

# **Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Award**



**2018 - 2019**

## **BOOK REVIEWS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Vermont Department of Libraries  
Montpelier, VT

<https://bit.ly/2m5EyfP>

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# About This Guide

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

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

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

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

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

## Compilers:

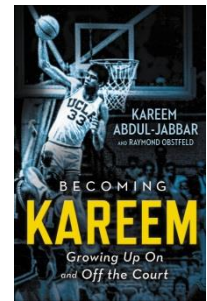
- Annie Brabazon, *Grand Isle School*
- Melissa Curtis, *Pawlet, Vermont*
- Charles H. Farrell IV, *Grand Isle School*
- Sacha Krawczyk, *Fletcher Memorial Library (Ludlow)*
- Carole Oglesby, *Malletts Bay School (Colchester)*
- Hannah Peacock- Committee Chair, *Burnham Memorial Library (Colchester)*
- Rebecca Rupp, *Swanton, Vermont*
- Nicole Westbom, *Kellogg-Hubbard Library (Montpelier)*

**Kareem Abdul-Jabbar & Raymond Obstfeld**  
**BECOMING KAREEM: GROWING UP ON AND OFF THE COURT**

Little, Brown, 2017.

ISBN: ISBN 978-0316555388.

\$17.99, 304 pages.



Kareem Abdul-Jabbar describes how he became one of the top basketball players of all time: from his childhood, through the influence of his many coaches and mentors, to the historical events that helped shape his life. This book goes far beyond a sports hero autobiography, intertwining civil rights history with issues of identity and what it means to be successful. While the tone of the work is understated and contemplative, the memoir contains powerful ideas for reflection and discussion about racism, politics, identity, and religion.

**Curriculum Connections**

***Language Arts:***

- Kareem realized early on that there were coaches - or mentors - in his life outside of basketball who could teach him things that sports never could. Who are some of your coaches, and what have they taught you? Write about someone in your own life who has acted as a coach/mentor, or who has helped you develop as a person.
- In 4th grade, Kareem found his "superpower": his aptitude for sports. Describe your own superpowers.

***Social Studies:***

- Explore the history of social and political activism and sports. From athletic fields to Olympic villages, many athletes have used their voices to draw attention to social and political causes. One place to start is at:  
<https://www.cnn.com/2016/12/12/sport/gallery/social-activism-in-sports/index.html>
- Watch Kareem's discussion about Becoming Kareem with The Daily Show Trevor Noah, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K66m2dCnNLo>. In what ways does Kareem compare his own travails as a socially engaged athlete to those of football player Colin Kaepernick. How effective have these and other athletes been at addressing societal ills such as racism?

***Physical Education:***

- Shoot some hoops! Work with your physical education department to organize a *Kareem*-inspired class, doing basketball drills, and having a scrimmage.

***Discussion Questions:***

- Discuss the long struggle for civil rights in the United States as it's explored in *Becoming Kareem: Growing Up On and Off the Court*. How did activists and celebrities like Kareem, Muhammad Ali, and James Baldwin contribute to the national conversation about race relations in the 1960s and beyond?
- Why have many African-Americans like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar chosen to change their names and often their religion as they become more socially conscious? Why did Kareem connect so deeply with the teachings of Islam?
- Why do you think the title is “*Becoming Kareem*”? How does Kareem become more than - or different from - who he was before?
- Choose one of Kareem’s life coaches, and imagine they were coaching you. What advice do you think they would give you?

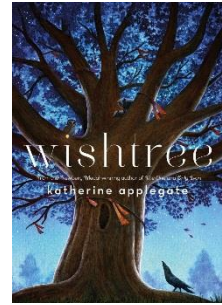
**Author Website:**

<http://becomingkareem.com/>

**If you loved this title, you may like:**

- Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem. *Streetball Crew: Sasquatch in the Paint*. Disney-Hyperion, 2013.
- Alexander, Kwame. *Crossover*. HMH Books, 2014.
- Lupica, Mike. *Fast Break*. Philomel Books, 2015.
- Maraniss, Andrew. *Strong Inside (Young Readers Edition): The True Story of How Perry Wallace Broke College Basketball's Color Line*. Philomel Books, 2016.
- Zuckerman, Gregory. *Rising Above: How 11 Athletes Overcame Challenges in Their Youth to Become Stars*. Philomel Books, 2016

**Katherine Applegate**  
**WISHTREE**  
**Feiwel & Friends, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-1250143037.**  
**\$16.99, 211 pages.**



Trees don't just talk to anyone – they're introverts at heart – but when they share their stories, they're wise, wonderful, and funny. Red, the narrator of *Wishtree*, is a majestic red oak who acts as unofficial guardian of the neighborhood. To the local birds and animals, Red offers shelter, food, and advice; and especially enjoys conversations with Bongo, the crow. Red also has a special relationship with human neighbors: each year on the first of May, people attach ribbons, strips of cloth, and scraps of paper to the tree, each representing a wish.

Red's life isn't trouble-free. The owner of the property on which Red grows threatens to cut the tree down, complaining of the annual clean-up of wish debris. And then there's Samar, daughter of the new Muslim family in the neighborhood, who faces rejection and prejudice, and wishes for a friend.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- Research the characteristics of a red oak tree. Why did the author select this species of tree to be the main character of the book? How did the author use personification to create Red? How would the character have changed if the wishtree were a birch, or a pine or a poison sumac?
- Research the animals who are characters in the book. Based on the population range of the various animals, can we identify the probable location or setting of the book?

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

- This book offers a unique writing point of view. It is rare to have a tree as the narrator of the story. Write a paragraph or two from a unique point of view. Challenge yourself. Write a narrative about a cellphone or a pencil or a lunchbox.

