

Monica Roe

AIR

Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2022

ISBN: 978-0-37438-865-2

272 pp.

Grades 5 and up

Summary

Emmie is gritty in more ways than one. Not only is she strong, fierce, and independent, she's also not afraid to get literal grit in her elbows while pursuing her chosen sport: she's an aspiring extreme wheelchair athlete. She was born with spina bifida, but took her parents at their word when they said that she can do anything other kids can do. In order to truly compete, though, she needs a new wheelchair. Emmie is earning money through her own home business - but when some well-meaning community members learn of her goal, Emmie struggles with how and when to accept help, while remaining true to herself.

Curriculum Connections

Science

Emmie's friend Ale is passionate about bees. Learn about beekeeping here:

<https://www.nal.usda.gov/animal-health-and-welfare/beekeeping>

Why are bees so important? See these books:

Burns, Loree Griffin. *Honeybee Rescue : A Backyard Drama*. Charlesbridge, 2022.

Markle, Sandra. *The Case of the Vanishing Honeybees: A Scientific Mystery*. Millbrook Press, 2022.

Williams, Lily. *If Bees Disappeared*. Roaring Brook Press, 2021.

Write about the ways in which the extinction of bees would impact your life.

Art

Emmie and Dawn both spend their free time on artistic expression. Emmie creates custom wheelchair bags, which are also her main source of income. Dawn is a scrapbooker and saves her memories in dynamic pages that she builds by hand. Try one of the following:

Draw a bag design that expresses your own outlook. Think about what kinds of notions you might need. Would you include a message and what would it say?

Create a scrapbook page. You don't need anything fancy to make frames and captions that accent your memories. Check your local library for resources on how to get started, whether you are creating a traditional page or something more alternative or funky.

How to Make Homemade Scrapbooks

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Homemade-Scrapbooks>

Math

Emmie's wheelchair goal is expensive, but she makes a good savings plan and chips away at it. Think about an item or experience for which you might like to start saving. There are great resources for kids to learn how to earn and save money. Try to make your own savings plans for your goal. Think about how long it might take, your spending habits, your potential income, and what obstacles you might have. How about writing your own money-making business plan?

These books might help:

Chatzky, Jean. *How to Money: Your Ultimate Visual Guide to the Basics of Finance*. Roaring Brook Press, 2022.

Jackson, Ty Allan. *Make Your Own Money : How Kids Can Earn It, Save It, Spend It, and Dream Big*. Storey Publishing, 2021.

Social Studies

Learn about wheelchair sports. The official Olympics website at <https://olympics.com> has a section called Body+ which features videos and stories of athletes who are redefining what Olympics sports can be.

International Paralympic Committee

<https://www.paralympic.org/news/para-sport-explained-wheelchairs-wheelchair-sports>

Discussion Questions

Emmie notices people staring and treating her differently than her peers. How does she respond? What would you do if you were faced with this?

Emmie and Ale have a strong friendship. In what ways are they successful at supporting each other? How did they grow as friends through the course of the book?

How does Emmie's father act as an advocate for her? In what ways does he struggle and learn?

Emmie accepts the financial support of her community and later second-guesses her decision. Why? Would you have accepted help? Why or why not?

What kind of a person is Dawn (Emmie's aide)? How did Emmie act toward her? How did their relationship evolve?

Author online

Monica Roe: Writer, Rambler, Rural
<https://monicaroeauthor.com/>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

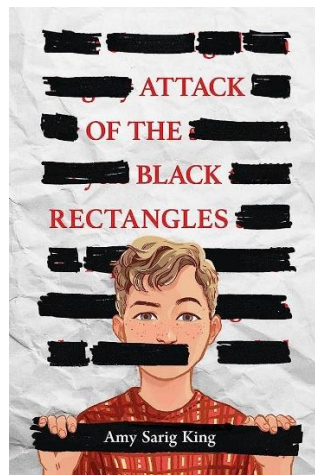
Draper, Sharon. *Out of My Mind*. Atheneum, 2012.

John, Antony. *Mascot*. HarperCollins, 2019.

Lloyd, Natalie. *Hummingbird*. Scholastic, 2022.

Stroker, Ali, and Stacy Davidowitz. *The Chance to Fly*. Harry N. Abrams, 2021.

Sumner, Jamie. *Roll With It*. Atheneum, 2020.



A.S. King
ATTACK OF THE BLACK RECTANGLES
Scholastic, 2022
ISBN: 978-1-33868-052-2
272 pp.
Grades 5 and up

Summary

When Mac and friends discover that their classroom reading copies of Jane Yolen's *The Devil's Arithmetic* have phrases blacked out, they protest – and find themselves up against teacher Laura Sett, who believes that “I am here to protect all of us from the ugly world.” As the kids battle censorship, they also find themselves confronting questions about the nature of truth and the importance of standing up for oneself.

Curriculum Connections

Math

Mac and his friend Denis have invented the game of BOT DUCK MAN, a take on Rock Paper Scissors. Check out the history of Rock Paper Scissors-type games and research the mathematical strategy for winning.

See these helpful hints:

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/gvym4x/game-theory-rock-paper-scissors>

Rock Paper Scissors Association

<https://wrpsa.com/>

Social Studies

While book censorship in many states is now an issue in the news, attempts to ban books are far from new. Research the history of book censorship and book burning – and check out the American Library Association's list of banned and challenged books at <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks>.

Mac's small town has passed rules and regulations to create an ideal community: they've banned junk food and Halloween, enforced curfews, and decreed that all houses be painted white. Research the history of utopian communities – and try to design one of your own. Now might be a good time to read Lois Lowry's *The Giver*.

Mac objects to the ways Columbus's arrival in America and the story of Thanksgiving are taught. Do you think he's right? Can you come up with other examples in which history might be more truthfully represented?

Language Arts/Creative Writing

Letters make a difference. Write a letter to your local newspaper about an issue that concerns you. You might also write a letter to your local representative or Congressperson. See How to Write a Letter to Your Member of Congress at <https://www.nclc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/HowtoWriteanEffectiveLettertoYourElectedOfficial.pdf>.

Mac's haiku reads:

Important is the truth
Even if it hurts sometimes
It is still the truth

Try composing a haiku of your own about one of the themes in the book: truth and lies, the nature of reality, censorship, and so on.

How to Write a Haiku

<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/how-to-write-haiku/>

Psychology/Philosophy

Mac's dad claims that he's an alien with no feelings and tells Mac that he's building a spaceship in the garage. While it's hard to diagnose Mac's difficult dad, check out *confabulation*, a mental disorder in which people invent false memories.

Confabulation

<https://www.verywellmind.com/confabulation-definition-examples-and-treatments-4177450>

What's real? Aaron, for example, is convinced that the Earth is flat. How is reality defined – and how do the different characters in the book see it?

Discussion Questions

Should some books be banned? Why or why not?

Do you feel that sometimes adults don't tell you the truth? Are there times when kids *shouldn't* be told the truth?

On page 101, Mrs. Sett tells the kids: "You'll learn, as you grow up, that adults in your life seem to be doing things you *think* are wrong, but we're really helping you." Can you think of examples of this? Do you think she's right?

How would you define grace?

Are there times when you shouldn't follow the rules? When and why?

One of the protest signs in the book reads "If you're comfortable learning history, it's the wrong history." Do you think this is true? Can you think of some examples?

What does Mac mean on page 232 when he says "Some battles we lose. Some battles we win. And some battles aren't ours to fight."?

What about Mac's relationship with his dad? Does he believe him?

Author online

A.S. King: The Official Hideout
<https://www.as-king.com/>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Forde, Patricia. *The List*. Sourcebooks, 2018.
Gratz, Alan. *Ban This Book*. Starscape, 2018.
Hentoff, Nat. *The Day They Came to Arrest the Book*. Laurel Leaf, 1983.
Lasky, Kathryn. *Memoirs of a Bookbat*. Clarion, 1996.
Levithan, David. *Answers in the Pages*. Knopf, 2022.
Reed, M.K. *Americus*. First Second, 2011.



Lora Senf
THE CLACKITY
Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2022
ISBN: 978-1-66590-267-0
288 pp.
Grades 5 and up

Summary

Coraline meets *Alice in Wonderland* in this spooky tale. Evie Von Rathe and her aunt, Desdemona, live in Blight Harbor – the seventh-most-haunted town in America. When Desdemona disappears in the town’s creepy abandoned slaughterhouse, it’s up to Evie to face her fears (and breathe through her anxiety), confront a murderous ghost, and rescue her aunt from the supernatural Clackity.

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts/Creative Writing

Evie’s Aunt Desdemona writes an advice column for people with supernatural problems. Try inventing some problems and answers for a supernatural advice column of your own. (“I think my next-door neighbor might be a vampire. How can I tell? What should I do?”)

The Story Thief wasn’t happy with Evie’s story because he thought it didn’t have an ending. How do you feel about stories with unresolved endings? Can you write a short story that ends with a question or on a cliff-hanger?

Psychology

Evie struggles with anxiety and panic attacks. Learn more about these. For online resources see:

National Institute of Mental Health: Panic Disorder

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/panic-disorder-when-fear-overwhelms>

What’s the Different Between a Panic Attack and an Anxiety Attack?

<https://www.healthline.com/health/panic-attack-vs-anxiety-attack#causes>

How to Help a Child Struggling with Anxiety

<https://www.npr.org/2019/10/23/772789491/how-to-help-a-child-struggling-with-anxiety>

A flock of sparrows helps Evie in her quest to save her aunt. What does the saying “Birds of a feather flock together” mean? Can it apply to people? Can you think of examples?

Science

Desdemona tells Evie that sparrows are an old symbol of protection, and that a flock of sparrows can fight off something much larger when they all work together. Research sparrows and flocking behavior. See these online resources:

Sparrows

<https://a-z-animals.com/animals/sparrow/>

Secrets of Flocking Revealed

<https://phys.org/news/2011-10-secrets-flocking-revealed.html>

Bird Party – What is a Flock?

<https://blog.mybirdbuddy.com/post/bird-flock>

Flocking Behavior in Birds

<https://www.scienceofbirds.com/podcast/flocking-behavior-in-birds>

Lily's Lessons teach Evie many facts about nature, covering everything from gooseberries to deer droppings. Come up with your own Lily-type list of interesting and quirky nature facts.

Art

To rescue her aunt, Evie has to tackle seven different houses - ranging from a farmhouse to a blue-glass house to a gingerbread cottage. Invent and illustrate seven very different mystery houses of your own.

Evie says that the third house reminded her of an M.C. Escher picture. Research artist M.C. Escher and his works.

M.C. Escher

<https://mcescher.com/>

Discussion Questions

If you had a house ghost, what do you think he/she/they/it would be like? How would you feel about having a house ghost? Excited? Nervous?

Evie said that the old slaughterhouse looked “defiant. Sometimes places are like people and have their own personalities. They can be warm or cold. Friendly or mean.” Can you think of some buildings or places that have a personality? What kind?

Evie's new haircut and look make her feel tough and brave. What makes you feel brave?

Were Grey, Pink, and Gold good witches or bad witches?

The Story Thief tells Evie that “All stories are keys, you know.” What do you think that means?

Why do you think readers like (or don't like) spooky stories? What other books remind you of *The Clackity*?

Author online

Lora Senf, Writer

<https://lorasenf.com/>

Q & A with Lora Senf

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/89731-q-a-with-lora-senf.html>

Sometimes a Monster is Just a Monster, Sometimes It's More

<https://teenlibrariantoolbox.com/2022/06/21/sometimes-a-monster-is-just-a-monster-sometimes-its-more-anxiety-and-middle-grade-horror-a-guest-post-by-lora-senf/>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Arden, Katherine. *Small Spaces*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2019.

Auxier, Jonathan. *The Night Gardener*. Harry N. Abrams, 2015.

Gaiman, Neil. *Coraline*. HarperCollins, 2012.

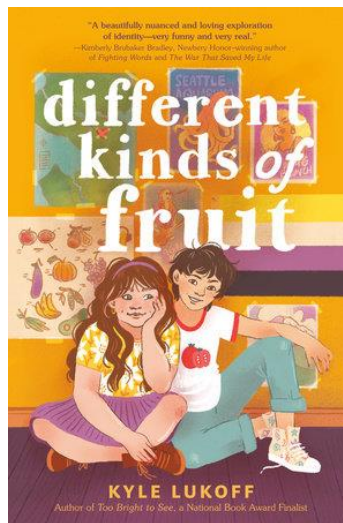
Geminhart, Dan. *Midnight Children*. Macmillan, 2022.

Lang, Heidi, and Kati Bartkowski. *Whispering Pines*. Margaret K. McElderry, 2021.

Meloy, Colin. *The Stars Did Wander Darkling*. Balzer + Bray, 2022.

Senf, Lora. *The Nighthouse Keeper*. Atheneum, 2023.

White, J.A. *Nightbooks*. Katherine Tegen, 2018.



Kyle Lukoff

DIFFERENT KINDS OF FRUIT

Dial Books, 2022
ISBN: 978-0-59311-118-5
320 pp.
Grades 5 and up

Summary

Bailey, the new kid in Annabelle's class, is cool, fashionable, funny, and non-binary - which last is new to the small-town community. Annabelle is fascinated with Bailey, but as their friendship progresses, why is Annabelle's father being so weird about it? Why does the presence of one preteen have such an impact on him and other community members? Annabelle is open to learning and willing to lead the way to a more inclusive town, a town with room for different kinds of fruit.

Curriculum Connections

Science

Annabelle learns a lot about food classification, and you can, too. Try making your own taxonomy charts. You can learn more about taxonomy here: <https://www.britannica.com/science/taxonomy> or in a book or encyclopedia from your library.

Also see:

Castaldo, Nancy. *Ultimate Food Atlas: Maps, Games, Recipes, and More for Hours of Delicious Fun*. National Geographic Kids, 2022.

Rothman, Julie. *Food Anatomy: The Curious Parts & Pieces of Our Edible World*. Storey Publishing, 2016.

You can also apply taxonomy to animals. See:

Broom, Jenny. *Animalium: Welcome to the Museum*. Big Picture Press, 2017.

Jenkins, Steve. *The Animal Book*. Clarion Books, 2013.

Research seahorses and their behavior and draw a seahorse life cycle. See these resources:

Seahorse Facts!

<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/animals/sea-life/seahorse-facts/>

Life Cycle Lesson for Kids

<https://www.generationgenius.com/plant-and-animal-life-cycle-lesson-for-kids/>

Falconer, Sam. *Life Cycles: Everything from Start to Finish*. DK, 2020.

Social Studies

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation at <https://welcomingschools.org/resources/lesson-plans-gender-identity-transgender-non-binary> has lesson plans about gender identity.

Many of these plans are based on picture books, which are fabulous resources at any age for learning about new perspectives. Read a picture book about gender identity and follow the lesson plan.

Major themes of this book are activism and diversity. Throughout the book, students at the lab shared causes and events that were meaningful to them. Some examples are:

- Solar power and climate change awareness
- Black Lives Matter Week of Action
- Women's History Month
- Queer Awareness Month
- Disease Literacy Month
- Hispanic Heritage Month
- AAPI Month
- Child labor awareness

Research one of these topics or another cause that has personal meaning to you. Keep notes and use what you learn to write a letter to someone who can help you take action. The Southern Poverty Law Center has a resource for writing a persuasive letter:

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/student-tasks/do-something/persuasive-letters>

Discussion Questions

How did Annabelle's father react to meeting Bailey? Why did he have such an emotional response?

