholastic Press, 2014.
- Clements, Andrew. *The Jacket*. McDougal Littell Library, 2003.
- Garcia, Rita-Williams. *One Crazy Summer*. Amistad, 2010.

**Delia Sherman**  
**THE EVIL WIZARD SMALLBONE**  
Candlewick, 2016.  
ISBN: 978-0-76368-805-9  
\$17.99, 416 pages.



Twelve-year-old Nick Reynaud, escaping his abusive uncle and cousin, runs away from home one snowy Maine night and ends up at the door of Evil Wizard Books, presided over by the curmudgeonly Evil Wizard Zachariah Smallbone. While kept captive as the wizard's apprentice and boy-of-all-work, Nick explores the bookshop, teaching himself magic with the help of a series of very snarky textbooks. Soon Nick is embroiled in the Evil Wizard's feud with the French werewolf Fidelou and his pack of motorcycle-riding followers, who aim to take over the (surprisingly strange) little town of Smallbone Cove that the wizard has ruled for centuries. A delightful, inventive, and out-of-the-ordinary fantasy.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Science:***

- The four Sentries that keep Smallbone Cove safe from outside dangers are the Stream, the Lantern, the Stone Wall, and the Weathervane, based on the ancient Greek classical elements Water, Fire, Earth, and Air.
  - Make a poster illustrating the aspects of the Greek four elements.
  - How many elements are there? Check out the Periodic Table – and collaborate to make a creative version of your own!
  - The Periodic Table: Books and Resources  
<http://www.rebeccaruppresources.com/?p=6423>
  - Invent Sentries of your own. How would you keep Smallbone Cove safe?
- The Evil Wizard's arch-enemy Fidelou is a werewolf – but his followers are werecoyotes. How are wolves different from coyotes?
  - Coyotes, Wolves, and Dogs  
<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Gray-Wolf/Identification>
  - Rise of the Coyote  
<http://www.nature.com/news/rise-of-the-coyote-the-new-top-dog-1.10635>

#### ***Literature:***

- While Fidelou, the white werewolf, is the leader of the pack, in Native American legends, coyotes are heroes. Read some coyote legends – and what about turning a coyote legend

into a graphic novel?

- Native American Coyote Mythology  
<http://www.native-languages.org/legends-coyote.htm>
- The people of Smallbone Cove are really seals. The Evil Wizard has their sealskins, which keeps them in human form. In Gaelic mythology, such seal-people are known as selkies. What can you find out about selkies? For one thing, selkies aren't always good. See Mollie Hunter's *A Stranger Came Ashore* (Floris Books, 2012).
  - In the movie [The Secret of Roan Inish](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0111112/) (1994; PG), ten-year-old Fiona learns of a legend that one of her ancestors was a selkie – and sets out to rescue her baby brother, who was washed out to sea and ever since has been cared for by seals.  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0111112/>

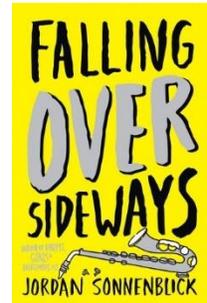
***Discussion Questions:***

- Was the Evil Wizard evil?
- Why did Nick lie to the wizard about his name and abilities?
- Why is Nick's totem a fox? If you had a totem, what would it be?
- Why have the townspeople stopped taking care of the Sentries?
- How does Dinah use science?
- Why don't all the transformed apprentices want to stay human?
- Why doesn't the wizard fix Miss Rachel's legs?
- What kind of Contract would you have made with the Evil Wizard?
- How is being an Evil Wizard like being the president?

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Buckley, Michael. *The Sisters Grimm*. Amulet Books, 2011.
- Gidwitz, Adam. *A Tale Dark and Grimm*. Puffin Books, 2011.
- Goldman, William. *The Princess Bride*. Harcourt, 2007.
- White, T.H. *The Sword in the Stone*. Philomel Books, 1993.