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

- Create a mixed media wish collage. Glue leaves, twigs, and seeds to a backing and then include your personal wishes among the natural adornments.
- Create your own wishtree! Attach your wishes to its branches.

***Discussion Questions:***

- What wish would you make on the wishtree?
- Why does Francesca want to cut down the tree?
- Why does the boy carve “leave” on the wishtree?
- Why does the wishtree decide to talk to the children?
- On page 126, Red states, “I wanted to make a difference, just a little difference, before I left this lovely world.” How does Red make a difference? Do you share Red’s thoughts? How can you make a difference?

**Author’s Website & Social Media:**

For information on National Wish Day and a *Teacher’s Guide to Wishtree*:

<https://wishtreebook.com>

Katherine Applegate’s Twitter address:

<https://twitter.com/kaaauthor>

**If you liked this, you’ll like:**

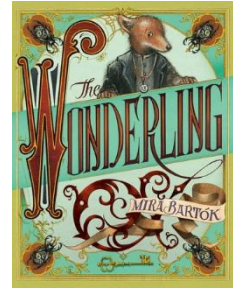
-Applegate, Katherine. *The One and Only Ivan*. HarperCollins, 2012.

-Brown, Peter. *The Wild Robot*. Little, Brown, 2016.

-Perkins, Lynne Rae. *Nuts to You*. Greenwillow, 2014.

-Levy, Dana Alison. *The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher*. Delacorte, 2014.

**Mira Bartok**  
**THE WONDERLING**  
Candlewick, 2017.  
ISBN: 978-0763691219.  
\$16.99, 464 pages.



Life for the groundlings at Miss Carbunkle’s Home for Wayward and Misbegotten Creatures can only be described as miserable. For the shy, one eared, half fox, half human known simply as Number 13, life is particularly dismal. Friendless and alone, Number 13 believes his fate is sealed and that a cycle of hard work devoid of joy is his destiny. This all changes when he meets Trinket, a birdlike groundling who convinces him to escape- thus launching him straight into a courageous journey.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- What is the story of King Arthur and the Round Table? Encourage students to research this story and explain why Trinket chose the name “Arthur” for Number 13.
- Have students create a board game that maps the route Arthur traveled, beginning and ending at Miss Carbunkle’s school.
- File a complaint: Adapt the persona of one of the villains in the story. Write a complaint from their point of view explaining why they feel they were unjustly portrayed in the story and explain the actions they would like the author to take to remedy the biased portrayal.

#### ***Music:***

- Create a list of 5-10 songs that you would like to “catch” and explain why you think each one deserves to be saved.
- Play a variety of musical styles while painting or drawing freely. After, discuss how or if their art changed when the music changed. Why do you think music has such a strong effect on the way you feel?

#### ***Art/Writing:***

- Create your own groundling. Use both words and pictures to bring your groundling to life. Think about: What type of creature your groundling will be? Will it be a protagonist or antagonist? Where will it live? Who are its friends? What makes this groundling special or unique? Create an artistic representation of your groundling (drawing, painting, puppet, sculpture, digital art, etc.) and then tell its story through words.



### **Discussion Questions:**

Follow this link for an excellent set of additional discussion questions provided by Candlewick Press: [http://www.candlewick.com/book\\_files/0763691216.bdg.1.pdf](http://www.candlewick.com/book_files/0763691216.bdg.1.pdf)

- Why do you think the author chose to give Arthur only one ear and Trinket no wings? Are these differences obstacles to their success at meeting their goals?
- Even though he is scared, why do you think Arthur finally agrees to escape with Trinket?
- Why do you think Belisha risked losing her eyesight to help Arthur and his friends?
- Talk about Miss Carbunkle and her sister Phoebe. Why do you think they are so different? Do you have a sibling that you don't get along with?
- What makes Pevil such a special mouse? Do you think Arthur would have been able to escape Gloomington without his help?

### **Author Website:**

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

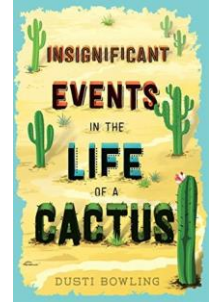
### **Author Interview:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uYAHcmnBnw>

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

- Agra Deedy, Carmen & Randall Wright. *The Cheshire Cheese Cat*. Peachtree, 2011.
- DiCamillo, Kate. *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*. Candlewick, 2006.
- Grahame, Kenneth. *The Wind in the Willows*. Sterling Illustrated Classics, 2012.
- McGhee, Alison. *Firefly Hollow*. Atheneum, 2015.
- Rutkoski, Marie *The Cabinet of Wonders: The Kronos Chronicles, Book I*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008.
- Seldon, George. *The Cricket in Times Square*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1960.

**Dusti Bowling**  
**INSIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF A CACTUS**  
Sterling, 2017.  
ISBN: 978-1454923459.  
\$16.99, 274 pages.



Aven Green is pretty much your average soccer-playing , blog-writing 13-year-old, with one major exception. Aven was born without arms. When her family moves from Kansas to Arizona, Aven’s once infallible confidence begins to falter. Making friends is tough, until she meets Connor and Zion, boys who also know what it’s like to be an outsider. Together, the trio works to solve a mystery about the quirky amusement park Aven’s family calls home.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- Have readers create a visitor’s brochure for Stagecoach Pass. Include a map of the park. Ask them to add some of their own ideas for different booths that the park could add to attract new customers.

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

- Aven calls her blog “The Unarmed Middle Schooler’s Guide to Survival.” Have readers come up with names for their own blogs. What would they write about? Ask them to create a couple of sample posts, either by hand or on the computer.