What are the advantages of studying contemporary issues in social studies class?

How did Dixon change as a person as the book progressed?

Why does Dixon's mom get involved with the social studies curriculum? What are her arguments? What do you think? Have you heard these talking points before?

How does Julien change as the story progresses?

What kind of teacher is Amy? Why did she change the curriculum even though she clearly didn't want to? What would you have done?

Author online

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

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Bigelow, Lisa Jenn. *Drum Roll, Please*. HarperCollins, 2018.

Blake, Ashley Herring. *Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World*. Little, Brown, 2019.

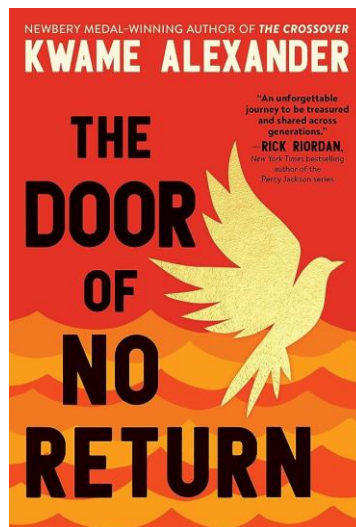
Bunker, Lisa. *Zenobia July*. Viking, 2019.

Clarke, Cat. *The Pants Project*. Sourcebooks, 2019.

Gino, Alex. *Melissa*. Scholastic, 2022.

Lukoff, Kyle. *Too Bright to See*. Dial, 2021.

Oshiro, Mark. *The Insiders*. HarperCollins, 2021.



Alexander, Kwame

THE DOOR OF NO RETURN

Little, Brown, 2022

ISBN: 978-0-316-44186-5

416 pp.

Grades 5 and up

Until the unthinkable happened, Kofi spent his carefree days swimming in the river Offin, playing oware with his grandfather, and trying to avoid his bully of a cousin. Kofi had been warned by his family to be careful around the water at night and that there are “Things about the water that you don’t know,” but one night Kofi ignores their warnings and goes for a late-night swim - and this mistake sends him on a journey of no return. This novel in verse is the first in a trilogy, starting in the West African Asante Kingdom of Ghana. Kofi’s journey will draw you in and break your heart - but this is a story that must not be missed.

Curriculum Connections

Themes: Family, food, storytelling, identity, love, fate vs. free will, coming of age, betrayal vs. loyalty, courage, tradition.

Social Studies/Geography

Kofi is approaching age 12 and there are many references to the ceremonies surrounding boys as they come of age in their community. Can you think of ceremonies that exist for boys and girls of similar age in the US? What are they and who celebrates them? What do they represent?

While the villages of Upper and Lower Kwanta are fictional, there is a River Ofin in Ghana and the Door of No Return is a real place located in the Elmina Castle on the Cape Coast. Pull up a map of Ghana, find the town of Elmina and find Elmina Castle. As you move North and slightly West, you will be in the region of Upper and Lower Kwanta. Approximately how far would it be from the start of the river Ofin to the coast?

Food, an important part of culture, makes an appearance throughout the book and is always a favorite topic for Kofi. He is either begging his mother to stop making yams or begging her for more of his favorite, Red Red sauce and plantains. Find out if yams and plantains are still staple crops in this region. And what is Red Red sauce? Does it really exist and if so, how is it made?

What have you learned about Europe or European colonization? What do you think about what you have been taught? Do you think you've been told the whole story?

Investigate and compare colonization in West Africa and the Americas. Set up a graphic organizer and research answers to the following questions:

Who were the groups colonized?

Who were the groups doing the colonization?

What areas of life were impacted - for example, education, language, family structure, religion, clothing?

What natural resources were exploited?

How did the government change?

How did the land "ownership" change?

Math

In the book, Nana Mosi is often found playing the game oware. You may have played the same "pit and pebble" game under a different name. According to historians, this may be one of the oldest games in the world. See what you can find out about where it is played, what it is called, and how the game changes from place to place. If you have the game, take it for a spin!

Make your own pit-and-pebble game. See instructions here:

<https://www.marbleskidsmuseum.org/make-your-own-mancala>

Music

Kofi mentions the dundun or talking drums several times. Talking drums have a rich history starting in Africa and they are still played today. Find out what is so unique about them and why they were outlawed for use by slaves in the U.S.

West African Talking Drum

http://www.mim.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2014-05-13-MIMkids-West-African-Talking-Drum_v3.pdf

This lesson plan from the Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) includes background information, instructions for making your own talking drum, and video clips of talking drum players.

Language Arts/Creative Writing

After reading *The Door of No Return*, see *The 1619 Project: Born on the Water*, a picture book by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renee Watson (Kokila, 2021). Compare and contrast the books' target audiences, text formats, and subject matter. Was this information new to you?

The 1619 Project Curriculum

<https://pulitzercenter.org/lesson-plan-grouping/1619-project-curriculum>

Discussion Questions

See the Little, Brown Educator Guide for *The Door of No Return* at <https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/DOOR-OF-NO-RETURN-EG.pdf>.

What do you know about precious gems and minerals found in Africa? What were the colonial powers most interested in taking from Ghana in the 1600s other than slaves? Are there items that we import today from Ghana? Foods? Gems? Minerals? Other?

In the book, a treaty exists between Upper Kwanta and Lower Kwanta to keep the villages at peace. Are the villages friendly? Explain how that peace breaks down when a son of Lower Kwanta dies in an accident at the hands of an Upper Kwanta youth.

What do you think of the naming traditions Kofi describes in "Names"? Do you know of any similar naming traditions? What do you notice? What do you wonder? (pp. 104-105)

Who is trading what in "The Transaction" (pp. 307-308)? What do you think is happening to Kofi?

What is the door of no return?

Author online

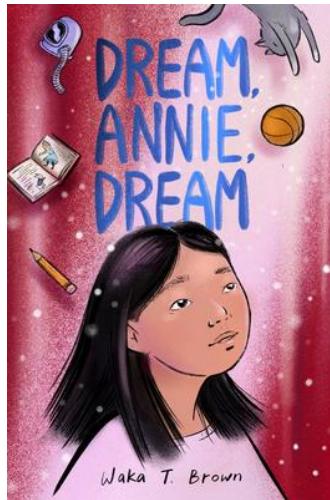
Website: kwamealexander.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/KwameAlexanderBooks

Twitter: twitter.com/kwamealexander

Instagram: www.instagram.com/kwamealexander

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/kwame-alexander-624b9a6



Brown, Waka T.
DREAM, ANNIE, DREAM
Quill Tree Books, 2022
ISBN: 978-0063017160
347 pp.
Grades 4 and up

Summary

As the daughter of Japanese immigrants, Annie Enoway has been raised to dream big – of starring roles in the theater, for example, or of taking her basketball skills to the NBA. But when Annie is passed over in favor of her best friend Jessica for lead roles in *Annie* and *The King and I*, her faith in her dreams begins to falter. Soon she finds herself navigating changing friendships, racial bias, and the opinions of others about what she can and cannot do as an Asian-American girl. Come cheer Annie on as she chases her big dreams in this inspiring coming-of-age story.

Curriculum Connections

Themes: Identity, racism, family, friendship, sexism, privilege.

Social Studies

The 1980s were a time of anti-Japanese sentiment due to trade friction with Japan. Because of this, there were few Japanese-American actors as role models for Annie and those few on television or in movies were often portrayed harshly. Research Asian-American

actors during this time period. What do you notice? Would Annie have more role models today in acting? In basketball?

Explore the model minority myth at <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/what-is-the-model-minority-myth>. What could be so bad about being part of a group that's seen as being successful?

From NPR, see "Model Minority Myth Again Used as a Racial Wedge Between Asians and Blacks"

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/04/19/524571669/model-minority-myth-again-used-as-a-racial-wedge-between-asians-and-blacks>

Physical Education

Learn about real-life NBA superstar Muggsy Bogues! See:

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2022/jun/22/muggsy-bogues-shortest-nba-player-charlotte-hornets-basketball>

Music

Both Annie and Jessica try out for parts in the musical *Annie*. Listen to Annie's audition song "Maybe" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXjvP7AeZ0o> and Jessica's audition song "Tomorrow" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yop62wQH498>.

See the film versions of *Annie* (1982) (PG) and *The King and I* (1956) (G).

Language Arts/Creative Writing

Annie takes the classic tale *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and writes her own spin on it for the school play. Try your hand at writing a fractured fairy tale! For example, try writing your own versions of *The Stinky Cheese Man*, *Ninja Red Riding Hood* or *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*.

See Writing Lesson: Fractured Fairy Tales at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f34wjFQy3s>.

Science

Learn about the science behind Annie's successful free throws at <https://www.usab.com/youth/news/2010/01/the-science-behind-your-free-throws.aspx>

Cooking

For the International Food Bazaar, Annie's mom volunteers to make a family favorite - gyoza. Try making gyoza (see recipes at <https://www.justonecookbook.com/vegetable-gyoza/>) and then research what kinds of dumplings come from different ethnic groups.

See: <https://firstwefeast.com/eat/2015/09/10-countries-10-ways-to-eat-dumplings>

Discussion Questions

Annie's teacher, Mrs. Olds, has been known to make sexist remarks favoring the boys and belittling the girls during their math class. If you were in this class, what are some actions you could take to combat this blatant sexism?

While visiting a new Japanese-American doctor for Annie, Annie's mom reads an article in *Time Magazine* about overachieving Asian whiz kids. Soon her heart is set on Annie going to medical school and Annie is afraid that her dreams of the stage or NBA might not be as secure as she thought. How does Annie feel when she finds out that her mom does not support her dreams? How is Annie handling her dreams of acting or playing basketball vs. her parents' dreams of her becoming a doctor or a mathematician?

Annie remembers her mother's stories about her pride in graduating from college and becoming a flight attendant - but, as the years went on, her mother became more withdrawn, shy, and reserved. It is only when she meets Mrs. Wright (Kent's mom) that things begin to change for Mrs. Inoue. What happens and why?

Annie and Jessica have been best friends since they were little girls and as the story opens, it seems that they still are. But soon cracks begin to form in their friendship. When do you first notice a shift in their relationship? If you could give Annie friend advice, how would you help her navigate this tricky time? Have you ever had a friend drama that had to be handled gently?

Why do you think there is so much tension between Jessica and Natalie?

How is Natalie a more supportive friend to Annie than Jessica is?

Annie has a very different relationship with her two parents. How is she with her mom? In what ways are they similar or different? What about her dad? How do you think that dynamic affects the parents' relationship?

At the beginning of the novel, Annie is blissfully unaware of any micro-aggressions directed at her or her family - but as time goes on, she begins to have a sense of things that just don't feel or sound right. Mrs. Kelly can't pronounce her mom's name so just calls her Jackie, and tells her mom that she "looks like a doll" in her kimono. Community members treat the Enoue family ethnicity as interchangeable. When does Annie start to recognize subtle and blatant racism in her friends and community?

Author online

Website: <https://wakatbrown.com/>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/W_T_Brown

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/w_t_brown/

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Brown, Waka T. *While I Was Away*. Quill Tree Books, 2021.
Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Harper Collins, 1992.
Kim, Jessica. *Stand Up, Yumi Chung!* Puffin, 2021.
Shang, Wendy-Wan Long. *The Great Wall of Lucy Wu*. Scholastic, 2013.
Shen, E. L. *The Comeback*. Square Fish, 2022.
Yang, Kelly. *Front Desk*. Scholastic, 2018.
Yun, Erin. *Pippa Park Raises Her Game*. Fabled Films Press, 2021.



Karina Yan Glaser
A DUET FOR HOME
Clarion, 2022
ISBN: 978-0-54487-640-8
368 pp.
Grades 5 and up

Summary

Huey House, a homeless shelter, is home for Tyrell and his mother while she is out of work, and now for June and family, after the traumatic loss of her father leaves them adrift. Both kids find solace in classical music and connect over music lessons with a persnickety neighbor. When proposed changes in the city's homelessness policies threaten the housing program, June and Tyrell rally the residents of Huey House to fight for the organization that has meant so much to them.

Curriculum Connections

Music

June is a student of the viola and Tyrell starts to learn violin. Research the two instruments. See:

Nelson, Sheila M. *The Violin and Viola: History, Structure, Techniques*. Dover Publications, 2003.

Pinksterboer, Hugo. *Tipbook Violin and Viola*. Hal Leonard, 2008.

Storey, Rita. *The Violin and Other Stringed Instruments*. Smart Apple Media, 2009.

Learn about and listen to the two instruments:

<https://philharmonia.co.uk/resources/instruments/viola/>

<https://philharmonia.co.uk/resources/instruments/violin/>

How are they similar? What are the main differences in appearance?

How do they sound? What factors contribute to the differences in sound?

Are they played the same way? What skills are transferable from one instrument to the other?

Several composers were mentioned in the course of the story. Learn something about them and listen to samples of their music.

For information on the lives of the musicians, see:

Krull, Kathleen. *Lives of the Musicians: Good Times, Bad Times (and What the Neighbors Thought)*. Clarion Books, 2013.

Venezia, Mike. Getting to Know the World's Greatest Composers series. Children's Press.

For musical selections, see:

Five Minutes That Will Make You Love Bach

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/arts/music/classical-music-bach.html>

Telemann's Viola Concerto in G Major

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

The Best of Johan Pachelbel

<https://www.cmuse.org/best-of-johann-pachelbel/>

Johannes Brahms Lullaby

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t894eGoymio>

Which composer do you like best? What do you like about them?

Social Studies

Learn about homelessness. Vermont is currently undergoing a housing crisis with one of the highest rates of unhoused individuals in the country. The Vermont Department of Human Services has information about the challenge and some of the resources available. Identify three resources that could help someone in need of housing and answer the following questions:

How hard was it to learn that this resource existed?

Who can use this resource? Is it limited by age or gender? Do you need to have a phone or access to the internet to access this program or resource?

Is there a waiting period? Is the program temporary, like the proposed changes to Huey House? Are there other terms or limitations to which individuals must comply?

Research the problem and write to a legislator. Your voice is valuable. Read some recent articles about changes in homelessness policies. A teacher, parent, or librarian can help you to find the most up-to-date reporting at the local level. Let those who serve in the government know how you feel about the homelessness crisis. Here are some ways to contact government officials in Vermont:

Write to the governor at <https://vermontce.my.vermont.gov/s/governor-office-ce> This form makes reaching the governor easy!

Write to a Vermont Congressperson. See <https://legislature.vermont.gov/>. Find out who your representative is and how to contact him/her/they.

Discussion Questions

What were some of the situations that led to the families needing Huey House? Did you find it easier to relate to some families than others? Why do you think that is?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of June continuing to attend the same school after her housing situation changes?

Huey House was a home for many different people. Who was your favorite character and why?

Why was June's viola confiscated when she entered Huey House? Does the reasoning make sense to you? What would be a way to allow residents to practice music and what would the advantages be?

Why did Tyrell react so strongly to being called a criminal by June?

What kind of person is Dominica? Do you think she makes a good music teacher? Why or why not?