**Jordan Sonnenblick.**  
**FALLING OVER SIDEWAYS**  
**Amulet, 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-0-545-86324-7**  
**\$17.99, 272 pages.**



Claire's eighth grade year is off to a bumpy start. She's being teased at school by a mean girl, and her frenemy Ryder relentlessly badgers her about saxophone chair auditions. She loves dance classes, but her friends are moving up into high school classes while she's left behind with the little kids. Her big brother is perfect in every way, so Claire feels she disappoints all the teachers he used to have. But life really turns sideways when her father collapses in front of her during breakfast. Suddenly her dancing, singing, joking dad can't do those things anymore. He's changed, but he's still there—isn't he? Jordan Sonnenblick navigates the tricky waters of eighth grade with humor and manages to convey the heartbreak of a major tragedy alongside more mundane, but still horrifying problems, such as a big zit appearing on the first day of school.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Language Arts:***

- Music and language are two essential themes of *Falling Over Sideways*. Similar to an assignment given to Claire Goldsmith by her history teacher, write a four-line poem that could be set to music or presented as a rap.
- Claire is a very human protagonist with a sense of humor and the ability to laugh at herself. Sonnenblick's writing can make it okay to laugh even during the tough times. Write about an event that you didn't find at all funny at the time it happened, and try to infuse some humor into your writing.

#### ***Science:***

- Learn the parts of the brain through print or Internet sources. In groups of two or three, create a model of the brain that shows the different parts, using different colored play-doh or clay. Here's a website that could be useful:  
[http://www.macmillan.org.uk/images/cancerinfo/longdescriptions/cancertypes/brain-lobesandfunctions\\_2012\\_accessible.jpg](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/images/cancerinfo/longdescriptions/cancertypes/brain-lobesandfunctions_2012_accessible.jpg)

#### ***Art/ Music:***

- Turn a scene from the book - for example the father-daughter dance - into a skit. Could the same scene be played as either funny or sad?

***Discussion Questions:***

- For teens, a parent’s healthy presence is often just assumed. In what ways would you “step up” if a parent or close family member had a life-changing emergency? Have you already experienced a similar situation?
- The book focuses primarily on the father-daughter relationship. What are some of Claire’s other important relationships? Which relationships strengthen or become less important to her over the course of the book?
- How would this book have been different if it was told by Matthew, Claire’s brother? How would Claire’s story have been different if she had been 8 years old instead of 13? What if she had been 18?

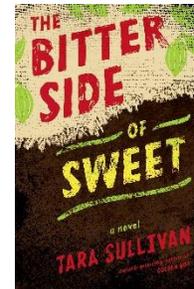
**Author’s Website:**

<https://www.jordansonnenblick.com/blog/>

**If you loved this, you’ll like:**

- Condie, Ally. *Summerlost*. Dutton Books, 2016.
- Knowles, Jo. *See You at Harry’s*. Candlewick, 2012.
- Sonnenblick, Jordan. *After Ever After*. Scholastic, 2014.
- Sovern, Megan Jean. *The Meaning of Maggie*. Chronicle Books, 2014
- Vivat, Booki. *Frazzled: Everyday Disasters and Impending Doom*. HarperCollins, 2016.

**Tara Sullivan**  
**THE BITTER SIDE OF SWEET**  
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2016.  
ISBN: 978-0-39917-307-3  
\$17.99, 320 pages.



In *The Bitter Side of Sweet*, Sullivan shines a harsh light on the horrors of modern-day slavery through 15-year old Amadou's struggles to care for his eight-year old brother, Seydou, while farmers force them to harvest cacao on an Ivory Coast plantation. Tricked two years earlier into believing they had been offered seasonal work, the boys are locked in a shed at night, beaten for the smallest infraction, and punished with food deprivation. Escape attempts by a newly arrived 13-year-old girl, Khadija, inadvertently lead to Seydou suffering grievous injury. Terrified, but recognizing that Seydou will die if they remain enslaved, Amadou and Khadija make one more attempt at freedom. The novel's message is clear when the travelers reach relative safety with Khadijah's mother and Amadou tastes hot chocolate for the first time: "You mean that for the past two years we were kept on that farm to grow something that's a treat for city kids who can't sleep?"