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

- What makes a cactus a cactus? Try this experiment to show how cactus absorb and save water.  
<http://www.oceanoasis.org/teachersguide/activity8.html>
- A day in the desert video: Saguaro Wilderness  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWM0hYyHDvQ>

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

- Chat room conversations: Imagine that Aven, Connor or Zion has found other people to talk with while in a chat room that she or he found while surfing the Internet. Describe the chat room your character was in and why your character would be drawn to the kind of group that operates the chat room. Then construct a conversation your character might have with others while in the chat room.

- Write a report card for a character in your book. Choose a character and come up with five areas of the character’s personality to grade based on how the character behaved in the story. Write the character’s name at the top of the page. Give the character a grade in each subject, and give details from the story to support the grade in the comments section. See the example below:

Student: Aven

Subject	Grade	Comment
Courage	A	Aven moved and started a new school. She dealt with bullies and eventually found a new set of friends.

***Discussion Questions:***

*From the publisher’s website:*

[https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/895bec\\_c28d12511b0e478baa55c4066461a296.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/895bec_c28d12511b0e478baa55c4066461a296.pdf)

- How do you think your life would be different if you didn’t have arms? Find some examples of the way Aven solves problems that arise from not having arms. What kind of problems would you face in your life if you didn’t have arms? How would you solve them?
- Think about the title of the book. Why is it called this? What does Aven mean when she says her life is an insignificant event in the life of a cactus?
- This book is told in first person, from Aven’s point-of-view. How do you think it would change if it were told in third person? Do you notice any differences between the way Aven talks to the reader and the way she writes her blog posts?
- When Aven first meets Connor, and he points out that she doesn’t have arms, she says, “Oh my gosh! I knew I was forgetting something today.” How does she use her sense of humor to her advantage? Can you find other examples in the story where Aven makes light of not having arms?
- In chapter 7, a girl at school asks Aven if her disability is contagious. Why does the girl ask this? Why does it make Aven feel bad?
- Why does Zion eat on the sidewalk behind the office by himself? Do you know someone who spends a lot of time alone at school? What might be some ways to include him/her in your activities?
- Compare and contrast Aven and Connor. What traits do they share? What traits make them different? Do you think Connor is as comfortable having Tourette’s as Aven is not having arms? Find specific examples in the text to support your answer.

- Why do Aven and Connor fight in chapter 29? Do you think they could have communicated their feelings to each other in a better way? How do you react when a friend hurts your feelings?
- What happens in chapter 34 that makes Aven feel like dancing? How might the whole story have been different if Jessica had treated Aven like this on her first day of school?
- Think about the setting the author has chosen, Stagecoach Pass. How does it affect the way you read the story?

**Author Website:**

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

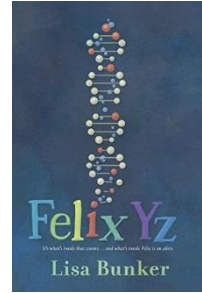
**Author Interview:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5jj\\_iBDL2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5jj_iBDL2s)

**If you liked this, you'll love:**

- Bell, Cece. *El Deafo*. Abrams, 2014.
- Brubaker-Bradley Kimberly. *The War That Saved My Life*. Dial, 2015.
- Draper, Sharon. *Out of My Mind*. Atheneum, 2010.
- Lord, Cynthia. *Rules*. Scholastic, 2006.

**Lisa Bunker**  
**FELIX Yz**  
**Viking, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-0425288504.**  
**\$16.99, 283 pages.**



When Felix was a toddler, an accident at his father’s lab killed his dad and fused Felix’s brain with a super-intelligent fourth-dimensional alien known as Zyx. Now, a decade later, it’s clear that Felix can’t survive unless he undergoes a hazardous operation (the Procedure) to separate him from Zyx. The book is written in the form of Felix’s secret blog, each entry counting down the days until the Procedure, and features two memorable voices: that of Felix himself, and of Zyx.

Along with his complex relationship with Zyx, Felix also has to cope with the trials and tribulations of middle school, including a crush on classmate Hector; and the up-and-down dynamics of family life, with his mother’s pushy boyfriend and his supportive gender-unusual grandparent.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Math:***

- Zyx tries to keep a low profile, but- when he discovers chess- he can’t help himself. He actually beats chess masters in online competitions. Host a chess night for your students.
- The number “3” is important to the story. Identify groups of three in the world around us. These groups could be from nature or from language.

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

- The book can be a study in developing voice in a character. In this book, there are two beings who reside in the same body. Each entity has his or its very distinctive voice. Describe each of these voices- how they differ and how they are the same, and how they approach different situations.

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

- The pronoun as a part of speech is studied in the book. There is a character who invents gender-neutral pronouns. How does the author utilize pronouns?

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

- Describe the family dynamics in the book.

- How did Felix deal with being frustrated with Zyx?
- How did Zyx deal with being frustrated with Felix?
- Who is your favorite character? Why?
- Does Felix enjoy school? Why?

**Author's Website:**

For information on the author and book see:

<https://www.lisabunker.net>

**If you liked this, you may like:**

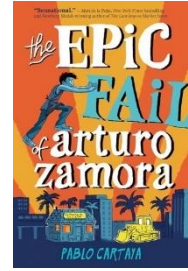
-Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *Found*. Simon & Schuster, 2008.

-Unsworth, Tania. *The One Safe Place*. Algonquin, 2014.

-Emerson, Kevin. *Last Day on Mars*. Walden Pond, 2017.

-L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1962.

**Pablo Cartaya**  
**THE EPIC FAIL OF ARTURO ZAMORA**  
Viking, 2017.  
ISBN: 978-1101997239.  
\$16.99, 236 pages.



Most summers Arturo Zamora spends hanging out with his friends, relaxing and occasionally working in his family's neighborhood Cuban restaurant. This summer is different...very different. First Arturo reconnects with a girl from his past. She has grown into a cute, funny, young lady. His stomach always gets nervous when she is near. Arturo also gets new responsibilities at the restaurant.