Author online

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

If you liked this book, you might also like:

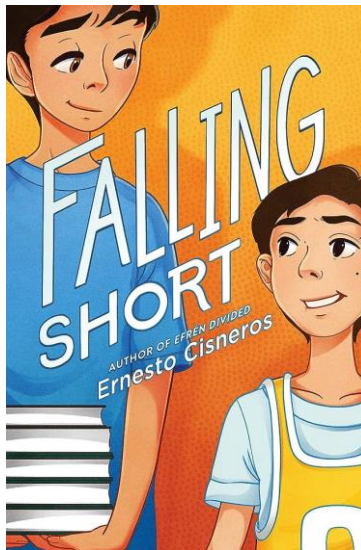
Applegate, Katherine. *Crenshaw*. Square Fish, 2017.

Jacobson, Jennifer Richard. *Paper Things*. Candlewick, 2017.

Nielsen, Susin. *No Fixed Address*. Yearling, 2020.

Stevenson, Nanci Turner. *Lizzie Flying Solo*. HarperCollins, 2019.

Venkatraman, Padma. *The Bridge Home*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2020.



Ernesto Cisneros

FALLING SHORT

Quill Tree Books, 2022

ISBN: 978-0-06288-172-4

304 pp.

Grades 5 and up

Summary

Isaac and Marco have always had each other's backs. Whether at school or home, their friendship is as solid as a rock. However, now that they are in middle school, their different strengths send them down different paths. Marco finds friends in his college-track classes, while Isaac is embraced by the basketball team. Can they still lift each other up while facing the new challenges that come from this next phase in their lives?

Curriculum Connections

Basketball

Read about basketball players who have defied the norm at:

<https://bleacherreport.com/articles/428189-out-of-the-ordinary-the-14-most-unique-players-in-nba-history>.

Pick one of these players or choose and research one of your own and make an informational “trading card” about them. What makes these atypical and exceptional players?

Coding

Marco and his friends talk about their favorite coding languages. Learn more about coding and experiment with one or more coding languages.

See:

Coding Games in Python. DK Children, 2018.

Garland, Ian. *Kids Can Code!* Sky Pony, 2019.

Morgan, Nick. *JavaScript for Kids*. No Starch Press, 2014.

Woodcock, John. *Coding Games in Scratch*. DK Children, 2019.

Experiment with Scratch for free at <https://scratch.mit.edu/>

Also see free programming resources at Khan Academy

<https://www.khanacademy.org/computing/computer-programming>

Try creating an animation or simple game of your own.

Discussion Questions

In what ways did Marco and Isaac support each other?

How were Marco and Isaac’s families different? What were the boys’ unique challenges, especially with their fathers?

What is a skill that you have tried to teach a friend? How did it go?

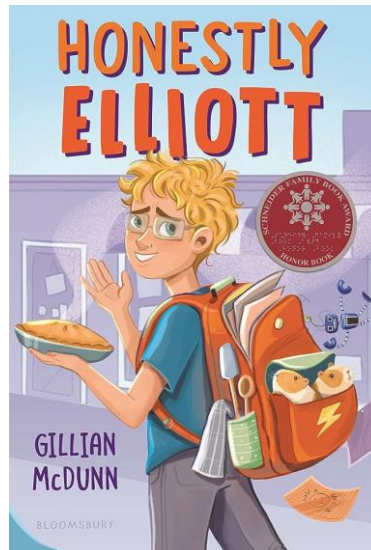
The boys find new friend groups in middle school. Which of their friends would you choose to hang out with?

Author online

<https://www.ernestocisneros.com/>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem, and Raymond Obstfeld. *Becoming Kareem*. Little, Brown, 2018.
Alexander, Kwame. *The Crossover*. Clarion, 2019.
Khan, Hena. *Zayd Saleem, Chasing the Dream*. Salaam Reads/Simon & Schuster, 2020.
Roberts, Barbara Carroll. *Nikki on the Line*. Little, Brown, 2020.
Shang, Wendy Wan-Long. *The Great Wall of Lucy Wu*. Scholastic, 2013.



Gillian McDunn
HONESTLY ELLIOTT
Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2022
ISBN: 978-1-54760-625-2
288 pp.
Grades 4 and up

Summary

Elliott is being thrown a lot of curveballs at once: his parents' divorce, a new half-sibling on the horizon, and a best friend who just moved away. Along with this, he is trying his best to manage the impulsivity and disorganization that accompanies his ADHD - and all together, these are making for a challenging school year. When his teacher assigns the class a project to create a business, he ends up partnered with Maribel, a popular and fastidious girl who, on the surface, seems like his polar opposite. However, it turns out that Maribel and Elliot share a love of cooking - a mutual interest that spawns not only their Desperation Pie business, but an unexpected friendship.

Curriculum Connections

Themes: family, friendship, divorce, ADHD.

Social/Emotional Learning

Elliott's ADHD is an important theme in this story. While his brain can make things more challenging, such as organization, it also makes him creative and empathetic. The recent film, *The Disruptors*, highlights the challenges and power of ADHD, featuring a number of successful and well-known individuals with ADHD. Check out the associated website at <https://disruptorsfilm.com/> for links to the film and other ADHD resources.

Research the individuals featured in the film or other famous people with ADHD: <https://www.additudemag.com/slideshows/famous-people-with-adhd/>

Cooking/Health

Maribel is not able to eat gluten - but she still makes some delicious pies. Learn more about gluten and gluten sensitivity.

See The Dish on Gluten at <https://healthpoweredkids.org/lessons/the-dish-on-gluten/>.

Try some gluten-free baking. See some great recipes here:

Gluten Free on a Shoestring
<https://glutenfreeonashoestring.com/>

Gluten-Free Baking
<https://www.kingarthurbaking.com/learn/guides/gluten-free>

Make your own Desperation Pies!
<https://www.lifeloveandsugar.com/vinegar-pie/>

Entrepreneurship

Elliott and Maribel are youth entrepreneurs. There are some amazing success stories of very young and successful businesspersons.

Bernstein, Daryl. *Better Than a Lemonade Stand: Small Business Ideas for Kids*. Aladdin/Beyond Words, 2012.

Bridges, Mozhiah, and Tamica Morris. *Mo's Bows: A Young Person's Guide to Start-Up Success*. Running Press, 2019.

Toren, Adam, and Matthew Toren. *Kidpreneurs: Young Entrepreneurs with Big Ideas!* Business Plus Media Group, 2009.

Yamada, Kobi. *What Do You Do With an Idea?* Compendium, 2014.

Check out these videos and then brainstorm your own business ideas!

Me and the Bees

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjqryyYbUII&t=99s>
<https://www.meandthebees.com/>

Mo's Bows

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzoGIR2RCrM>
<https://mosbowsmemphis.com/>

Discussion Questions

Elliot's divorced parents have very different homes and expectations of him. How does he manage these differences? Which house would you rather live in and why?

How do you think that Elliott's teachers view him as a student? Do you think this is accurate? Why or why not?

Maribel and Elliott seem like unlikely partners for a business or friendship. What makes their partnership and friendship successful?

How does Elliot's relationship with his father change over the course of the book? What contributes to these changes?

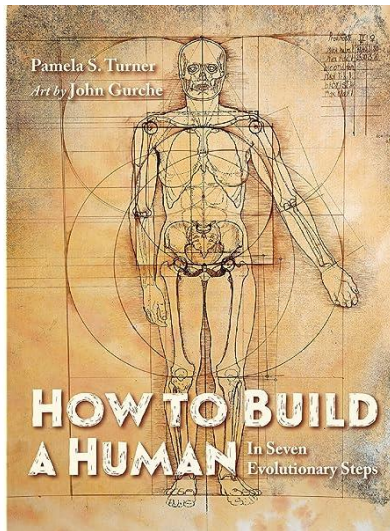
How does Elliot's opinion of himself change over the course of the book? What contributes to these changes?

Author online

Website: <https://www.gillianmcdunn.com/>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/gillianmcdunn/>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Bauer, Joan. *Hope Was Here*. Puffin, 2005.
Conklin, Melanie. *A Perfect Mistake*. Little, Brown and Company, 2022.
Faruqi, Saadia, and Laura Shovan. *A Place at the Table*. Clarion, 2022.
Guerrero, Tanya. *All You Knead is Love*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021.
Horvath, Polly. *Everything on a Waffle*. Square Fish, 2008.
Jackson, Alison. *Eggs Over Evie*. Henry Holt, 2010.
Lord, Cynthia. *Because of the Rabbit*. Scholastic, 2021.
Sumner, Jamie. *Roll With It*. Atheneum, 2020.
Yang, Kelly. *New From Here*. Simon and Schuster, 2022.



Pamela Turner
HOW TO BUILD A HUMAN
Charlesbridge, 2022
ISBN: 978-1-62354-250-4
176 pp.
Grades 5 and up

Summary

In this entertaining, up-to-date, and utterly fascinating account of human evolution, Pamela Turner traces the history of our species in seven steps from “We Stand Up” through “We Smash Rocks,” “We Invent Barbecue,” and “We Become Storytellers.” Substantive reader-friendly science presented with wit, humor, and some very cool footnotes.

Curriculum Connections

Science

One of the big unsolved questions of science today is “How did life begin?” There are a surprising number of theories. Make a list. Which do you think is the most likely? (For a start, see 7 Theories on the Origin of Life at <https://www.livescience.com/13363-7-theories-origin-life.html>.)

Lucy – an example of *Australopithecus afarensis* – is one of the most famous fossils in the world. Find out more about Lucy and her discovery. (See *The Lucy Man: The Scientist Who Found the Most Famous Fossil Ever* by CAP Saucier (Prometheus, 2011).)

Is Lucy still the oldest human ancestor skeleton ever found? Maybe not. Read about Ardi at <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/oldest-skeleton-human-ancestor-found-ardipithecus>.

Fossilized footprints tell scientists a lot about who made them. Try making your own footprint fossil. You'll need a cardboard box, damp sand, and plaster of Paris. (See <https://scoutermom.com/5744/making-plaster-prints/>.)

Research the cooking hypothesis. What are some of the ways in which cooking may have changed the human species? (See *Scientific American's* Cooking Up Bigger Brains at <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/cooking-up-bigger-brains/>.)

One of the oldest known hominin-made tools is a stone chopper now in the British Museum. This came from the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania and is somewhere between 1.8 and 2 million years old. Check out these images and descriptions of Stone Age tools from the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History: <https://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/behavior/stone-tools>.

Math

It's not how big your brain is that makes you smart; it's your brain to body weight ratio – though even that might not be a sure thing. Read about brain size, brain to body weight ratio, and intelligence at <https://www.livescience.com/largest-brain-body-size>.

See “What does brain size have to do with intelligence?” at <https://www.popsci.com/what-does-brain-size-have-to-do-with-intelligence/>.

Use this Animal Brain chart (<https://tasks.illustrativemathematics.org/content-standards/tasks/1520>) to calculate brain to body weight ratios for several different animals.

Language Arts/Creative Writing

How did hominins communicate before the development of spoken language? Come up with some ideas. Without words, how would you tell your friends “There's some yummy fruit down by the river” or “Run! There's a bear behind that tree!”

What was life like in the Stone Age? Do some research – and try writing your own Diary of a Stone Age Kid. See resources at Early Humans and the Stone Age at <https://www.rebeccaruppresources.com/blog/early-humans-and-the-stone-age/>.

Some scientists suggest that the world's oldest stories may have survived in geomythology – tales originating in ancient oral traditions that tell the stories of geologic phenomena, perhaps passed down for thousands of years. The story of Atlantis may be an example, based on the catastrophic eruption of a volcano on the Greek island of Santorini. See how many other examples you can find. See:

<https://theconversation.com/dinosaur-bones-became-griffins-volcanic-eruptions-were-gods-fighting-geomythology-looks-to-ancient-stories-for-hints-of-scientific-truth-162071>

The Arts

The famous Lucy fossil got her name from the Beatles' song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" that paleoanthropologist Donald Johanson and company played during their African expedition. Listen to it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mn9-4x7tmLM>.

Art dates back at least 45,500 years – which is the age of the oldest known cave painting of an animal, a life-sized picture of a wild pig found in a cave in Indonesia. Or maybe even older: some cave paintings in Spain are thought to be about 64,000 years old and were probably the work of Neanderthals. Research the history of cave art. (See Cave Art History at <https://edu.rsc.org/resources/cave-art-history/1528.article>.)

The first cartoons? Overlapping images on cave walls may have appeared to move when viewed by firelight. Read about it at <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn22585-prehistoric-cinema-a-silver-screen-on-the-cave-wall/>.

Make your own Paleolithic cave painting:
<https://www.annarbor.com/entertainment/parenting/make-your-own-paleolithic-cave-painting/>.

See Werner Herzog's 2010 film "Cave of Forgotten Dreams" (G), filmed inside the Chauvet caves of southern France. (For more information, see <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1664894/>.)

Discussion Questions

Scientists agree that we're in the midst of a catastrophic loss in biodiversity, primarily due to human activity. Why is biodiversity important – and what can we do to help reverse this trend?

Why is *Homo sapiens* – that is, us – the only hominin left standing? For more information, see this article from *Scientific American*:
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-is-homo-sapiens-the-sole-surviving-member-of-the-human-family/>.

In the 19th century, sociologist Herbert Spencer came up with the idea of "social Darwinism" – that is, the theory that individual people and businesses succeed or fail according to Darwin's evolutionary law of "survival of the fittest." Spencer opposed any laws helping the poor, since these, he argued, would interfere with the evolution of civilization by delaying the extinction of the "unfit." What do you think? Was Spencer right? Why or why not?

What did Darwin mean by "the fittest?"

What about eugenics? Was it a good idea gone wrong?

What makes us human? How are we different from our primate ancestors?

Author online

Pamela S. Turner: Author/Researcher

<https://www.pamelasturner.com/>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Keller, Michael. *Charles Darwin's On the Origin of Species: A Graphic Adaptation*. Rodale, 2009.

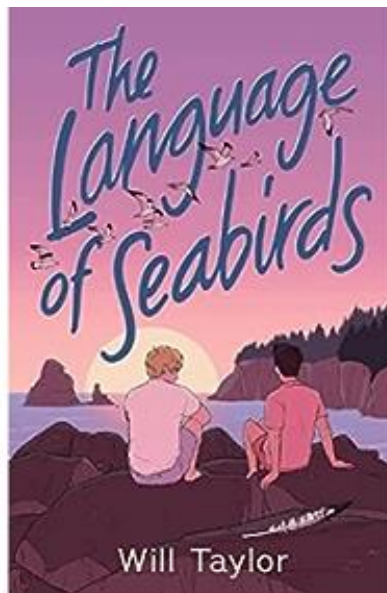
Kelly, Jacqueline. *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate*. Square Fish, 2011.

Loxton, Daniel. *Evolution: How We and All Living Things Came to Be*. Kids Can Press, 2010.

Ottaviani, Jim. *Primates*. Square Fish, 2015.

Peters, Lisa Westberg. *Our Family Tree*. Clarion, 2003.

Thimmesh, Catherine. *Lucy Long Ago*. Clarion, 2009.



Will Taylor

THE LANGUAGE OF SEABIRDS

Scholastic, 2022

ISBN: 978-1-33875-373-8

256 pp.