### **Curriculum Links**

#### ***Social Studies:***

- What is human trafficking and slave labor? How do these practices affect the future of children in the countries that still allow it? Both documentaries-- The [Dark Side of Chocolate](#) and [Girl Rising](#) show different perspectives of child slave labor. Track the causes and effects through different paths: education, corporate money, poverty, distribution of natural resources, etc.  
*Dark Side of Chocolate:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Vfbv6hNeng>
  - *Girl Rising:* <http://girlrising.com/see-the-film/>
- Discuss what 'fair trade' means.
- Watch [this video https://www.edtechlens.com/blog/blog-video-how-chocolate-is-made-from-cacao](https://www.edtechlens.com/blog/blog-video-how-chocolate-is-made-from-cacao) on how chocolate is made from cocoa pods. Try some unsweetened chocolate. Then do a taste testing on various sweetened chocolates. Have the kids investigate the different brands of chocolate, and whether they are [fair trade or not](#). (There are several Vermont chocolatiers you can taste including Lake Champlain Chocolates) <http://www.foodispower.org/chocolate-list/>
- Brainstorm different ways in which kids can put the pressure on businesses to adopt more equitable trade and labor practices.  
<http://www.globalexchange.org/fairtrade/cocoa/classroom>

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- Why does Amadou feel a loyalty to Khadijah after she has put both Amadou and Seydou's lives at risk?
- How are Khadijah's circumstances different than most of the boys on the plantation? Do you think they affect how she makes decisions? How and why?
- How does Amadou come to the conclusion, repeated twice in the book, "I refuse to count the things that don't matter?" Why is that helpful to him?
- Do you think this important story about child slave labor would be as interesting if the author wrote a non-fiction book about the cocoa industry? Why do you think she chose to tell the story through Amadou's eyes, and not Seydou's or Khadijah's?

### **Author's Website:**

<http://tarasullivanbooks.com>

### **If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Applegate, Katherine. *Home of the Brave*. Feiwel & Friends, 2007.
- Hobbs, Will. *Crossing the Wire*. HarperCollins, 2006.
- Kadohata, Cynthia. *Half a World Away*. Atheneum, 2014.
- McCormick, Patricia. *Sold*. Hyperion, 2006.
- Park, Linda Sue. *A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story*. Clarion, 2010.
- Pinkney, Andrea Davis & Shane W. Evans (Illus.) *The Red Pencil*. Little, Brown, 2014.
- Sullivan, Tara. *Golden Boy*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2013.
- Yousafzai, Malala, with Christina Lamb. *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*. Little, Brown, 2013.

**Melissa Sweet**  
**SOME WRITER!: THE STORY**  
**OF E.B. WHITE**  
**HMH Books for Young Readers, 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-0-54431-959-2**  
**\$18.99. 176 pages.**



*Some Writer* is more than just a biography of the author E.B. White. It is also a fitting tribute comprised of photos, personal letters, early essays and poetry, original artwork from author-illustrator Melissa Sweet, and even a brochure White designed as a young boy. E.B. White became a writer at an early age, entering and winning contests throughout his childhood. He began his career as a journalist and *New Yorker* contributor, and later took on the challenge of writing for children. Dividing his time between New York City and the country, White was hugely inspired by the animals on his farm in Maine and used them in his writing. As a children's author, he became best known for his books *Charlotte's Web* and *Stuart Little*, which today are considered classics.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Art:***

- Melissa Sweet uses collage in the illustrations of this book. Materials include watercolors, pencils, paper clips, nails, snippets of wood, pieces of old books, baling wire, and screws. Design your own collage with similar materials or select materials that have some significance to you.
- As a teenager, E.B. White designed a brochure of Maine to prepare his friend for “one of the most beautiful states in the Union.” Design a brochure that promotes your favorite place.

#### ***Language Arts:***

- E.B. White received many letters from young readers who enjoyed his books. Write to an author you like and explain why you enjoyed his or her book.
- E.B. White's writing was hugely inspired by animals. Write a short story about an animal.
- Research and write a short biography of an author you like.

#### ***Discussion Questions:***

- E.B. White once wrote, “Hang on to your hat. Hang on to your hope. And wind the clock, for tomorrow is another day.” What does this mean to you?

- When *Stuart Little* was published, it was banned by some libraries and labeled as NOT RECOMMENDED FOR PURCHASE BY EXPERT. Why do you think it was banned? Should books ever be banned?
- Anne Carroll Moore, a book reviewer and librarian, strongly encouraged E.B. White to write a children's book. When she read *Stuart Little*, however, she wrote, "I have never been so disappointed in a book in my life." How would you feel if you were E.B. White? Have you ever faced this sort of discouragement?
- Before reading this biography, what did you know about E.B. White? Were you surprised by anything you learned?
- Although his career was based in New York City, E.B. White loved his home and farm in Maine. What is your favorite place and why?