His summer really takes a turn when a land developer threatens the family's restaurant with a plan to gentrify the neighborhood. Arturo must save his neighborhood, save his family's business and get the girl. What could possibly go wrong?

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Geography:***

- Research the Cuban culture of Miami, Florida. This book has several recipes for traditional Cuban dishes. What other cultures can be experienced in Miami?  
For information about the culture of Miami, Florida see: <https://miamiandbeaches.com>

#### ***Reading:***

- Find excerpts of the writing and poetry of Jose Marti. How did Arturo find meaning in Marti's work?

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

- What is gentrification? Research its impacts on communities. How does it relate to the book?

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

- Why is the restaurant, La Cocina de la Isla, so successful?
- How is food important to the Zamora family?
- Why do people seem drawn to Wilfrido Pipo's project? Would you be drawn to it?
- How does Jose Marti inspire Arturo?
- Do you have a writer or poet who inspires you? Who? How?

**Author's Website:**

For information on the author and book go to:

<https://pablocartaya.com>

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

-Bauer, Joan. *Close to Famous*. Viking, 2011.

-Bowling, Dusti. *Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus*. Sterling, 2017.

-Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Falling Over Sideways*. Scholastic, 2016.

-Williams-Garcia, Rita. *One Crazy Summer*. Amistad, 2010.



**Jack Cheng**  
**SEE YOU IN THE COSMOS**  
**Dial, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-0399186370.**  
**\$16.99, 320 pages.**



Eleven-year-old Alex Petroski is making his own version of Carl Sagan’s Golden Record, carrying representative sounds of Earth, that was launched in 1977 on board Voyagers 1 and 2. Each chapter in the book is a transcript of Alex’s recordings for his own Golden iPod, which he plans to launch on his homemade rocket, Voyager 3, at the Southwest High-Altitude Rocket Festival (SHARF) in New Mexico. Alex is on his own: his father is dead; his mother is mentally unstable; and his older brother, Ronnie, lives in California. Nonetheless, accompanied by his dog (Carl Sagan, named for his hero), Alex sets off for the rocket festival. It’s an epic journey, during which he makes new friends, finds a new and unexpected half-sister, loses his dog, has a near-fatal accident, and ultimately – home again - forges a family. Alex’s resourcefulness, courage, and kindness in the face of many troubles makes you proud to share a planet with this kid.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- Curious about his father, Alex has been doing genealogical research on Ancestry.com. Try researching your own family tree. See Family Tree Kids at <https://www.familytreemagazine.com/kids/familytreekids/> for ideas, associated activities, and printable family tree forms.

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

- What is a rocket? And how does it work? See this NASA page for kid-friendly information: <https://www.nasa.gov/audience/forstudents/5-8/features/nasa-knows/what-is-a-rocket-58.html>
- Check out NASA’s list of excellent rocketry lesson plans, categorized by grade: <https://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/rocketry/lessonplans/index.html#.WrazG5PwbUI>.
- Launch your own rockets! See Baking Soda Rockets for Kids at <http://www.weknowstuff.us.com/2016/06/baking-soda-rockets-for-kids.html> or How to Make Fizzy Bottle Rockets, a similar experiment using alka-seltzer tablets, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4645B03AC4>. (Hint: do it outside.)
- What’s on the Voyager Golden Record? Find out here:

<https://voyager.jpl.nasa.gov/golden-record/whats-on-the-record/>

- Alex is eager to show half-sister Terra his house, his room, and his tesseract. Carl Sagan himself explains 2, 3, and 4 dimensions and tesseracts in a short YouTube video, “4<sup>th</sup> Dimension Made Easy,” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0WjV6MmCyM>.
- Alex’s mother is ultimately diagnosed with schizophrenia. Learn more about it here: <https://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/schiz.html>

### ***Language Arts and Literature:***

- SHARF and NASA are acronyms – that is, as Alex explains, words made from the first letters of other words. Alex has a try at making an acronym from his own full first name (Alexander): Astronomer/Launches rockets/Earthling/Xplorer.

Try making an acronym for your name or for that of a person you admire.

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

- Craft a rocket! Collect cardboard tubes, potato-chip cans, soda bottles, construction paper, foil, stickers, bottle caps, and more – and turn the kids loose.

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

- Some of the best discussion questions in *See You in the Cosmos* are posed by Alex himself. Try this one:  
Why should we try to go to Mars or communicate with extra-terrestrial intelligence when we can’t even solve all the problems we have on our own planet?
- Alex’s hero, Carl Sagan, was an American astronomer and cosmologist. He was especially interested in the search for intelligent life on other planets. Is that a good idea? Why or why not? Check out this Steven Johnson article from the New York Times, “Greetings, E.T. (Please Don’t Murder Us.)” at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/28/magazine/greetings-et-please-dont-murder-us.html>.
- What if you were making a Golden iPod or Record? What would you put on it?
- What do you think extraterrestrial beings would think of the Earth?
- Do you feel that people don’t want to tell you the truth because you’re a kid? Are there good reasons for this or not?
- Does everyone have to have sadness?
- And more from Alex: What is a dad anyway?

**Author's website:**

<https://jackcheng.com/>

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

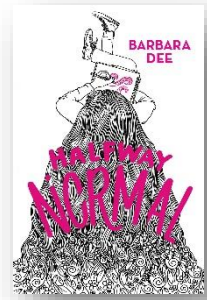
Books

- Baratz-Logsten, Lauren. *I Love You, Michael Collins*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2017.
- L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time*. Square Fish, 2007.
- Schusterman, Neil. *Challenger Deep*. HarperTeen, 2016.

Videos

- Contact*. 1997. Rating: PG.
- Cosmos*. 1980. A thirteen-episode television series narrated by astronomer Carl Sagan. Still available and still worth it.