Grades 6 and up

Summary

After his parents' recent separation, Jeremy and his dad head to a cabin on the Oregon coast while his mom moves out of their house. The vacation is not a success – Jeremy's father, coping with grief by drinking, becomes more and more distant and curt. Things take a turn for the better, though, when Jeremy sees a boy running on the beach and meets Evan, with whom he forms a bond. This is a bittersweet story about a first crush – and about finding yourself, even when it seems that your family has come unmoored.

Curriculum Connections

Themes: Themes: identity, family, friendship, romance, alcoholism.

Science

In the book, Jeremy gets caught in a dangerous situation when the tide comes in and changes the geography of the beach.

See Charting the Tides at <https://nckingtides.web.unc.edu/educational-tools/charting-the-tides-lesson-plan-4th-and-6th-grades/>, a detailed lesson plan that provides background information, practice sheets, and hands-on activities. Many of the resources are available at two different levels, 4th and 6th grade, although this lesson can certainly be adapted for other grade/age levels.

Jeremy and Evan use different seabirds as a code for communication.

To learn about seabirds found on the Oregon Coast, see Seabirds of the Pacific Northwest at https://oregonmarinereserves.com/content/uploads/2016/08/PNW_Seabirds_Brochure_USFWS.pdf, a full-color, beautifully illustrated guide which also includes information about pollution and other threats to the well-being of the Oregon coast's bird population.

Choose one of the seabirds in this guide to research in more depth. Other resources include:

Vermont Online Library/Gale in Context

https://go.gale.com/ps/start.do?p=ITKE&u=vol_s2&sid=geolinks

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

<https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/#>

Audubon Adventures

<https://www.audubonadventures.org//adventures.htm>

Social Studies

Jeremy is reticent about telling his family that he is gay. There is a long history of discrimination against individuals that identify as gay, as well as a history of activism and pride within the LGBTQ+ community. Using the resources in the Understanding LGBTQ+ Identity toolkit at <https://vermont.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/lgbtq-identity/>, kids can explore this history and discover mirrors, windows, and doors of their own regardless of gender/sexual identity.

Art

There are many great art projects related to birds. For example, see:

Cut Paper Bird Collage

https://www.incredibleart.org/lessons/middle/baysinger_birds.html

In this lesson, students compare the very different art styles of bird artists John James Audobon and Charley Harper. They then use photographs of birds to create collages in the style of Charley Harper.

Learn to Draw Birds with David Sibley

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/summer-2020/learn-draw-birds-david-sibley>

The famed bird artist gives general advice on how to draw birds and shares videos on how to draw specific birds including an Arctic Tern and a Great Blue Heron.

Physical Education/Math

Will and Evan connect through running, and throughout the book, we witness the challenges, joys, and benefits of running. In NOVA's Marathon Challenge lesson at https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/activities/3414_marathon.html, kids learn about the effect of exercise on pulse rate by monitoring and recording their pulse before and after exercise and plotting this data on a graph.

Discussion Questions

The time on the Oregon coast with his dad could have been a time for Jeremy and his dad to reconnect during the divorce. How are Jeremy's dad's behavior and actions standing in the way of their forging a closer relationship? Why do you think Jeremy's dad acts the way that he does?

Evan has a very positive relationship with his grandmother. Why do you think he feels so comfortable with her? What does his grandmother say or do to help Evan know that it is safe to share with her?

Why do Jeremy and Evan choose specific birds for their secret language? Why do they feel that they need a secret language?

Author Online

Website: <https://www.willtaylorbooks.com/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/WillTaylorBooks/>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Bigelow, Lisa Jenn. *Drum Roll, Please*. Harper Collins, 2019.

Bildner, Phil. *A High Five for Glenn Burke*. Square Fish, 2021.

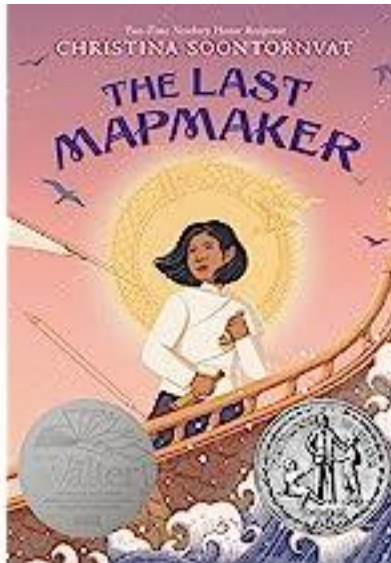
Blake, Ashley Herring. *Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World*. Little Brown Books, 2019.

Callender, Kacen. *King and the Dragonflies*. Scholastic, 2022.

Lucas, Chad. *Thanks a Lot, Universe*. Harry N. Abrams, 2022.

Ostertag, Molly Knox. *The Girl from the Sea*. Graphix, 2021.

Pancholy, Maulik. *The Best at It*. Balzer + Bray, 2020.



Soontornvat, Christina
THE LAST MAPMAKER
Candlewick, 2022
ISBN: 978-1536204957
368 pp.
Grades 5 and up

Summary

Set in a rich, Thai-inspired fantasy world. Twelve-year-old Sai could have a bright future if she sticks with her job as assistant to Paiyoon, the Mangkon Royal Navy's Master Mapmaker - but Sai has secrets. Born into poverty with a conman for a father, Sai constantly struggles to keep her origins a secret. When Paiyoon and Sai are asked to join a mapping expedition to the Southern Seas, Sai sees an opportunity to change her luck - but will have to decide who to trust and what sacrifices she is willing to make to chase her dreams.

Curriculum Connections

Themes: Family, fate, redemption, colonialism and privilege.

Social Studies

Create a map of the Great Southern Continent including the names Sai chose for the places she and Bo stayed: Sandflea Beach, Destitution Harbor, Starvation Point, and Deathfall Cove. Remember that Sai was trying to make the Sunderlands sound unappealing to others trying to journey there. Can you make your map look like a place people would not like to visit?

See How to Make a Fantasy Map at <https://www.skillshare.com/en/blog/how-to-make-a-fantasy-map-a-guide/>.

Most map experience now is digital, using such resources as Google Maps or Apple Maps. What do you know about the maps in the book? With what materials are Paiyoon's maps created? Is this true to life or just fantasy? Do we still create maps with these same materials?

Mapping Through the Ages

<https://www.gislounge.com/mapping-through-the-ages/>

Colonialism is a central theme of this book. The powerful island of Mangkon has taken over all the surrounding islands, exploiting their resources and degrading their environments. Choose a country that has been a colonizer. Who did they colonize? What did they gain? What was the effect on the colonized country? What was the impact on their language and culture? Discuss the wide-ranging effects of colonialism as seen in the real world and in the book.

Language Arts/Creative Writing

At the end of the book, Sai comes to some understanding about her father and the choices he made about her care and upbringing. She searches for him but is unable to find him. Craft a fictional letter that Sai might write to her father now that she understands his motivations.

Project ahead 10 years. What is life like for Sai and Bo?

Art

The slake that Sai and Bo encounter is a dragon-like creature. Choose a medium in which to create a slake or another mythical sea monster like Champ or Nessie.

Sea monsters and their inspirations

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/sea-monsters-inspiration-serpents-mermaids-the-kraken.html>

Discussion Questions

From Candlewick Press, see the Discussion Guide for *The Last Mapmaker* at https://soontornvat.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Last_Mapmaker_DG.pdf.

Why is Sai saving every penny to escape her only living relative, her father, Mud?

How is Master Paiyoon a mentor to Sai? What does he teach her? What does he value about her? Explain why Sai thinks Paiyoon is overlooking important information on the maps during the sea journey. What is he really doing and why?

In Mangkon, how does status impact a person at a young age? What's the significance of a lineal? What does it mean for a person to have many versus very few (or no) lineals? What would a lineal mean to Sai? How would it have made her life different? Is there anything in our culture that is similar to lineals?

Which character did you connect with the most? Why?

Master Paiyoon introduces Sai to the idea that Mangkon exploits other countries and strips them of resources. What are his examples? Why is he worried about the possibility of finding the Sunderlands? Why does he think the word "discovery" is used incorrectly? Can you think of examples of this in the real world? Discuss his comments on page 200 and relate them to Sangra's description of Mangkon as "an empire of cowards and thieves" (page 277).

Bo says to Sai, "It's not easy keeping up a lie day in and day out" (page 197). What lie is he talking about? What does Sai know about keeping up lies for a long time? Talk about the lies, deceptions, and secrets of various characters, including how Rian deceives others. What are some of the reasons that the characters lie? Discuss Sai's ability as a forger. How is forgery a form of deceit?

After Sai raises the alarm about Bo pickpocketing, she feels bad about snitching. She hears her father's voice saying, "Loyalty, Sai. Even a dog knows how important it is" (page 127). What does loyalty mean, and why does it matter? What is the relationship between loyalty and deceit? When else does it come up in the story? How do the adult whales show a form of loyalty to the captured baby whale?

Author online

Website: <https://soontornvat.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/christina.soontornvat>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/soontornvat>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/csoontornvat/>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/ChristinaSoontornvat>

If you liked this book, you might also like

Alston, B.B. *Amari and the Night Brothers*. Balzer+Bray, 2021.

Avi. *Gold Rush Girl*, Candlewick, 2020.

Barnhill, Kelly. *The Girl Who Drank the Moon*. Algonquin, 2016.

Beatty, Robert. *Willa of the Wood*. Hyperion, 2018.

Colfer, Chris. *The Land of Stories*. Little, Brown, 2012.

Gartner, Ben. *The Eye of Ra*. Crescent Vista Press, 2021.

George, Jessica Day. *Dragon Slippers*. Bloomsbury, 2007.

Mafi, Tahereh. *Furthermore*. Dutton Books, 2017.



Lisa Yee

MAIZY CHEN'S LAST CHANCE

Random House, 2022

ISBN: 978-1-98483-025-8

288 pp.

Grades 5 and up

Summary

Spending the summer in Last Chance, Minnesota, where her grandparents run the Golden Palace Restaurant, was not what Maizy Chen had hoped for. She and her family are the only Asian-Americans in this small midwestern town. During her poker-playing sessions with her dying Grandpa (Opa), Maizy learns about the historical challenges that have faced Chinese immigrants - and that are still on-going. When Bud, the restaurant's iconic bear statue, is stolen and then vandalized with hate speech, Maizy finds unexpected friends in Last Chance as she investigates the crime. This story reminds us that a caring community can overcome the hateful words and actions of a few - and that there's always room for food and celebration.

Curriculum Connections

Themes/Topics: immigration, friendship, racism, family.

Cross-Curricular

From Penguin Random House, see the Educator's Guide accompanying *Maizy Chen's Last Chance* at https://images.randomhouse.com/promo_image/9781984830258_8641.pdf. Included are activities, resources, and discussion questions.

Social Studies

Much of the story focuses on the story of how Maizy's family immigrated to the United States, including obstacles and successes over the generations.

From the New York Historical Society, the Chinese-American Exclusion/Inclusion exhibit at <https://chineseamerican.nyhistory.org/> does a remarkable job of sharing the stories of Chinese immigration and history through documents, interviews, artifacts, and more. Many parts of the exhibit can be accessed online. Make sure to check out the related curriculum guide at <https://chineseamerican.nyhistory.org/education/>.

The Chinese Historical Society of America at <https://chsa.org/> has a wealth of resources, including a virtual tour of the Exclusion/Inclusion exhibit above (see <https://chsa.org/virtual-exhibits/>).

Asian Americans at <https://www.pbs.org/weta/asian-americans/> is a PBS documentary that gives a history of Asian-Americans through personal stories. While it does not exclusively focus on Chinese-Americans, there are segments that refer to some of the history mentioned in the novel.

Language Arts/Creative Writing

Maizy's curiosity is piqued about her family's history by the photographs of young Chinese men in the office of the restaurant. The expression "a picture is worth a thousand words" exists for a reason. The exhibit Portrait of America at <http://www.portraitofamerica.org/the-portraits/> features large-scale photographs of recent

immigrants. Choose one of the photos from the exhibit, list questions that you would ask this person about their experiences, and discuss what you can infer about their life from the photograph and/or words shared.

Discussion Questions

Maizy and her grandfather spend a lot of time playing poker together. He uses the game to teach Maizy some life lessons by using poker as a metaphor for life. What are some examples of the lessons that he teaches Maizy through the game of poker? How do they apply to her life?

What meaning does the bear statue in front of the Golden Palace restaurant hold for Maizy's family and the community? Can you think of a statue, building, or piece of public art that is meaningful for your family or community?

When the bear statue was first stolen, who did you suspect and why? Were you correct? If not, were you surprised about the actual person who stole it and why?

Maizy figures out a way to put her own fortunes into the fortune cookies for specific customers. What is the purpose of the fortunes that she writes? How do customers respond to them? Can you think of a fortune that you would write for a friend or family member?

Make your own fortune cookies

<https://www.fifteenspatulas.com/fortune-cookies/>

Author online:

Website: <http://www.lisayee.com/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/lisayee1/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LisaYeeAuthor/>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Johnson, Varian. *The Parker Inheritance*. Scholastic, 2019

Khan, Hena. *Amina's Voice*. S&S Books, 2019.

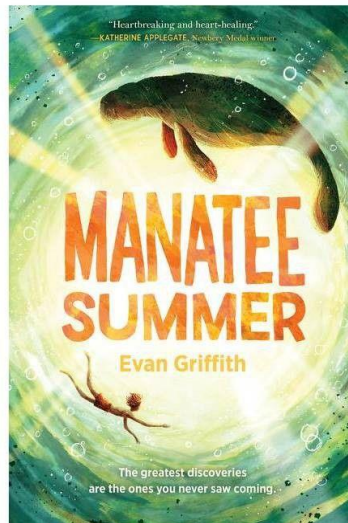
Khor, Shing Yin. *The Legend of Auntie Po*. Kokila, 2021.

Oh, Ellen. *Finding Junie Kim*. HarperCollins, 2022.

Park, Linda Sue. *Prairie Lotus*. Clarion, 2022.

Wang, Andrea. *The Many Meanings of Meilan*. Kokila, 2022.

Yang, Kelly. *Front Desk*. Scholastic, 2019.



Evan Griffith
MANATEE SUMMER
Quill Tree Books, 2022
ISBN: 978-0-06309-491-8
288 pp.
Grades 4 and up

Summary

Peter is looking forward to a summer of adventures with his best friend Tommy, recording nature finds in their discovery journal and searching for the elusive manatees that are said to inhabit the canals near his Florida home. Peter's plans take a hit when he is given the responsibility of caretaking his increasingly forgetful grandfather while his mother works - and discovers that Tommy is moving away. Despite Peter's new normal, he manages to discover a manatee close to his home. When the manatee is injured by a speed boat, Peter embraces the role as her protector and begins a fight that will impact him and his community for years to come.

Curriculum Connections

Science

Learn about manatees!

The Florida Wildlife Commission Teacher Resources site has a link to a printable workbook about manatees for grades 3-7, plus a plethora of other related links. See <https://myfwc.com/education/wildlife/manatee/for-teachers/>.

What is the difference between endangered, threatened, and extinct species?

Create a chart showing examples of species in each category and the reason they are in trouble or became extinct. Discuss ways of helping threatened and endangered species.

Example:

Species	Endangered, threatened or extinct	Why?	Other info
Northern Long Eared Bat	Endangered	White Nose Syndrome is killing many bats	Bats are found in Vermont

Take a virtual visit to a manatee haven in Crystal River, FL, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAGrsX53Nyc>.