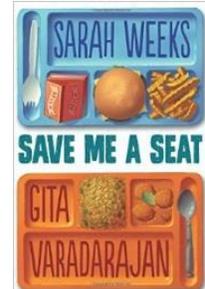
**Author's Website:**

<http://melissasweet.net/>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Greenberg, Jan. *The Mad Potter: George E. Ohr, Eccentric Genius*. Roaring Brook Press, 2013.
- Montgomery, Sy. *Temple Grandin: How the Girl Who Loved Cows Embraced Autism and Changed the World*. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2012.
- Silvey, Anita. *Let Your Voice Be Heard: The Life and Times of Pete Seeger*. Clarion Books, 2016.
- Silvey, Anita. *Untamed: The Wild Life of Jane Goodall*. National Geographic Children's Books, 2015.
- White, E.B. *Charlotte's Web*. Harper & Brothers, 1952.

**Sara Weeks and Gita Varadarajan**  
**SAVE ME A SEAT**  
**Scholastic Press, 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-0-545-84660-8**  
**\$16.99, 216 pages.**



Ravi, a recent immigrant, starts his first day at Albert Einstein Elementary and quickly discovers school in the United States is very different from school in India. Joe, a boy from New Jersey with an Auditory Processing Disorder, is hopeful this new kid will attract the school bullies' attention away from him. The cafeteria, a common enemy, and time with Miss Frost bring these two fifth graders together and they find they have much more in common than they ever imagined. This humorous and touching story told through the alternating perspectives of Ravi and Joe during the first week of school, reveal how assumptions, school bullies and doting moms are the perfect recipe for the most unexpected friendship.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Language Arts:***

- The story is told in Ravi's and Joe's alternating first-person narrations and lends itself to writing activities and discussions focused on these two standards.
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3  
Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact). Create a Venn diagram for Ravi and Joe to show their differences and similarities regarding interests, school experiences and family life. Turn this Venn diagram into a short essay.
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.6  
Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.  
The alternating chapters describe the same event from Ravi and Joe's perspective. Write a chapter describing the same event from the perspective of another character in the book (Dillon, Samreen, Miss Frost, Dillon's Mom.)
- Ravi and Joe provide their own glossary of terms at the end of the book. A glossary is a list and definition of terms in a special subject area, or a list of difficult or unusual words and expressions used in a text. Create a glossary of words specific to your life.

#### ***Social Studies:***

- From the first day at his new school Ravi notices the difference between school in India and the United States. Research another aspect of Indian culture and compare it to the United States.

- Enjoy a multicultural food fest and make the recipes provided at the end of the book and research and find recipes from other countries and cultures too!

***Math:***

- Ravi hopes to impress his teacher by solving math problems using Vedic math techniques. Vedic Mathematics is the name used to describe the ancient system of Indian mathematics. It is a shortcut method for carrying out calculations mentally. Research the history of Vedic math and practice some calculations.

***Social/Emotional:***

- Ravi and Joe’s teacher Mrs. Beam assigns a personal reflection project and asks each student to bring in an object that represents who they are along with a one sentence explanation of why they chose the object they did. The statements go in a jar and are pulled out one at a time. The person pulling the card tries to pair it with the correct object. Try this activity with your friends, classmates, or book club.

***Discussion Questions:***

- Miss Frost tells Ravi that assumptions are wrong? Do you agree with this statement? Why or Why not? What kind of assumptions do people make in this story?
- What challenges does Ravi face as the new student at Albert Einstein Elementary School? What did other students or adults do to make Ravi feel welcome or not so welcome?
- Ravi calls Samreen an ABCD –American Born Confused Desi (Desi is Hindi word for Indian.) What does he mean by this?
- Is it more important for Ravi to assimilate or hold on to his Indian Culture? Can he do both?
- Describe your school cafeteria.
- How should Ravi and Joe deal with the bully?
- What role do Ravi and Joe’s families play in helping them survive fifth grade?

**Save Me a Seat site:**

<http://sarahweeks.com/books/save-me-a-seat/overview>

**Author Website:**

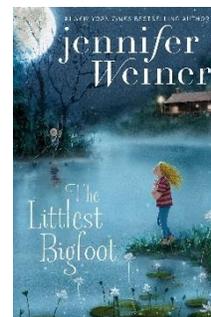
<http://sarahweeks.com/>

**If you loved this, you’ll like:**

-Cotrell Boyce, Frank. *The Astounding Broccoli Boy*. Walden Pond Press, 2015.

- Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Bud Not Buddy*. Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 1999.
- Patterson, James. *I Funny*. Little Brown and Co., 2012.
- Rylander, Chris. *The Fourth Stall*. Walden Pond Press, 2011.
- Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Zen and the Art of Faking It*. Scholastic Press, 2007.

**Jennifer Weiner**  
**THE LITTLEST BIGFOOT**  
**Aladdin, 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-1-48147-074-2**  
**\$16.99, 304 pages.**



Alice Mayfair, twelve-years-old, slips through the world unseen and unnoticed. Awkward, unkempt and ignored by her family, she is being shipped off to her eighth boarding school. The Experimental Center for Love and Learning is a super inclusive, off-beat school tucked away in a woodsy corner of upstate New York. It also just happens to be across the lake from a secluded clan of Bigfoots, or “Yare”. Within this clan is Millie Maximus, an unusually small Yare who feels just as lonely as Alice. One night Millie starts to drown in the lake and Alice comes to her rescue. The two become fast friends and Alice swears to protect Millie’s secret. But soon enough a league of Bigfoot hunters, led by another lonely misfit kid named Jeremy, is on their trail. This is a heartwarming and hilarious tale about friendship, furry creatures, and belonging that kids will be able to relate to on so many levels.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Language Arts:***

- Is Bigfoot real or is he a myth? Currently, many argue about what the truth is, but there is no concrete evidence one way or another. Write what you believe and why.
- Throughout history, various cultures have described large, hairy, apelike creatures living reclusively from the general population. In Russia, there was a description of *leshii* in its folklore. Nowadays, there are reports of the Abominable Snowman or Yeti in the Himalayas. Others claim to have seen Sasquatch in Canada. Pick one of these and compare/contrast it to what the United States calls Bigfoot.
- Research any local legends and myths.

#### ***Social Studies/Science:***

- Explore Bigfoot sightings and evidence. <http://www.animalplanet.com/tv-shows/finding-bigfoot/finding-bigfoot-map/>
- Create a map with pictures of any Bigfoot sightings in Vermont.
- Locate Standish, New York on a map. Does the book give an accurate description of Standish?

***Discussion Questions:***

- What are the qualities of a friend? Do you think being friends with someone who is different than you would have challenges and/or benefits?
- Have you ever felt as if you didn't belong, like Alice and Millie? When and where? Is there someone or something that helped you through that time in your life? How might you help others that feel this way?
- Do you believe in Bigfoot? Why or why not?
- The Experimental School believes that "we all have things to learn from one another." Do you agree? Would you like to go to a school like The Experimental Center for Love and Learning? Why or why not?
- Is there a character in the book that you can relate to? Who is it and how?
- Jeremy and Jo both say, "On the Internet, everything lives forever." Do you keep this in mind when you're online? How do you protect your privacy?

**Author's Website:** <http://www.jenniferweiner.com/>

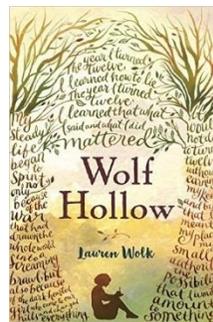
**Teaching Guide:** [http://believeinbigfoot.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Littlest-Bigfoot\\_TG.pdf](http://believeinbigfoot.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Littlest-Bigfoot_TG.pdf)

***The Littlest Bigfoot Interactive World:*** <http://believeinbigfoot.com/>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

- Applegate, Katherine. *Crenshaw*. Feiwel & Friends, 2015.
- Bell, Cece. *El Deafo*. Abrams, 2014.
- Palacio, R.J. *Wonder*. Knopf, 2012.