**Barbara Dee**  
**HALFWAY NORMAL**  
**Aladdin, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-1481478519.**  
**\$16.99, 243 pages.**



Norah Levy has just completed two years of treatment for leukemia and is ready to go back to the “real world” of middle school. She knows it’ll be tricky—but like the Greek mythological characters she read about while she was sick, Norah’s up for any challenge. But seventh grade turns out to be trickier than she thought. Norah’s classmates don’t know what to make of her. Her best friend, Harper, tries to be there for her, but she doesn’t *get it*, really—and is hanging out with a new group of girls. Norah’s other good friend, Silas, is avoiding her. What’s that about, anyway?

When Norah is placed with the eighth graders for math and science, she meets Griffin, a cute boy who encourages her love of Greek mythology and art. And Norah decides not to tell him her secret—that she was “that girl” who had cancer. When something happens to make secret-keeping impossible, Norah must figure out a way to share her cancer story. But how do you explain something to others that you can’t explain to yourself? Can Nora take her cue from her favorite Greek myth? And then, once she finds the words, can she move forward with a whole new ‘normal’?

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Language Arts/History:***

- The book ends with Nora returning to Phipps to read her book about Greek myths to other kids there. Introduce D’Aulaires’ Book of Greek Mythology to your students. Create a family tree of Greek gods.
- Have students chose a Greek god to write a report on. Have them read their report to the class, while dressed in a costume they made to represent their god.
- Explore the history of Greek mythology. The History Channel is a great resource and has good videos too. <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/greek-mythology>

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

- Have students create a mythical god. Have them decide on lineage, weapons, special powers, etc. Then they can draw, paint or sculpt what he, she, or it would look like.
- The art on the book jacket looks a lot like zentangle. Have students explore zentangle and create their own book jacket or poster.

#### ***Health:***

- Scholastic has an amazing Livestrong at School program that is designed to generate classroom discussions about cancer, cancer treatment, and how to support those living with cancer. <http://www.scholastic.com/livestrong/>

***Discussion Questions:***

- Many people try to help Nora, even though she doesn't always want it. Whose help is helpful and whose is not? If you were in Nora's shoes, what kind of help would you want?
- If Nora hadn't become sick, do you think her parents' relationship would have been different? If so, how?
- Norah identifies with Persephone. Is there a mythological character you identify with? Why?
- What did you think of Nora's reaction to the bake sale? Do you think you would you have acted similarly or differently if it were you?
- If you were in a situation like Nora's, would you want to return to public school or would you rather be homeschooled? What are the pros and cons of each?
- Who is your favorite Greek god or goddess? Why?

**Author's Website:**

<http://barbaradeebooks.com>

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

- Anderson, John David. *Posted*. Walden Pond Press, 2017.
- Bell, Cece. *El Deafo*. Harry N. Abrams, 2014.
- Griffin, Paul. *When Friendship Followed Me Home*. Penguin Random House, 2016.
- Kelly, Erin Entrada. *Hello Universe*. Greenwillow Books, 2017.
- Palacio, R.J. *Wonder*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2012.

**Kevin Emerson**  
**LAST DAY ON MARS**  
**Walden Pond, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-0062306717.**  
**\$16.99, 336 pages.**



The remains of the Earth fell into the sun years ago, and ever since human beings have lived on Mars. Now Mars is about to suffer the same fate, so its millions of inhabitants are being evacuated in giant starliners, heading for a distant Earth-like planet, Aaru-5. Liam, his friend Phoebe, and their parents have stayed behind until the last minute, the parents completing terraforming trials for their new planet, when a deadly explosion destroys the research station. The starliner departs without them, leaving Liam, Phoebe, their unconscious parents, and a panda-like robot named JEFF behind. Liam, Phoebe, and JEFF set off to attempt a rendezvous with the starliner – but in the meantime, they’ve discovered a dead blue alien with a time-travel watch and met an intimidating representative of the mysterious Drove, whose aim seems to be to destroy all of humanity. An action-packed and exciting first book of a trilogy.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- While the inhabitants of Liam and Phoebe’s Mars still think of Earth as their home, they no longer have individual national allegiances. Instead they celebrate Humanity Day and fly a flag representing all humanity. See the proposed International Flag of Planet Earth for future space voyages at <http://www.flagofplanetearth.com/>. Try designing your own versions of the Martian flag of Humanity.
- Research the geography of Mars. Mars, for example, has the Valles Marineris, a canyon ten times as long and four times deeper than the Grand Canyon, and Olympus Mons, the highest volcano in the solar system, three times taller than Mount Everest.
- Learn about the history of Martian maps here:  
<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/10/planets-maps-exploring-mars-space-science/>.

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

- About 90% of the stars in the universe, including our sun, are main sequence stars. Learn about the life cycles of stars here: <https://www.space.com/22437-main-sequence-stars.html>.
- Gravity on Mars is only about one-third of that on Earth. How much would you weigh on Mars? How about on the other planets of our solar system?

- Want to go to Mars? Read about Elon Musk’s plan for the SpaceX Mars Colony here: <http://www.planetary.org/blogs/jason-davis/2017/20170929-spacex-updated-colonization-plans.html>.
- Astrobiology is the study of extraterrestrial life. On Liam and Phoebe’s Mars, the only native Martian lifeforms are microbes – but so far our scientific explorations of Mars haven’t even found that. See this photo timeline of the search for life on Mars: <https://www.space.com/16877-mars-life-search-photo-timeline.html>.