Language Arts

Create your own Discovery Journals. Follow these easy steps to create simple journals, complete with pockets to store small nature discoveries. You'll need lunch-sized paper bags, glue sticks, scissors, a hole punch, paper, yarn or ribbon, and markers or crayons. See <https://ilovemykidsblog.net/2017/06/paper-bag-journal-craft.html>.

Why are manatees starving? Research what is currently causing the deaths of hundreds of Florida manatees.

Write a persuasive essay explaining why help is needed to deal with the pollution-causing algae that are eradicating the manatees' primary food source. See <https://www.savethemanatee.org/news/seagrass-awareness-shines-spotlight-on-critical-food-source-for-manatees/>.

Art

Create a 3-D Manatee

<http://manatipr.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/SMC-3DCraftInstructions.pdf>

Discussion Questions

Peter's mom gives him the responsibility of taking care of grandfather who has Alzheimer's disease during summer vacation. Do you think this was a fair thing to ask of him? Do you ever feel your parents give you too many responsibilities?

Peter and Tommy share a Discovery Journal where they record new experiences they have in nature. What is something that you might record if you had a journal?

Why did Peter name the manatee Zoe? Do you think that was an appropriate name for her? What would you name a manatee?

Tommy is afraid of water, even though he knows how to swim. What do you think caused him to decide to swim with Peter and the group of manatees?

Why does Peter become so mad at Tommy? Are they able to fix their friendship? Have you ever had a friend move away? Were you able to stay friends or did the friendship fade away?

Vocabulary

1. Quivering (pp. 37, 201)
2. Extracurricular (p. 26)
3. Analyst (p. 5)
4. Transferred (p.196)
5. Conspiracy (p. 207)
6. Pertinent (p. 222)
7. Comprehensive (p. 225)
8. Craggy (p. 227)
9. Polarized (p. 237)
10. Subset (p. 207)

Author online

Evan Griffith

<https://www.evangriffithbooks.com/>

Evan Griffith interview with Vermont College of Fine Arts

https://wildthings.vcfa.edu/manatee-summer-evan-griffith/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=manatee-summer-evan-griffith

Instagram: evangriffith14

Twitter: @Evan_Griffith

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Allen, Kate. *The Line Tender*. Puffin, 2020.

Dee, Barbara. *Haven Jacobs Saves the Planet*. Aladdin, 2022.

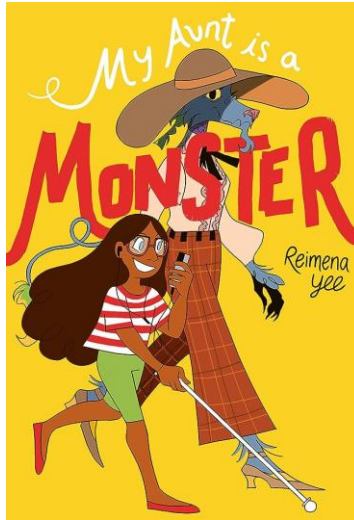
Kelly, Lynne. *Song for a Whale*. Yearling, 2019.

Kurlansky, Mark. *World Without Fish*. Workman, 2014.

Liu, Sylvia. *Manatee's Best Friend*. Scholastic, 2021.

Lourie, Peter. *Manatee Scientists*. Clarion Books, 2011.

Parry, Rosanne. *A Whale of the Wild*. Greenwillow, 2021.
Rorby, Ginny. *How to Speak Dolphin*. Scholastic, 2017.



Reimena Yee
MY AUNT IS A MONSTER
Random House Graphic, 2022
ISBN: 978-0-59312-546-5
336 pp.
Grades 4 and up

Summary

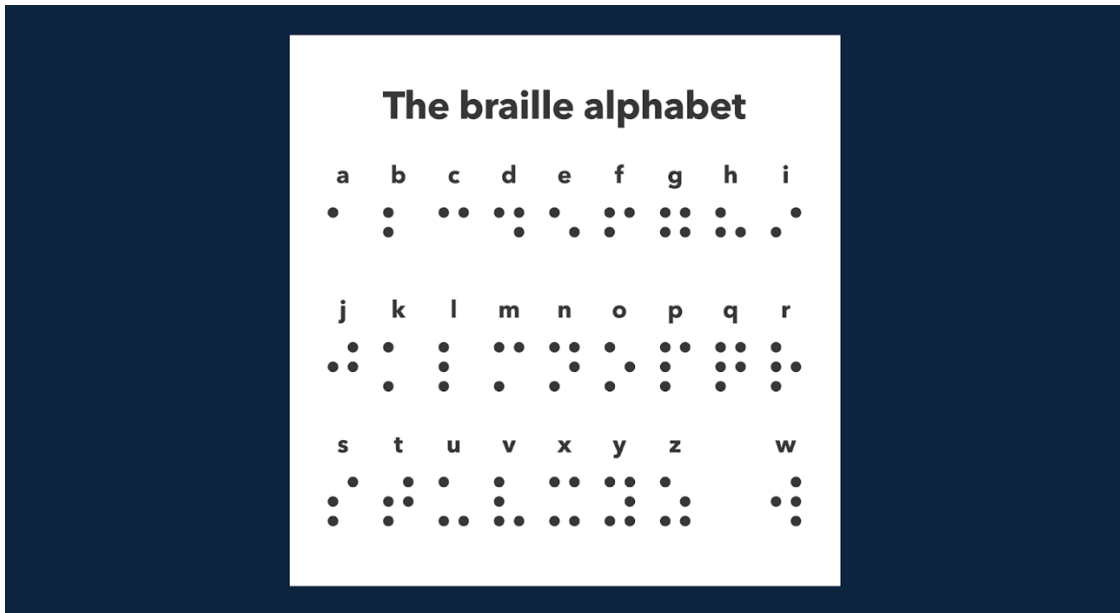
Orphaned Safia Haziz, who is blind, is taken in by her aunt, Lady Whimsy - a.k.a. the World's Greatest Adventurer - who has been turned into a blue-furred, wolf-like monster by a mysterious curse. When Lady Whimsy's arch-nemesis, Pineapple Tart, resurfaces, Safia and Aunt Whimsy set off to track her down via ocean cruise and jungle exploration. This vivid and colorful graphic novel is a delightful romp.

Curriculum Connections

Themes: Travel, journalism, art, disability, monsters, graphic novel format.

Language Arts/Creative Writing

Safia reads in Braille. This is the Braille alphabet (from Perkins School for the Blind).
Read more about it: <https://www.perkins.org/how-the-braille-alphabet-works/>



Use this site for Braille translation: <https://www.brailletranslator.org/>.

Safia also listens to audio books. *My Aunt is a Monster* is not yet available on audio, but students can listen to another graphic novel as an audiobook. How is the story told when you can't see the illustrations?

*Vermont has an ABLE Library that serves patrons who are blind and visually impaired. They supply Braille and talking books to anyone in Vermont that needs them. See <https://able.vermont.gov/>.

Lady Whimsey's quarterly magazine, *Observations*, took her all over the world to investigate strange phenomena. Some of her articles included "The Man with a Very Long and Strong Mustache" (issue 1); "Mysterious Animal" (issue 15); and "The Most Charming Taxidermies" (issue 101).

-What are some ideas you would write about for this magazine? Brainstorm three wild and wacky happenings or places. - and try writing an article of your own.

Art

Reimena Yee does most of her illustrating on the computer. Try this program to make your own graphic panel: <https://www.storyboardthat.com/storyboard-creator>.

Or print out paper templates and draw your story by hand:
<https://www.kidlit.tv/2016/10/how-to-make-a-comic/>

Discussion Questions

The idea of an obscured or hidden monster is a theme in literature, such as “Beauty and the Beast.” What are some other stories that feature monsters that may not be fully revealed to the main character or the reader? Does Safia’s opinion of her aunt change once she knows what Lady Whimsy’s true appearance is?

Safia is delighted to make a friend when she meets Hebe. They swear to go on adventures together, yet Hebe betrays Safia. How does Safia forgive Hebe? Does the end of the story hint that they may still be friends with adventures ahead?

Aunt Cathryn and Lady Whimsy give Safia an “adventure kit” which contains new bedtime story cassettes, a diary, a sketchbook, a recorder; and a receptacle for keeping everything. What would be the essential items in your adventure kit? Draw or list them.

For Lady Whimsy and Aunt Cathryn, Safia’s adventure kit is a “reminder that whenever you feel sad or lost in this big world, you’ll always have a home. And people who love and support you.” How do you define home? What items represent your home?

“According to the Cooperative Children’s Book Center’s 2019 study (<https://ccblogc.blogspot.com/2020/06/the-numbers-are-in-2019-ccbc-diversity.html>), only 3.4% of children’s books have disabled main characters. Compare this statistic with the CDC’s finding that 26% of Americans have disabilities (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html>) and it’s easy to see there’s a problem.”

See this article from Book Riot on “The Current State of Representation of Disability in Children’s books (<https://bookriot.com/disability-representation-in-childrens-books/>).

What other books have you read or can you find that feature disabled characters? Make a list.

Safia is a main character who is disabled and multidimensional.

See these resources for selecting books that represent characters with disabilities:

-Schneider Family Book Award <https://www.ala.org/awardsgrants/schneider-family-book-award>

Lee and Low publishers

<https://blog.leeandlow.com/2019/05/28/how-to-critically-select-childrens-books-with-representations-of-disability-experiences/>

Author online

<https://reimenayee.com/>

Podcast - “Reading with your Kids,” *My Aunt is a Monster*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GivTJHL1Smg>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Anderson, John David. *Sidekicked*. Walden Pond Press, 2014.

Brallier, Max. *The Last Kids on Earth* series. Viking Books for Young Readers, 2015-2021.

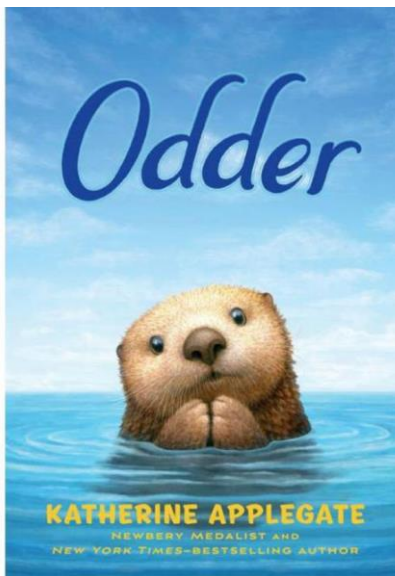
Gardner, Whitney. *Long Distance*. Simon & Schuster, 2021.

Lawrence, Mike. *Star Scouts*. First Second, 2017.

LeZotte, Ann Clare. *Show me a Sign*. Scholastic, 2020.

Sorosiak, Carlie. *Leonard (My Life as a Cat)*. Walker Books, 2022.

Venable, Colleen AF. *Katie the Catsitter*. Random House, 2021.



Katherine Applegate

ODDER

Feiwel & Friends

ISBN-13 :978-1250147424

228 pp.

Grades 4 and up

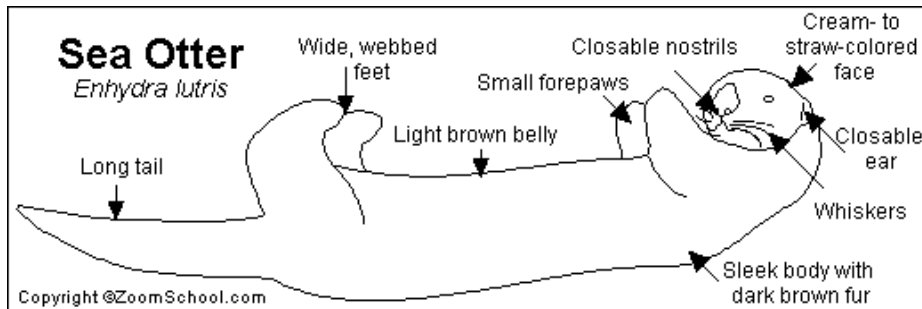
Summary

Mischievous and inquisitive Odder spends her days in the Pacific waters off the coast of Monterey Bay, California. When one of her adventures leads to trouble, Odder must rely on the human scientists at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Center for help. This gentle tale based on the real Monterey Bay Aquarium Center Otter Rehabilitation Program will have readers falling in love with Odder as they learn about her resilient species and the steps being made to ensure their survival.

Curriculum Connections

See A Teacher's Guide to Odder at <http://www.mackidsschoolandlibrary.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ODDER-TeachersGuide-A-1.pdf> which includes discussion questions and activities.

Science



Take a virtual field trip to the Monterey Bay Aquarium to learn about their extraordinary sea otter rehabilitation program.

<https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/animals-a-to-z/sea-otter>

Watch the live cam of the otters living at the Aquarium.

<https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams/sea-otter-cam>

Teaching Guide for activity on “How Muscle Cells Keep Otters Warm”

https://www.sciencenews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/081421_FullGuide.pdf

Sea otters are rebounding from near-extinction

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/article/sea-otters-comeback-california-alaska-feature?loggedin=true&rnd=1693778993076>

Art

Make a Paper Bag Otter Craft:

<https://buggyandbuddy.com/sea-otter-craft/>

Language Arts/Creative Writing

Write haikus about sea otters and illustrate using Japanese woodblock printing.

<https://thecraftyclassroom.com/crafts/japan-crafts-for-kids/japan-woodblock-printing-art-project/>

Example:

Sea otters dive deep
Beneath the cold blue waters
Clowns under the waves

Math

One Way or the Otter

<https://bedtimemath.org/fun-math-otters/>

Discussion Questions

How does the cover of *Odder* make you feel? Was this illustration a good choice for the cover? Do you think that the cover of a book affects how you choose a book?

After reading *Odder*, do you feel like you want to help an environmental cause? If so, which one?

Odder's nickname is "The Queen of Play." Do you think that is a good name for her? How does being "The Queen of Play" get her into trouble?

Why are the otters at the aquarium given numbers, not names? What does it mean when an otter is given a real name? Do you think the name the scientist gave Odder was a good fit for her?

At first Odder is sad when she learns that the scientists have given her a name. What happens to change her outlook and give her hope again?

Vocabulary

1. Aloft (p. 9)
2. Aloof (p. 11)
3. Pirouettes (p. 18)
4. Succulent (p. 21)
5. Slough (p. 24)
6. Frenzied (p. 56)
7. Vaulted (p. 130)
8. Peppered (p. 156)
9. Vague (p. 191)
10. Luxurious (p. 210)

Author online

Website: <https://katherineapplegate.com>

Video Interview: <https://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/applegate>

Katherine Applegate discusses *Odder*
<https://www.thechildrensbookreview.com/2022/10/katherine-applegate-discusses-odder>

Twitter: @kaaauthor

Instagram: kaaauthor

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Lorentz, Dayna. *Wayward Creatures*. Clarion, 2022.

Maguire, Gregory. *Cress Watercress*. Candlewick, 2022.