**Lauren Wolk**  
**WOLF HOLLOW**  
**Dutton Books for Young Readers, 2016.**  
**ISBN: 978-1-10199-482-5**  
**\$16.99, 304 pages.**



Twelve-year-old Annabelle, growing up with her two younger brothers on a farm in Pennsylvania in 1943, has never had to cope with anyone like Betty Glengarry. A “dark-hearted” girl sent from the city to live with her grandparents, Betty is frightening and sadistic. She beats Annabelle with a stick, threatens her little brothers, breaks a quail’s neck – and then turns her attention to Toby, a local recluse and shell-shocked veteran of World War I. Betty’s determined attempts to frame Toby begin to bear fruit and as Annabelle struggles to counter her lies, Betty disappears. Annabelle’s attempts to protect Toby lead to tragedy, and eventually she learns that right and wrong, truth and lie, can be slippery and shifting concepts. This is a beautifully written, though wrenching coming-of-age story with parallels to Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Science:***

- The Wolf Hollow of the title is named, Annabelle’s grandfather tells her, for the pits that were once dug there to trap wolves. Learn more about gray wolves at <https://www.nwf.org/Wildlife/Wildlife-Library/Mammals/Gray-Wolf.aspx>.

Adopt a Gray Wolf

<http://www.shopnwf.org/Adoption-Center/Adopt-a-Gray-Wolf/index.cat>

- Annabelle and her mother bring jewelweed, an herbal remedy, to help cure Betty of a severe case of poison ivy. What’s the science behind the itchy misery of poison ivy? And can jewelweed really help?

A Poison Ivy Primer

<http://insider.si.edu/2014/08/poison-ivy/>

No Ill Nature: The Surprising History and Science of Poison Ivy

<https://www.chemheritage.org/distillations/magazine/no-ill-nature-the-surprising-history-and-science-of-poison-ivy-and-its>

The Science Behind Jewelweed

<http://www.thenaturelabs.com/article.php?id=36>

#### ***Social Studies:***

- Toby suffers from shell shock, a condition now known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Find out how this was viewed during World War I and how it is treated today.

Shell Shock During World War One

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/shellshock\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/shellshock_01.shtml)

- While hiding Toby, Annabelle makes excuses for her visits to the barn by claiming to be collecting milkweed pods – a nationwide chore for kids during World War II, since milkweed fluff was used to make Navy life jackets. Why?

The Heroic Milkweed

<http://www.csmonitor.com/The-Culture/Gardening/2008/1026/the-heroic-milkweed>

Kids Gathered Milkweed Pods for WWII Effort

[http://www.pantagraph.com/news/kids-gathered-milkweed-pods-for-wwii-effort/article\\_5099b3d3-117e-52c6-8815-c6893b97ea30.html](http://www.pantagraph.com/news/kids-gathered-milkweed-pods-for-wwii-effort/article_5099b3d3-117e-52c6-8815-c6893b97ea30.html)

### ***Literature:***

- Compare *Wolf Hollow* to Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*. How are the stories similar? Different? Also see the 1962 movie version of [To Kill a Mockingbird](#), starring Gregory Peck as Atticus Finch. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0056592/>

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- Why doesn't Annabelle immediately tell her parents about Betty's behavior?
- Is it sometimes right to lie?
- Annabelle reflects several times on the wolves of Wolf Hollow. How do the characters in the book relate to the wolves?
- Why is Aunt Lily so certain that Toby is guilty?
- Why does Toby leave Annabelle a photo that shows him only as a reflection in the water?
- Why does Toby always carry his three guns? And why, when he finally leaves, does he leave his only working gun behind?
- Toby was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Why would he have said that he wasn't a war hero?
- Is Betty's death tragic? Or does it serve her right?

### **Author website:**

<http://www.laurenwolk.com/>

**If you loved this, you'll like:**

-Boyne, John. *Stay Where You Are and Then Leave*. Henry Holt, 2014.

-Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Harper, 2015.

-Pennypacker, Sara. *Pax*. Balzer + Bray, 2016.

-Rostkowski, Margaret. *After the Dancing Days*. Harper, 2000.

### Generic Questions that can be used for any book:

- Can you make any connections between this book and events in your own life? (text to self) What about connections between this book and other books you've read? (text to text) Can you make any connections between this book and experiences that people you know, or know about, have had? (text to world)
- What research do you think the author of this book had to do in order to write this story? (inferring)
- If this book were turned into a play and you could play any character in the story (without regard to gender) which character would you pick and why?
- Illustrate a scene from this book. (visualization)
- Having read the book, what connections can you make between the book jacket, the title and the story itself. (inferring)
- Design a new book jacket.
- While reading this book, did you make any predictions? What were they? Were they accurate? (inferring)
- **For non-fiction:** See your teacher/librarian, take a brief look at this book together and talk about how it is organized. (determining importance)
- What did you wonder about as you read this book? (questioning)