### ***Language Arts and Literature:***

- On Liam and Phoebe’s Mars, the only native Martians are species of glowing bacteria. In literature, however, writers have invented many different kinds of Martians, from H.G. Wells’s monsters in *War of the Worlds* to Ray Bradbury’s golden-eyed humanoids in *The Martian Chronicles* to the wacky Looney Tunes character Marvin the Martian, with his dog K-9. Compare Martians from literature – how many can you find? Or try inventing some Martians of your own.
- Check out “A Short History of Martians” here: <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/a-short-history-of-martians>
- In 2013, NASA sponsored a haiku poetry contest, and sent 1100 poems to Mars on a DVD on board the MAVEN spacecraft. See some of the winners here: <http://lasp.colorado.edu/maven/goingtomars/send-your-name/contest-winners/>.
- Try writing your own haiku about Mars.

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

- Is it possible for all people on Earth to become united? How might that happen?
- Liam loves Mars, but his sister Mina doesn’t. What might be the pros and cons of living in a Mars colony?
- If you were heading out in a starliner and could take only one small box of possessions along, what would you pack?
- Who is the mysterious chronologist? What’s your guess?

### **Author’s website:**

<http://www.kevinemerson.net/>

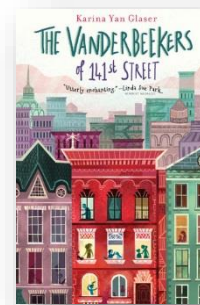
### **If you loved this, you’ll like:**

-Aldrin, Buzz, and Marianne Dyson. *Welcome to Mars: Making a Home on the Red Planet*. National Geographic, 2015.

- Gibbs, Stuart. *Space Case*. Simon & Schuster, 2016.
- Lee, Pascal. *Mission: Mars*. Scholastic, 2013.
- McDougall, Sophia. *Mars Evacuees*. HarperCollins, 2016.
- Weir, Andy. *The Martian: Young Readers Edition*. Ebury, 2016.



**Karina Yan Glaser**  
**THE VANDERBEEKERS OF 141<sup>ST</sup> STREET**  
**Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-0544876393.**  
**\$16.99, 304 pages.**



It's just before Christmas, and seriously unpleasant landlord Mr. Beiderman has decided not to renew the lease of the Vanderbeekers' brownstone apartment in Harlem, New York City. The five creative Vanderbeeker kids, however – 12-year-old twins Isa and Jessie, 9-year-old Oliver, 6-year-old Hyacinth, and 4-year-old Laney - are determined to make him change his mind. They circulate a neighborhood petition, and then decide to woo Mr. Beiderman with acts of kindness: Isa records a CD of her violin playing for him; Jessie, who loves science, makes an LED light up with lemons; Oliver writes a poem; Hyacinth gives him a kitten; and Laney makes a rainbow-colored picture of the brownstone. Nothing seems to work – until eventually they discover the tragic reason behind Mr. Beiderman's isolation. A warm and wonderful story set in a multiracial neighborhood.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- See the map of the Vanderbeekers' apartment and backyard on page 5. Try making a similar map of your own house or apartment.

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

- Try some of Jessie's experiments! See Gumdrop Molecule Lab at [http://feekesra.mtnhomesd.org/uploads/3/9/0/2/39026251/gumdrop\\_molecule\\_lab.pdf](http://feekesra.mtnhomesd.org/uploads/3/9/0/2/39026251/gumdrop_molecule_lab.pdf) and How to Make a Lemon Battery at <https://www.education.com/science-fair/article/lemon-power/>.
- Jessie's water wall is an example of a Rube Goldberg machine. Learn all about Rube Goldberg's wonderful machines at <https://wonderopolis.org/wonder/what-is-a-rube-goldberg-machine> and try designing one of your own.
- Check out this video of the Court of Water wall in Dresden, Germany, that plays music when it rains: <https://inhabitat.com/funky-blue-court-of-water-wall-plays-music-when-it-rains-video/>.

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

- Oliver has a room filled with bookcases and books. Among these are *Treasure Island* and *Prince Caspian* – but we know he has many more, including books about superheroes,

Greek mythology, pirates, space exploration, and presidents. Make a list of good books that might be found in Oliver's library.

***The Arts:***

- Learn about New York City brownstone architecture. See “The Rise of the Brownstone in New York” at <https://www.brownstoner.com/architecture/brownstone-brooklyn-architecture-charles-lockwood/>
- Using her button machine, Hyacinth has made Operation Beiderman buttons. What do you think they look like? Design a button for a cause that's important to you.
- Isa plays Dvorak's “Humoresque” at a school concert. Listen to it. What do you think? Was Jefferson Jamison right to call it “snooze music?” Try listening to some of Isa's other pieces, such as Eugene Ysaye's “Les Furies” and Camille Saint-Saens's “The Swan.”

***Discussion Questions:***

- Papa quotes Anatole France to Hyacinth, saying that “Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains unawakened.” Do you think that's true? Why or why not?
- Why does Jessie tell Benny that Isa doesn't want to go to the dance with him? Is the Rule of Twins a good idea?
- Isa plays “Les Furies” when she gets angry. How does music convey different emotions?
- Why can't Mr. Beiderman leave his apartment? And why does he finally decide to come downstairs?

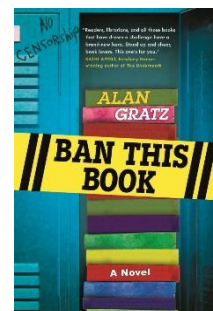
**Author's Website:**

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

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

- Birdsall, Jeanne. *The Penderwicks*. Yearling, 2007.
- Eager, Edward. *Half Magic*. HMH, 2016.
- Enright, Elizabeth. *The Saturdays*. Square Fish, 2008.
- Ransome, Arthur. *Swallows and Amazons*. David R. Godine, 2010.
- Taylor, Sydney. *All-of-a-Kind Family*. Yearling, 1984.