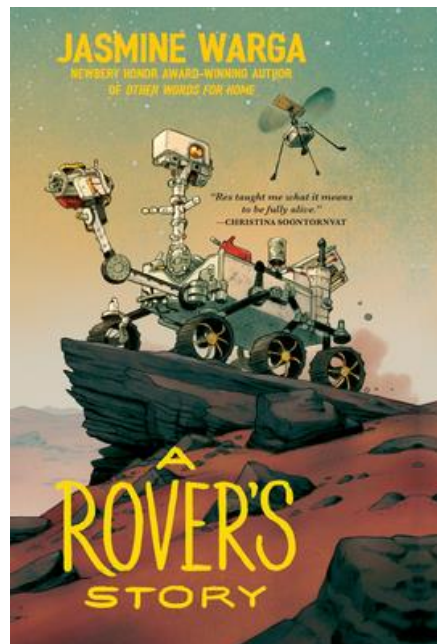
Newman, Patricia. *Sea Otter Heroes*. Lerner Publishing Group, 2017

Parry, Rosanne. *A Wolf Called Wander*. Greenwillow, 2021.

Pennypacker, Sara. *Pax*. Balzer + Bray, 2019.

Perkins, Lynne Rae. *Nuts to You*. Greenwillow, 2016.

Seidler, Tor. *Firstborn*. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2016.



Jasmine Warga

A ROVER'S STORY

Balzer + Bray, 2022

ISBN: 978-0-06311-392-3

320 pp.
Grades 4 and up

Summary

Meet Resilience - Res for short - a Mars Rover. His designers, including Middle Eastern roboticist Rania, don't realize that there's more to Res than expected: he experiences emotions, appreciates music, makes friends with other robots, and most importantly, decides the fate of his own mission. The story is told through journal-like entries and letters to Res from Rania's daughter, Sophie. Be prepared to fall in love with this hilarious and sweet Rover, and his sidekick, the helicopter drone Fly.

Curriculum Connections

Themes: space & astronomy, letter writing, robotics, coding.

See this (multi-book) Teaching Guide from Harper Collins:
<https://b0f646cfbd7462424f7a-f9758a43fb7c33cc8adda0fd36101899.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/teaching-guides/TG-9780063113923.pdf>

Science

Make a simple robot

<https://www.progressiveautomations.com/blogs/how-to/how-to-make-diy-robots-with-kids>

Make a cardboard Mars Rover

<https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/edu/learn/project/make-a-cardboard-rover/>

From NASA, see this Mars 2020 Mission Overview:

<https://mars.nasa.gov/mars2020/mission/overview/>

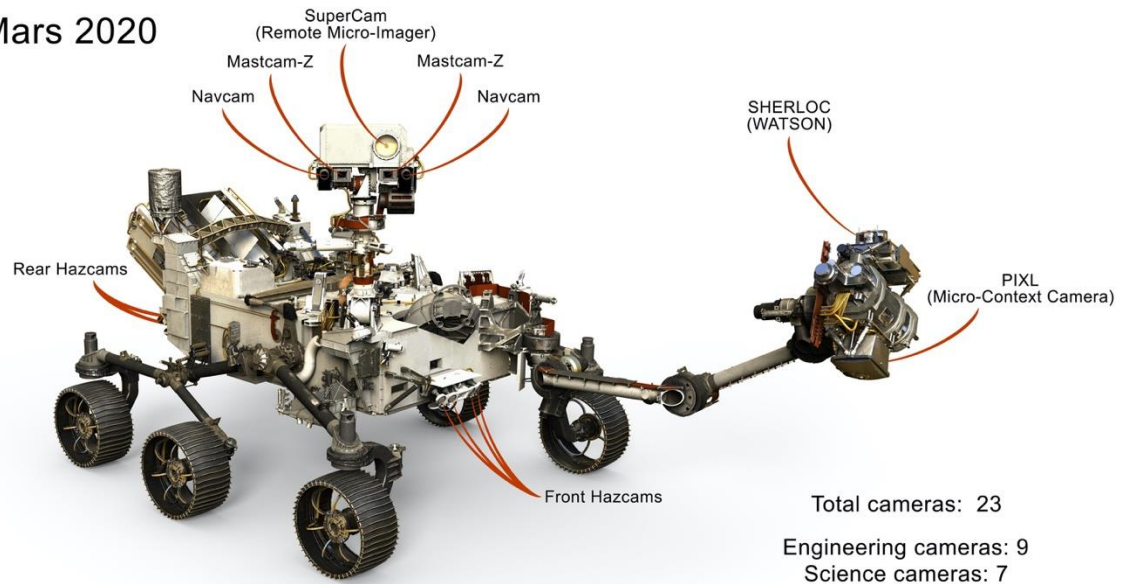
See the National Geographic documentary "Curiosity: The Life of a Mars Rover" (47 minutes):

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/tv/movies-and-specials/curiosity-life-of-a-mars-rover>

What's in a Mars Rover? See:

<https://mars.nasa.gov/mars2020/spacecraft/rover/cameras/>

Mars 2020



Discussion Questions

Sophie, Rania's daughter, is in constant communication with Resilience through her letters. From Sophie's letters, what evidence can we glean about Rania's relationship with her daughter? Do Sophie's letters change as she gets older?

Res spends a lot of time recording noises from the cave and trying to determine what they are. What do you think is making the sounds? Do we ever find out for certain?

Res develops emotions that sometimes cause him to ignore commands from NASA - and also cause him to experience joy and sadness. Is it really possible for robots to have emotions? What emotions did you experience when reading this book?

Journey often says "Beeps and boops," after which Res creates his own phrase, "Zappedty zip." Make up your own saying that represents frustration or excitement.

Why do you think the author included Rania's illness as a part of the story? Did you worry that she wouldn't survive?

Author online

<http://jasminewarga.com/>

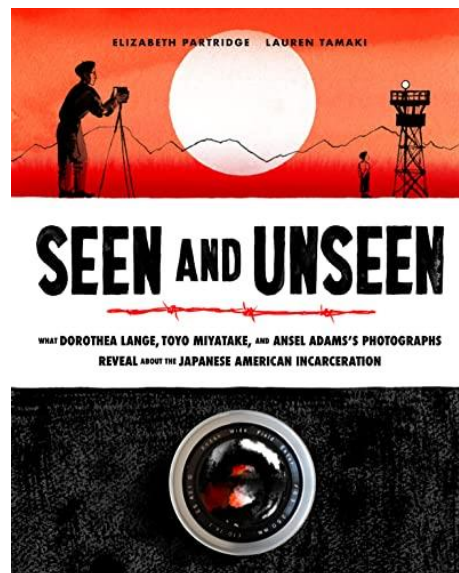
From the Washington Post, see "*A Rover's Story* grew out of a little girl's empathy:"

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/kidspost/2022/11/29/rovers-story-jasmine-warga/>

Q&A With Jasmine Warga <https://diversebooks.org/blog-qa-with-jasmine-warga-a-rovers-story/>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Brown, Peter. *The Wild Robot*. Little, Brown, 2020.
Emerson, Kevin. *Last Day on Mars*. Walden Pond Press, 2018.
Holm, Jennifer L. *The Lion of Mars*. Yearling, 2022
Motum, Markus. *Curiosity: The Story of a Mars Rover*. Candlewick, 2018.
Roach, Mary. *Packing for Mars for Kids*. Norton Young Readers, 2022.
Rusch, Elizabeth. *The Mighty Mars Rovers*. Clarion, 2017.
Thimmesh, Catherine. *Team Moon*. Clarion, 2015.



Elizabeth Partridge
SEEN AND UNSEEN
Chronicle Books, 2022
ISBN: 978-1-45216-510-3
132 pp.
Grades 5 and up

Summary

The story of the World War II incarceration of Japanese-Americans in internment camps is told through the eyes of three very different photographers: Dorothea Lange, who opposed the camps; Toyo Miyatake, a professional photographer and camp inmate; and Ansel Adams, who favored the Japanese-American imprisonment. This creatively designed book combines the original photographs with drawings, quotations, text, and reproductions of historical documents.

Curriculum Connections

History

The United States entered World War II after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Research the attack. Why did the Japanese decide to attack Pearl Harbor? Why was the United States caught by surprise?

Blinick, Naomi. *Beneath Pearl Harbor: Young Reader Edition*. Best Publishing, 2018.

Messner, Kate. *History Smashers: Pearl Harbor*. Random House, 2021.

Serrano, Christy. *The Attack on Pearl Harbor*. Capstone, 2021.

Tarshis, Lauren. *I Survived the Bombing of Pearl Harbor, 1941*. Scholastic, 2011.

Research ways in which Japanese-Americans contributed to the war effort during World War II. From the National World War II Museum, see “Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in World War II” at <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/topics/asian-pacific-american-world-war-ii>.

Sadly the public reaction to Japanese-Americans during World War II is not an isolated incident. During World War I, German-Americans were discriminated against and persecuted and since the terrorist attacks of 9-11, American Muslims have suffered from prejudice and violence. Find photographs that show examples of these occurrences. Propose ways of preventing this from happening.

Using images from the Internet, create a scrapbook that demonstrates different attitudes toward a historical event. For example, show the Vietnam War from the points of view of soldiers in the field, protestors at home, and politicians.

Science

Find out how a camera works. Draw a diagram or make an infographic. See How Cameras Work at <https://electronics.howstuffworks.com/camera.htm>.

Make your own pinhole camera: _

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/books/article/pinhole-camera>.

Art

Learn more about the work of Dorothea Lange, Toyo Miyatake, and Ansel Adams. What other famous photographers do you know? For example, check out the work of Diane Arbus, Margaret Bourke White, Robert Capa, and Lewis Hine.

Try taking a series of photographs that tell a story. Depending on which pictures you choose, can you make your story positive or negative?

Discussion Questions

How would you have reacted to forced incarceration if you had been a Japanese-American during World War II? How would you have responded to the Loyalty Questionnaire? (For information and the complete text of the Loyalty Questionnaire, see <https://densho.org/catalyst/the-loyalty-questionnaire-of-1943-opened-a-wound-that-has-yet-to-heal/>.)

How did Japanese-Americans cope with life in the internment camps?

Why was the Japanese-American community undecided about receiving reparations after the war? (For a discussion, see <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2020/03/24/820181127/the-unlikely-story-behind-japanese-americans-campaign-for-reparations>.)

Should people in the present be paid reparations for historical wrongs? African-Americans for slavery? Native Americans for the theft of their lands? Why or why not? How would you decide who should receive payments? How much should people be paid?

Why is the book titled *Seen and Unseen*?

How can photographs be used to deceive the public? For a discussion, see “Photography’s Chilling History of Deception” at <https://www.ladyscience.com/features/photographys-chilling-history-of-deception-2021>.

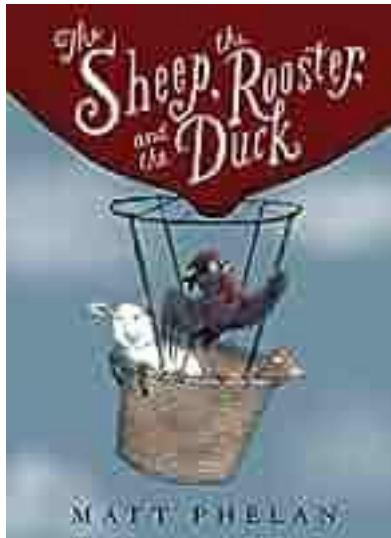
Author online

Elizabeth Partridge
<https://www.elizabethpartridge.com/>

Elizabeth Partridge: Instagram
<https://www.instagram.com/elizabeth.partridge/>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Faulkner, Matt. *Gaijin*. Little, Brown, 2019.
Houston, Jeanne Wakatsuki. *Farewell to Manzanar*. Clarion, 2017.
Salisbury, Graham. *Under the Blood-Red Sun*. Ember, 2014.
Sepahban, Lois. *Paper Wishes*. Square Fish, 2017.
Takei, George. *They Called Us Enemy*. First Edition, 2019.
Torres, J. *Stealing Home*. Kids Can Press, 2021.
Uchida, Yoshiko. *Journey to Topaz*. Heyday, 2022.



Matt Phelan
THE SHEEP, THE ROOSTER, AND THE DUCK
Greenwillow, 2022
ISBN: 978-0-06291-100-1
240 pp.
Grades 4 and up

Summary

Diplomat and inventor Benjamin Franklin, visiting France, relies on his young butler, ten-year-old Emile, to handle his household. After discovering an unlikely spy in the house, Emile is swept up in a swashbuckling cross-country adventure. Allied with the legendary Sheep, Rooster, and Duck, veterans of the Montgolfiers' first hot-air balloon flight, and daring Aeronaut Sophie, Emile reluctantly joins the fight to keep Benjamin's inventions from falling into dangerous hands. Graphic novel fans will adore this perilous (and hilarious) romp through 18th-century France.

Curriculum Connections

History

Who was Benjamin Franklin and what brought him to Paris?
Learn about Franklin's time in France, and research the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, which marked the end of America's Revolutionary War.

From the History Channel, see Benjamin Franklin at
<https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/benjamin-franklin>.

From PBS, see Ken Burns's "An American Celebrity in France" at
<https://www.pbs.org/video/american-celebrity-france-qzyxva/>.

Did Marie Antoinette really pretend to be a peasant?
Perhaps not, but here's a tour of the hamlet she created in historic Trianon at Versailles:
<https://en.chateauversailles.fr/long-read/queens-hamlet>.

While most of the characters in this story are recognizable or easily researched historical figures, Sophie is less so! Could she perhaps be inspired by Aeronaut Sophie Blanchard?

See “The Woman Who Rose High in the Early Days of Hot Air Ballooning” at
<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/the-women-who-rose-high-in-the-early-days-of-hot-air-ballooning>.

Learn more about Sophie’s daring adventures in this *Smithsonian* article:
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/sophie-blanchard-the-high-flying-frenchwoman-who-revealed-the-thrill-and-danger-of-ballooning-89106237/>

Science

Benjamin Franklin was credited with a great many inventions in his lifetime- some of them still widely used today, including the lightning rod, bifocal glasses, and even swim fins! The musical instrument mentioned in Matt Phelan’s work was called the glass armonica.

From PBS, see “Benjamin Franklin invents the Glass Armonica” at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57-JQlwRDqc>.
Listen to Mozart’s “Adagio for Glass Armonica” at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkTUL7DjTow>.

Now, using glasses of different shapes and sizes, try your own hand at making music! But why does it work?

Learn about the physics behind the tones created with the Sci Guys: Physics of Sound: Singing Wine Glasses at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VN3K9WhzOSs>.

Who were the Montgolfier brothers?

See Joseph-Michel and Jacques-Etienne Montgolfier at
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Montgolfier-brothers>.

Learn about the science of hot air balloons, and demonstrate how heat rises with this balloon science experiment: <https://www.mombrite.com/hot-and-cold-balloon-experiment/>.

Language Arts/Creative Writing

Phelan’s book is a work of historical fiction. He researched the time period and used real historic characters, though the story itself is fictional and might stretch a few truths...

Research the history of other famous animals. Examples include:

Jonathan the Tortoise

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/at-190-jonathan-the-tortoise-is-the-worlds-oldest-living-land-animal-180979514/>

Clara the Rhinoceros

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clara_\(rhinoceros\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clara_(rhinoceros))

Tommy Tucker

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/tommy-tucker>

Punxsutawney Phil

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punxsutawney_Phil

Clever Hans

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clever_Hans

Jumbo the Elephant

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/discover/meet-beast-jumbo-elephant#/>

Cher Ami

<https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/communicate/press-media/wwi-centennial-news/1210-cher-ami-the-pigeon-that-saved-the-lost-battalion.html>

What historic moments have these animals lived through? Write a short, adventurous story from an animal's perspective!