**Alan Gratz**  
**BAN THIS BOOK**  
Starscape, 2017.  
ISBN 978-0765385567.  
\$15.99, 255 pages.



Eleven-year-old Amy Anne Ollinger finds her voice and her courage fighting back against censorship after her favorite book is banned from her school library. When a parent decides that some of the books in the Shelbourne Elementary School Library are not suitable for the students, Amy Anne finds herself leading the charge to protect her right to read and preserve intellectual freedom for herself and her classmates. She enlists the help of her friends and together they carry out a series of actions to resist the banning of books. They create their own Banned Book Library Locker, create new covers for banned books, and raise awareness of the absurdity of banning books by submitting hundreds of “request for reconsideration” slips to the school board. Challenging the idea that one person can determine what everyone else can read, Amy quickly becomes the leader in a battle against censorship and demonstrates the power of young people to effect change.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- The Bill of Rights was written by the Founding Fathers to outline the freedoms Americans have that the government could not take away from them. Choose one of the ten amendments and explain what it means and its importance in your life.

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

- Page 48 lists the books Mrs. Spencer requested be pulled from the library collection. These are books that have been banned for real. Choose one and research the reasons it was banned and then read it and see what you think. Visit the American Library Association’s Banned and Challenged Book site for information on frequently challenged books. <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks>

#### ***Debate:***

- Amy Anne’s librarian Opal Jones and Amy Anne herself prepare their thoughts about why they think the freedom to read is important. And Mrs. Spencer has her ideas about why some books don’t belong on the library shelves and therefore trump a person’s right to read. Take a stand and defend your position on banning books versus the right to read.

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

- Amy Anne and her friends design new covers and titles for the banned books in her school so no one will know they are being read. Pick your favorite book and design a new cover for it or choose a children's book that has been challenged and design a new cover.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/childrensbooks>

### Discussion Questions:

- What are the reasons for not banning books that Amy Anne and Opal Jones argue in the book?
- What reasons does Mrs. Spencer give for banning books from the library?
- How does Amy Anne change throughout the story?
- What challenges does Amy Anne face in her home life? Do you connect to any of these?
- Do you agree that no one other than you and your parents should decide what you can or cannot read?
- Do you think books can make people do bad things or turn them into bad people?

### Author's Website:

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

Twitter: @AlanGraz

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

### A brief question and answer interview with Alan Gratz:

<http://www.fromthemixedupfiles.com/2017/10/interview-alan-gratz/>

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

- Clements, Andrew. *The Landry News*. Simon and Shuster Books for Young Readers, 1999.
- Clements, Andrew. *The Loser's Club*. Random House, 2017.
- Grabenstein, Chris. *Mr. Lemoncello's Library Olympics*. Random House, 2016.
- Hentoff, Nat. *The Day They Came to Arrest the Book*. Laurel-Leaf, 1983.
- Konisburg, E.L. *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1970.
- Yousafzai, Malala (with Patricia McCormick), *I Am Malala --How One Girl Stood up for Education and Changed the World* (Young Readers Edition) Little Brown and Company, 2015.

**Alan Gratz**  
**REFUGEE**  
Scholastic, 2017.  
ISBN: 978-0545880831.  
\$16.99, 338 pages.



Josef’s family is fleeing Nazi Germany in 1938, Isabel’s family is trying to leave the riots and unrest of Cuba in 1994, and Mahmoud’s family is escaping the violence of modern-day Syria. Gratz alternates these three narratives, keeping the chapters in *Refugee* short and ending each on a cliffhanger, which makes them easy to follow. The fast-paced, suspenseful stories feature characters who feel like real, relatable kids thrown into harrowing journeys filled with setbacks and hurdles. *Refugee* provides a vivid window onto the many struggles people face when fleeing their native countries for a better life elsewhere.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- *Refugee* is historical fiction. Do you agree with the statement: "Fiction is a lie that reveals the truth?" How do you think it applies to this novel? Which parts of the stories are true? Which are not? Why are the made-up parts of this book just as important as the true parts?
- Why did Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud’s families leave their homes? Write about what you think might have happened to their families if they had stayed. How are their situations similar, and how are they different?
- “It was like they were invisible,” Josef says on page 18, about his family’s time at the Berlin train station. “The bright yellow Star of David armbands . . . made them disappear . . . The people chose not to see them.” Why do most people ignore Josef’s family? How does Josef’s experience compare to Mahmoud’s realization about how people view refugees, on page 214?
- What do you think might have happened to Hana after she was separated from the rest of Mahmoud’s family when they were shipwrecked in the Mediterranean Sea? Write an account of Hana’s remaining journey.

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

- If you were fleeing Syria for Europe, what choices would you make for you and your family? Step into the shoes of a Syrian refugee. Imagine walking—and flying, driving, or traveling by boat— 1,500 dangerous miles from Syria to Europe. [Syrian Escape Route](#) is a virtual challenge produced by the BBC. It can be done on a SmartBoard or computer,

and allows students to make choices. What route should you take? How do you spend your money? What items do you take? The site also includes real stories of survivors.

- What you would take with you if you were forced to flee your country? Besides clothes, blankets, food and water, what else can you fit in a backpack? See what others would take on Twitter, at [#whatwouldyoutake](#)
- Research any of the three dictators in these stories — Adolf Hitler, Fidel Castro, or Bashar al-Assad. How have the policies and beliefs of these leaders affected the lives of real people like the characters in these stories?

#### ***Art/Dramatic Art:***

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

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

- How is the theme of empathy, of seeing the unseen and caring for others, of particular concern to each of the three main characters in *Refugee*?
- How did Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud change during the course of their journeys? Describe the points at which each has to act as an adult.
- What similarities do these stories have? How are they different? Why do you think the author wanted to present them all in one book?
- Mahmoud gave his sister to the people in the boat so she wouldn't drown. Did he make the right decision? Compare this to people who give up their kids for another family to adopt. How is it similar? How is it different?
- What does it tell you about Isabel's character that she traded her precious trumpet for gasoline? Have you ever sacrificed something you cherished for a greater good?
- How does Gratz connect the three stories at the end? Were you surprised at how he did that?