Discussion Questions

When asked “what use is a balloon?” Franklin replies, “You might ask ‘What is the use of a baby?’ Babies. Balloons. All is potential.”

What does Franklin mean by this statement?

When do Emile and Sophie start to realize their own potential?

The characters in *The Sheep, the Rooster, and the Duck* are all based on real people (and animals!). Which character did you find the most intriguing?

Which character did you connect most with and why?

Can you identify a character or part of the book that inspired you to learn more about either a time, place, or person in history?

Benjamin Franklin is sometimes referred to as “the first rock star” because he was already an international celebrity when he visited France. Not everyone was taken with Franklin however. King Louis XVI was said to have gifted Madame Deneuve with a chamber pot with Franklin’s face at the bottom of it!

What modern figure would you compare to Benjamin Franklin and why?

All of the characters in this story bring different talents and skills to the table. Sophie is a daredevil and incredible pilot. Emile is organized and a talented artist. Pierre, the courageous rooster, is skilled with a sword. Think about your own strengths. Talk about a time you have used a personal strength, talent, or skill to help a team, or work towards a common goal.

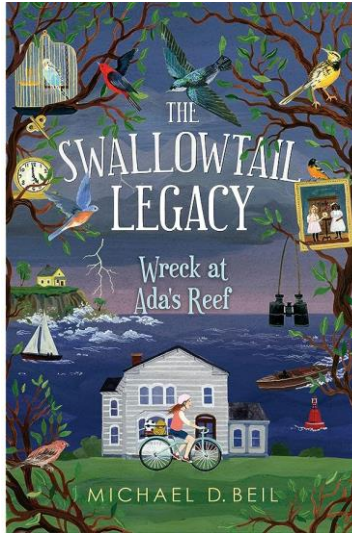
Emile was a reluctant adventurer. Now that crisis has been averted, what do you think his next chapter looks like? Will he create drafts for Montgolfier’s creations? Accompany the Sheep, Rooster, and Duck to the moon? Polish every end table in the Passy house to a high shine?

Author online

Hooked on a Phelan? Find Matt online at <https://www.mattphelan.com/>
Or watch him create The Sheep, Rooster and Duck on his [Youtube channel](#)

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Barnett, Mac. *First Cat in Space Ate Pizza*. Katherine Tegen Books, 2022.
Barry, Dave. *Worst Class Trip Ever*. Little, Brown, 2015.
Gaiman, Neil. *Fortunately, the Milk*. Harper Collins, 2013.
Gibbs, Stuart. *Once Upon a Tim*. Simon & Schuster, 2022.
Gilbert Murdoch, Catherine. *Davinci’s Cat*. Greenwillow, 2021.
Holm, Jennifer. *Turtle In Paradise*. Random House, 2010.
Kurtz, Chris. *Adventures of a South Pole Pig*. Clarion, 2013.
Lawson, Robert. *Ben and Me: An Astonishing Life of Benjamin Franklin by His Good Mouse Amos*. Little, Brown, 1988.
Reiss, Natalie. *Dungeon Critters*. First Second, 2020.
Rockliff, Mara. *Mesmerized: How Benjamin Franklin Solved A Mystery that Baffled all of France*. Candlewick, 2015.
Venable, Colleen AF. *Katie the Catsitter*. Random House Graphic, 2021.



Michael D. Beil

THE SWALLOWTAIL LEGACY: WRECK AT ADA'S REEF

Pixel + Ink/Holiday House, 2022

ISBN: 978-1-64595-048-6

320 pp.

Grades 5 and up

Summary

Twelve-year-old Lark Heron-Finch and her blended family visit Swallowtail Island off the shores of Lake Erie for the summer. While there - with the help of nonagenarian Dinah, Swallowtail's oldest resident - Lark uncovers clues connected to a decades-old boat accident, revealing secrets about the island's inhabitants and Lark's own family. This compelling mystery will hook readers with its letters, reports, art, and maps.

Curriculum Connections

Themes: Art restoration, journalism & research, shipwrecks, horses, soccer, ornithology.

Art

Lark's stepfather's job involves restoring works of art. Check out these before and after photographs of art conservation works: <https://americanart.si.edu/art/conservation/before-after>

Science

The study of birds is called ornithology. Elizabeth Heron-Finch was obsessed with birds: drawing them, studying them, and naming her children after them.

What is your favorite bird and why?

What birds live in your local region? Check out this site for a sample of birds native to Vermont: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/learn-more/vermont-critters/birds>

History

Does Vermont have a history of shipwrecks? Where would that happen in our state? See Shipwrecks of Lake Champlain at <https://www.lcmm.org/archaeology/shipwrecks/>.

Language Arts

Lark's journal is the one place where she can speak the God's honest truth (GHT). Do you have a journal? Writing can be helpful when dealing with anger and frustration... you can even rip up your page after you've written it.

Wreck at Ada's Reef uses a variety of formats to tell the story such as witness statements, maps, drawings, and letters. Does this enhance the novel or do you find it confusing?

Discussion Questions

Is Swallowtail Island a real place? Research the islands of Lake Erie and find out.

Do you understand how the ship's bell works (tells time) on a maritime vessel? Refer to this article for a refresher: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ship%27s_bell.

The Swallowtail Legacy Book Two (Betrayal by the Book) was recently published. Will you read the second story? Why or why not?

What strategies do you have to try to make friends in a new situation (such as a team or volunteer job)?

Vocabulary

Gentrification
Nonagenarian

Author online

<https://www.michaeldbeil.com/>

"There's something about Islands," a guest post by Michael D. Beil
<https://teenlibrariantoolbox.com/2022/02/09/theres-something-about-islands-a-guest-post-by-michael-d-beil/>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Beil, Michael D. *The Swallowtail Legacy: Betrayal by the Book*. Pixel + Ink, 2023.

Cervantes, Andrea. *Me, Frida, and the Secret of the Peacock Ring*. Scholastic, 2019.
Condie, Ally. *Summerlost*. Puffin, 2017.
Fitzgerald, Laura Mars. *Under the Egg*. Rocky Pond Books, 2015.
Guterson, Ben. *Winterhouse*. Square Fish, 2018.
Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *Mysteries of Trash and Treasure: The Secret Letters*. Katherine Tegen Books, 2022.
Inglis, Karen. *The Secret Lake*. Well Said Press, 2011.
Johnson, Varian. *The Parker Inheritance*. Scholastic, 2019.



Johnnie Christmas
SWIM TEAM
HarperAlley, 2022
ISBN: 978-0-06305-677-1
256 pp.
Grades 4 and up

Summary

After starting a new school in southern Florida, Bree learns that the only physical-education elective that fits into her schedule will require her to face her biggest fear: the swimming pool. With the help of a spunky senior-citizen neighbor and a new group of friends, Bree discovers a new passion. Along the way she learns about the struggles people of color have had to endure in order to compete in a sport where they were not always welcome.

Curriculum Connections

History

Learn about black swimmers in history and their impacts on the sport.

<https://www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/news/black-history-month-historic-swimming-firsts-in-black-history/>

Research athletes who integrated professional sports and create an illustrated storyboard project.

<https://www.history.com/news/black-athletes-who-integrated-their-sports>

<https://www.storyboardthat.com/lesson-plans/middle-school-projects/biography-project>

Play Segregation Tic-Tac-Toe.

Draw a grid containing 64 numbered squares on a large piece of paper and tape it to the floor. Place 25 pennies and 30 paper clips randomly on the grid. The grid represents a neighborhood and the paper clips and pennies symbolize families. Each penny wants to live near -- touching -- at least two other pennies, while each paper clip wants most of its neighbors to be paper clips. Take turns moving pieces. Players will discover that, as they try to make every piece happy, they start to create a pattern of extreme segregation. Discuss how an individual's social race preferences can lead to segregation. (classroom.synonym.com)

For this and other classroom activities to teach about segregation, see <https://classroom.synonym.com/classroom-activities-teach-segregation-7966273.html>.

Language Arts

See this guide for educators for using graphic novels with children and teens:

<https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/teachers/lesson-plans/18-19/Graphic-Novel-Discussion-Guide-2018.pdf>

Science

Walk into almost any indoor swimming pool area and you are met with the unmistakable odor of chlorine. What is it and why does it smell so strong? Why is it used to keep pools clean and germ free?

<https://www.ducksters.com/science/chemistry/chlorine.php>

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

Math

Can You Drink a Whole Lake?

<https://bedtimemath.org/fun-math-can-you-drink-a-lake/>

Discussion Questions

See *Swim Team* discussion questions at:

https://accessola.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#f2000000DjHx/a/5x0000005rr0/0bkpy9PaLgkiYTXJEdPV13wmujm_nC7wbwUpUI13AZs

Bree asks Ms. Etta to teach her how to swim. Have you ever been scared to try something new? Did you give it a try? Did anyone help you? What happened?

How did you feel about Ms. Etta's experience when she and her black teammates were not allowed to swim at the same pool as their white peers?

Before Bree learns to swim and joins the swim team, she is anxious about many things in her life and often has negative thoughts that diminish her confidence. What are some things that make you anxious? Do you have any strategies for overcoming these feelings?

How do Bree and her teammates feel when they learn that Keisha is joining the Manatees? What happens to change their minds?

At one point in the story Bree gets so mad that she throws her swim trophy. What is she angry about? What could have been a better way to get rid of her anger?

After the Manatees win the big meet against Holyoke Prep, their coach calls her swimmers "losers." Should a coach sometimes say unkind things about their athletes in order to motivate them to do better? Do you think this approach works?

Vocabulary

1. Powerhouse (p. 41)
2. Medley (p. 41)
3. Segregated (p. 83)
4. Conservatory (p. 85)
5. Treading (p. 97)
6. Fluke (p. 115)
7. Pesky (p. 152)
8. Elite (p. 156)
9. Endurance (p. 217)

Author online

<https://johnniechristmas.com/>

Instagram: johnniexmas

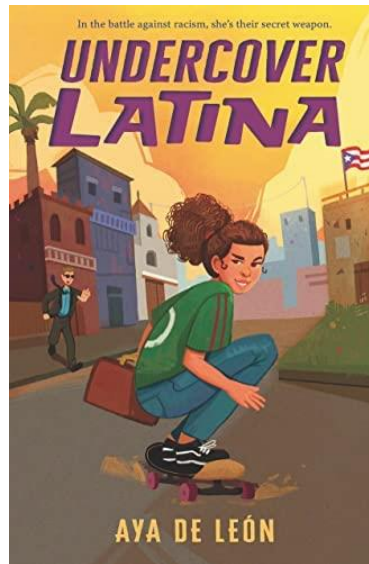
Twitter: @j_xmas

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/johnniexmas/>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VR3zH0kqS0>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Arguelles, Catherine. *Flip Turns*. North Star Editions, 2022.
Bailar, Schuyler. *Obie Is Man Enough*. Crown, 2021.
Baptist, Kelly J. *Eb & Flow*. Crown Books for Young Readers, 2023.
Cameron, Josephine. *Maybe a Mermaid*. Square Fish, 2020.
Faruqi, Reem. *Unsettled*. HarperCollins, 2022.
Mendez, Jasminne. *Aniana del Mar Jumps In*. Dial Book, 2023.
Morrison, Laurie. *Up for Air*. Harry N. Abrams, 2021.



Aya De Leon
UNDERCOVER LATINA
Candlewick, 2022
ISBN: 978-1-53622-374-3
325 pp.
Grades 6 and up

Summary

Andréa Hernández-Baldoquín comes from a family of spies, but not just any spies. Her parents are part of an organization that specifically protects people of color. At fourteen, Andrea is finally given the opportunity to take the lead on a mission of her own. Her assignment: to go undercover as a white girl and befriend the son of a white supremacist. Soon, however, complications arise as Andrea tackles issues of romance, friendship, and racial history and identity. A great spy novel that asks the reader to think about the systemic racism that exists in our country.

Curriculum Connections

Social Studies

Andréa's work is part of a larger mission to thwart an act of violence by a group of white supremacists. Sadly, organized hate crimes such as the one in the book have become more frequent in recent years. The first resource from Facing History (below) explains what white nationalism is, where it is showing up in our country, and ways in which it impacts schools. The second resource includes mini-lessons about the rise in hate crimes in schools, including ways to respond. Both of these resources are geared toward older middle-school students (12 and up).

White Nationalism Explainer

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/white-nationalism>

Acts of Hate in Schools

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/acts-hate-schools>

Andréa is partially chosen for this mission because she can pass as white. Discuss the concept of race and how it impacts individuals in this society, both positively and negatively.

Concept of Race

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/concept-race>

This resource from Facing History, designed for 6th-8th grade students, includes six activities to help students explore this topic. It is intended to help kids “analyze the socially constructed meaning of race and examine how it has been used to justify exclusion, inequality, and violence throughout history.”

Cross-Curricular

Table-top role-playing games are key to the connection between characters and plot development in this novel. Try playing some! These games offer interesting opportunities to teach math, writing, debate, and more.

Tabletop Role-Playing Games: Do they have a place in the classroom?

<https://www.tabletoteachingllc.com/post/tabletop-role-playing-games-do-they-have-a-place-in-the-classroom>

What are Role-Playing Games and How Can They Be Used in Education?

<https://swordsandstationery.com/learning/role-playing-games-educational-benefits/>

Discussion Questions

From Candlewick Press, see the *Undercover Latina* Discussion Guide at https://www.candlewick.com/book_files/1536223743.bdg.1.pdf.

Author online

Website: <https://ayadeleon.wordpress.com/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ayadeleonwrites/>

Interview with Aya de Leon about *Undercover Latina*

<https://mgbookvillage.org/2023/03/13/interview-with-aya-de-leon-about-undercover-latina/>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Gibbs, Stuart. *Charlie Thorne and the Last Equation*. Simon & Schuster, 2019.

Gibbs, Stuart. *Spy School*. Simon & Schuster, 2012.

Goodman, Carol. *The Metropolitans*. Viking, 2017.

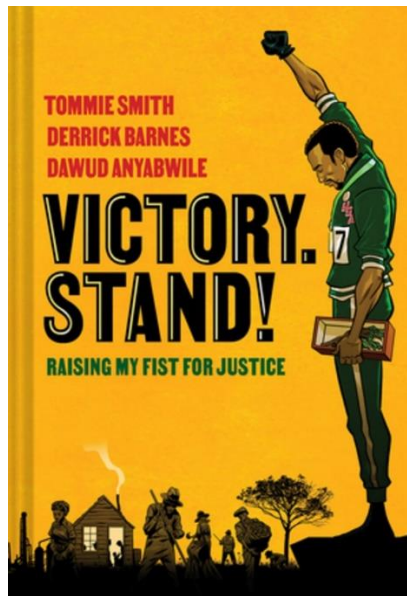
Gratz, Alan. *Projekt 1065*. Scholastic, 2016.

Lonely Planet Kids. *How to be an International Spy*. Lonely Planet, 2015.

Nesbet, Anne. *Cloud and Wallfish*. Candlewick, 2016.

Ponti, James. *City Spies*. Aladdin, 2020.

Ponti, James. *Framed!* Aladdin, 2017.



Tommie Smith et al.

VICTORY. STAND!

Norton Young Readers, 2022

ISBN: 978-1-32405-215-9

208 pp.

Grades 7 and up

Summary

Victory. Stand! is the graphic memoir of athlete and activist Dr. Tommie Smith. Even as a child, one of fourteen born to a sharecropping family in rural Texas, Smith was a competitive runner. As a teen, he was recruited by prestigious colleges willing to offer him a place on their team, but not the privileges or even basic necessities offered to other students. To compete in the 1968 Olympics, Smith and his fellow black athletes faced death threats and violence – and they would return home to poverty and oppression. All leads up to the iconic act of resistance that took place on that year’s Olympic podium and the price Smith and teammates paid for taking their stand. This gripping story serves as a call for continued work toward racial justice.

Curriculum Connections

History

Dr. Smith experienced and took part in some revolutionary and change-making moments in history. What was happening in the year leading up to Tommie Smith’s iconic protest? Take a look at the Civil Rights Movement Timeline at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_civil_rights_movement to explore the events leading up to the 1968 Olympic Games.

Tommie’s family moved North during the second wave of the Great Migration. Learn more about this time in history, the threats, violence, and racial oppression that led families to flee the Southern states.

<https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/migrations/great-migration>
<https://americanexperience.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/The-Second-Great-Migration.pdf>

In March of 1965, Tommie traveled to join the Sympathy March from San Jose to San Francisco. It was one of the first moments when he felt compelled to take a political stand. Research the Civil Rights marches taking place around the country at that time.

Learn about the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR).

See:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympic_Project_for_Human_Rights
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQENuBV_LPM

Members of the OPHR asked: “Why should we run in Mexico only to crawl home?”
What did they mean?

Why did OPHR demand that South Africa be denied entry to the 1968 Olympic Games?

Dr. Smith’s memoir is an invitation to continue the work for racial justice. Research the tradition of Black athletes as activists. Discuss how things have changed and how they haven’t.

Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Black Athlete Protest Tradition

<https://www.civilrights museum.org/50-voices-for-50-years/posts/martin-luther-king-jr-and-the-black-athlete-protest-tradition>

We Won't Shut Up and Dribble

<https://origins.osu.edu/article/we-won-t-shut-and-dribble-short-history-black-athletic-protest>

Learn about other change-making athletes who took a stand at or refused to be a part of the 1968 Mexico City Olympics.

John Carlos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxZuz-BMm-E>

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/just-start-olympian-john-carlos-sports-activism-n1239064>

Wyomia Tyus

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/dec/23/wyomia-tyus-athlete-activism-usa-olympics>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/17/sports/olympics/wyomia-tyus-athlete-protests-racism.html>

Lee Evans

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/19/sports/olympics/lee-evans-olympic-runner-who-protested-racism-dies-at-74.html>

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

<https://www.neh.gov/article/kareem-abdul-jabbar-changed-rules-black-athletes>

https://www.espn.com/nba/story/_/id/35602384/kareem-abdul-jabbar-life-social-justice-champion-record-no-athlete-break

Peter Norman

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Norman

Media Studies

How was Dr. Smith portrayed in the media leading up to the Olympics?

See:

Tommie in a Breeze

<https://vault.si.com/vault/1967/05/29/tommie-in-a-breeze>

Boos and a Beating for Tommie

<https://vault.si.com/vault/1968/01/29/boos-and-a-beating-for-tommie>

How was his protest reported in the media in 1968?

Black Power Salute Rocks 1968 Olympics

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZttN9hPvx4>

Howard Cosell Explains the Sham of Smith & Carlos Expulsion from the 1968 Olympics
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEg3uNqsTYQ>

Life Magazine, November 1, 1968 (see page 63)

https://books.google.com/books?id=FUkEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=1968&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi4ibikq-H_AhX-LFkFHY9JA18Q6AF6BAgIEAI#v=onepage&q=1968&f=false

New York Times This Day in Sports

https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/packages/html/sports/year_in_sports/10.16a.html

Discussion Questions

The very first page of *Victory, Stand!* puts us on the starting line of the 1968 Olympics with Dr. Tommie Smith. Injured and facing death threats, Tommie waits for the starting pistol in the race that could put him on the Olympic podium. Why do you think the authors chose to start the story at this high pressure moment?

As the story continues, we jump back and forth to the moments in Tommie's life that show how he got to that Olympic track and to that state of mind. Was this an effective way of telling his story? Why or why not?

Who and what were the biggest positive influences on Tommie's life? Who were the people that actively supported and inspired him? Why were these people so important?

On page 18, Tommie says "Our bodies are programmed to do what we train them to do. Muscle memory, consistency, routine." He credited these training methods with helping to make him a better athlete. How can these same habits be used to train ourselves to be courageous? How can we use them to combat racism?

Consider Tommie's father. What were some of his concerns about his son becoming an athlete? Why do you think he felt this way?

Return to page 73, where Tommie mentions what he considers "the most important race of his life." What made this race so important? What changed for Tommie when he won?

On page 100, Tommie talks about 1963 as a year of violence, but because news arrived slowly, or not at all, he was unaware of much that was happening across the nation. In the age of social media, we have the ability to photograph, record, and share information much more quickly. In what ways does this help or hinder our ability to protest, connect, and make change towards racial justice?

It took courage to dissent and raise a fist, and Tommie knew that he risked his career, his life, and the safety of his loved ones to do so. What formative moments do you think Dr. Smith drew courage from while he stood on the Olympic podium?

How does it change your perspective when you learn about the violence, threats, and sacrifices Black leaders faced when they fought for civil rights? How does the context of Dr. Smith's story change the way you view modern athletic activists?

“We had to be seen because we were not being heard.” Why are the actions of Black athletes so integral to the Civil Rights Movement? When Tommie was interviewed about why he raised a fist, he was asked “Do you think you represent all black athletes in doing this?” Was this a fair question? If you could go back in time and interview Dr. Smith in that moment, what question would you ask?

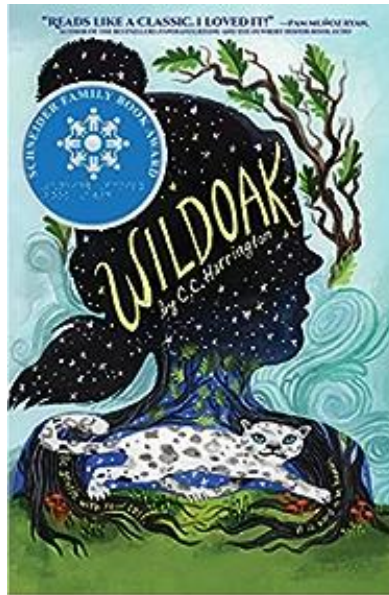
Author online

<https://www.instagram.com/tommiesmith68/?hl=en>
<https://tommiesmith.com/pages/about-tommie-smith>

Fifty years later, hear Dr. Tommie Smith speak about his induction into the Olympic Hall of Fame at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzSJrERpmOE>.

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Christmas, Johnnie. *Swim Team: A Graphic Novel*. Harper Alley, 2022.
Kaepernick, Colin. Ewing, Eve. *Colin Kaepernick: Change the Game*. Graphix, 2023.
Lewis, John. Aydin, Andrew. *March: Book One*. Top Shelf Productions, 2013.
Noah, Trevor. *It's Trevor Noah: Born A Crime*. Yearling, 2020.
Patterson, James Alexander, Kwame. *Becoming Muhammad Ali*. Jimmy Patterson, 2020.
Rhodes, Jewell Parker. *Black Brother, Black Brother*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2021.
Sturm, James. *Satchel Paige: Striking Out Jim Crowe*. Center for Cartoon Studies, 2007.
Taylor, Candidacy. *Overground Railroad (Young Adult Adaptation)*. Harry N. Abrams, 2022.
Woodson, Jacqueline. *Brown Girl Dreaming*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2014.
Yang, Gene Luen. *Dragon Hoops*. First Second, 2020.



C.C. Harrington
WILDOAK
Scholastic, 2022
ISBN: 978-1-33880-386-0
288 pp.
Grades 5 and up

Summary

Maggie, who suffers from a debilitating stutter, is sent to stay with her grandfather Fred in Cornwall – though, her father warns her, if her speech doesn't improve, she'll next be sent to the intimidating Granville Place boarding school. Then, in nearby Wildoak Forest, Maggie finds Rumpus, a frightened and abandoned snow leopard cub. Told in the alternating voices of Maggie and Rumpus, this is a wonderful story of compassion, conservation, and ultimately, hope for the future.

Curriculum Connections

Science/conservation

Raise money to adopt a snow leopard living in the wild!

See the Snow Leopard Trust at <https://shop.snowleopard.org/products/snow-leopard-cub-adoption>.

Plant trees! Research tree and tree-planting resources online. For example, see the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree Education Hub at <https://www.arborday.org/kids/> and the National Forest Foundation's Tree & Forest Activities for Children at <https://www.nationalforests.org/blog/forest-tree-activities-to-do-with-children>.

Also see Neighborhood Forest at <https://www.neighborhoodforest.org/> which provides free trees to kids on Earth Day.

Try the Big Tree Challenge! Identify the largest trees in your town or neighborhood. You'll need a tape measure. Keep records of tree locations and species.

Research people who have worked to save animals. Names to investigate include Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, Joy and George Adamson, Lek Chailert, and Harriet Hemenway.

You can do it too! See these stories of young people who are fighting to save wildlife: <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/eco-hero-awards-youth-activists/>.

Speech

What causes stuttering? See what you can find out.

Read some other books about speech disabilities:

Dahl, Roald. *The Vicar of Nibbleswicke*. Viking, 1994.

Rutter, Helen. *The Boy Who Made Everyone Laugh*. Scholastic, 2021.

Varnes, Allison. *Say It Out Loud*. Random House, 2021.

Vawter, Vince. *Paperboy*. Yearling, 2014.

Winter, Tamsin. *Being Miss Nobody*. Usborne, 2017.

In spite of her stutter, Maggie was able to speak up and defend Rumpus. Public speaking can be hard – but the more you do it, the easier it gets. Pick a topic having to do with trees, animals, or saving the environment and prepare a short speech to deliver in front of a group.

Discussion Questions

Should wild animals be kept as pets? Should they be kept in zoos?

Why does Maggie form such a bond with Rumpus? How are they alike?

Why doesn't Maggie stutter when she talks to animals?

The message that Maggie seems to sense from the ancient oak tree is "Be gentle with yourself. It is hard to be human." What does this mean for Maggie? Grandfather Fred? Maggie's father? What does it mean to you?

How does Maggie come to terms with her father? Or doesn't she?

What about Lord Foy? Could he have been prevented from cutting down Wildoak Forest?

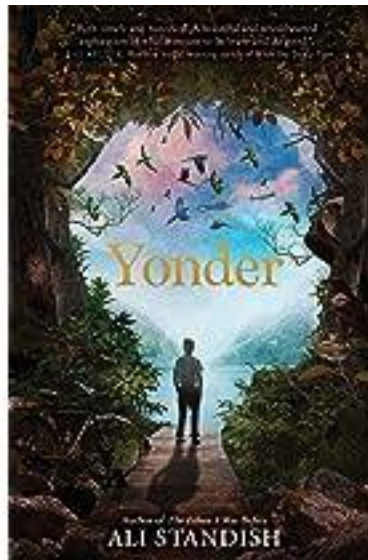
How are trees and forests important? How should we protect them from developers?

Author online

C.C. Harrington Author Website
<https://www.christinaharrington.com/>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Appelt, Kathi. *The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp*. Atheneum, 2014.
Broach, Elise. *The Wolf Keepers*. Henry Holt, 2016.
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Ali Standish
YONDER
HarperCollins, 2022
ISBN: 978-0-06298-568-2
368 pp.
Grades 6 and up

Summary

Hero! That's what everyone called Jack Bailey the day he dove into flood waters to rescue twin toddlers. To Danny Timmons, Jack Bailey seems fearless - always brave and kind despite losing his mother at an early age and living with an abusive father. When Jack, beaten and injured, is taken in by Danny's parents, he regales Danny with tales of Yonder - a land of peace and plenty where rainbow-colored jewel birds fill the sky. When Jack goes missing, Danny searches for answers, suspecting everyone from the town bully to Jack's father and even the Town Sheriff of hiding the truth. With Jack gone and Danny's father off to fight in World War II, Danny must find his own strength to face injustice – and to form his own opinions of what it means to be a hero.

Curriculum Connections

History

Even Americans who weren't called to fight in the Second World War experienced drastic changes to their families and livelihoods. Explore what life was like for families on the American (or Vermont) home front. What advances or setbacks did we experience as a nation? How did we pull together? What were divisive factors during this time?

See:

World War II at Home

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/students-teachers/distance-learning/world-war-ii-home>

Then Again: Vermonters and the war effort

<https://vtdigger.org/2020/04/05/then-again-vermonters-were-ready-early-and-often-to-help-war-effort/>

World War II at Home, 1942

<https://vermonthistory.org/world-war-ii-at-home-1942>

Language Arts/Creative Writing

When we meet Danny, Jack has just gone missing. The story Danny tells jumps through time, as he looks for clues in his own memory to find where Jack might have gone. Danny's memories, written in italic font, help to fill in the story that led up to the desperate moment of Jack's disappearance.

Try your hand at something similar!

Write a story in past and present tense. Start your story in the present, describing a fraught moment when you needed to make a tough choice. Then take a jump back in time! How does a past experience influence or guide the decision you make in the here and now?

Discussion Questions

What is the definition of the word *yonder*? How does the title resonate as a theme of the story?

Yonder is set in Appalachia during the Second World War. How does what's happening in the war overseas affect daily life in Foggy Gap, North Carolina?

Danny comes to the conclusion that "courage starts at home." Think about characters like Lou, Jack, Mrs. Musgrave, Danny, and his mother. Can you point to a time when each character made a choice they regretted or acted out of fear or anger? How about a time when each character showed courage?

Danny is shocked that the librarian who sends him a birthday card each year refused the Musgraves entrance to the library. How does this information change Danny's world view and his impression of the town he lives in?

If you were Lou, would you forgive Danny for telling Bruce that her brother had run away to escape the front lines? Why or why not?

At the beginning of chapter 39, Danny says he thought that he and Jack had courage in common, when what they actually had in common was fear. What does he mean?

On page 144, Danny's mother tells him that *yonder* isn't a place, it's a direction. She means this literally, but by the end of the story, Danny decides that the statement was apt in more ways than one. Can you think of more than one way that this sentence could be interpreted?

Think about the last image Danny has of Jack. What was Jack doing? How does this relate to the theme of the story?

On page 329, Danny states that "Courage takes practice." What does he mean?

In the first pages of *Yonder* (see p. 6), Danny states: "Even now, after all this time, I'm still trying to figure out which one this is. A hero's story, or a story without a hero." Having finished the book, which do you think is true?

Author online

Educator Guide & Lesson Plan for Ali Standish's Author Page

https://www.alistandish.com/files/ugd/d9fc19_9ef5bc8120764adeabf9f99cf7eefea0.pdf

Author Ali Standish talks about the creation of *Yonder*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKFnVKxPw5o>

If you liked this book, you might also like:

Albus, Kate. *A Place to Hang the Moon*. Margaret Ferguson Books, 2021.

Benjamin, Ali. *The Next Great Paulie Fink*. Little, Brown Books, 2019.

Braden, Ann. *Flight of the Puffin*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2021.
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