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

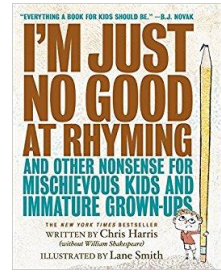
<https://www.alangratz.com/writing/refugee/refugee-discussion-guide/>

#### **If you loved this title, you may like:**

- Gratz, Alan, with Ruth and Jack Gruener. *Prisoner B-3087*. Scholastic. 2013.
- Lai, Thanhha. *Inside Out and Back Again*. HarperCollins, 2011.
- Park, Linda Sue. *A Long Walk to Water*. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2010.

- Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *The Red Pencil*. Little, Brown. 2014
- Senzai, N.H. *Shooting Kabul*. Simon & Schuster, 2010.

**Chris Harris**  
**I'M JUST NO GOOD AT RHYMING AND OTHER NONSENSE**  
**FOR MISCHIEVOUS KIDS AND IMMATURE GROWN-UPS**  
Little, Brown, 2017.  
ISBN: 978-0316266574.  
\$19.99, 192 pages.



“I used special ink on this poem’s last line  
That some children see and some don’t.  
If you’re a good child you’ll read it just fine, but----”

Do you just LOVE poetry? NO!?!? Do you like poetry? Meh?!? That’s okay, this book is still for you. You’ll visit the island where everyone’s Toby and learn whether grown-ups are better than kids.

Ever seen a feud unfold between author and illustrator? Ugly words (and pictures) are exchanged.

Do you ever wish your riddles were less satisfying? Do you need to memorize a poem that is 20 lines long (and really like the word ‘avocado’)?

Try one of these poems. Give it a shot, how hard can it be?

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- Chris Harris writes about the island where everyone’s Toby. Write a poem about an island where everyone has your name. What sort of stuff happens there?
- “Tis better” is a poem about a commonly used expression, but with a twist. Research idioms and try changing them. For example, “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks” is an expression that indicates that people become set in their ways and may not try a new method. What else could that expression be? “You can’t teach an old dog new math” or “You can’t teach an old dog what it doesn’t want to know.”

#### ***Visual arts:***

- Write down your favorite poem from this book or another book of poetry. Draw your own picture for it. Give the picture to a friend and ask them to write a sentence about it. Does the sentence bear similarity to the poem?
- Chris Harris uses font and word size to convey visually some of the concepts he is trying to illustrate. Try to create your own font. Can you make the word “angry” look angry? Can you make the word “sad” look sad? Can you make the word “cat” look like a cat?



You can also pick a word, turn it into your own font, then write a simple poem with that word as your poem.

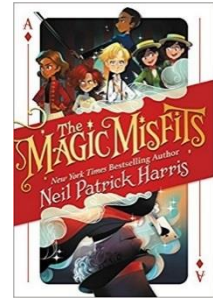
***Discussion Questions:***

- What makes a poem good? Which of these things do you think is important for enjoying a poem:
  - It feels sincere.
  - It is thoughtful.
  - It is original.
  - It makes the reader think.
  - It has good rhymes.
  - The rhythm is interesting.
  - It makes people laugh.
  - It is short.
  
- Which poem did you like the best?
  
- Can you think of picture books from your childhood that were written as verse? What made them memorable? (hint: Green Eggs and Ham)

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

- Pretlusky, Jack. *A Pizza the Size of the Sun*. Greenwillow, 1996.
- Scieszka, Jon. *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*. Viking, 1992.
- Silverstein, Shel. *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. Harper Collins, 1974.

**Neil Patrick Harris**  
**THE MAGIC MISFITS**  
**Little, Brown, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-0316391825.**  
**\$16.99, 272 pages.**



Sleight of hand- some people use it for entertainment, Uncle Sly uses it to steal. Carter escapes from his Uncle and a dastardly life of crime, and finds a new life in a new town, with a similar problem- a circus full of thieving performers. Carter connects with a group of talented misfits. These are his first friends- brilliant and skeptical Ridley, quirky twins of misdirection Olly and Izzy, escape artist Leila, and Theo who is talented in levitating items. Can they use their skills with illusions and performance arts to save the town from the sleazy circus of thieves?

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- The Author hid clues throughout the book, including a message through the images on the chapter pages. Can you create a code and write a letter to a friend? How much of the code will they need to solve your message: 5 letters, 10 letters?

#### ***Mathematics:***

- Card tricks often require the use of creative math. Learn about math and cards from the American Mathematical Society and Colm Mulcahy.  
<http://www.ams.org/publicoutreach/feature-column/fcarc-mulcahy1>
- Learn a simple card trick or try to create your own.

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

- Do you think Carter was a thief because he helped his uncle by distracting his victims? What would you have done if your guardian was like Uncle Sly?
- The Magic Misfits find each other because they have trouble “fitting in.” Do you ever feel like a misfit? Do you think most people have a time in their life where they feel like they don’t fit in?
- Do you have a group of close friends? What happens when one of your friends brings along a new person? What happens when another friend stops hanging out with the group and drifts away? Why do some friendships last and others don’t?
- Why is Ridley so skeptical of other people?

- The magic shop has a talking parrot. Imagine you have a pet with a human skill. What kind of pet would you have and what would the skill be?

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

- Avi. *The Unexpected Life of Oliver Cromwell Pitts: Being an Absolutely Accurate Autobiographical Account of My Follies, Fortune, and Fate*. Algonquin Young Readers. 2017.
- Balliett, Blue. *Chasing Vermeer*. Scholastic press. 2004.
- Funke, Cornelia. *The Thief Lord*. Scholastic. 2002.
- Rex, Adam. *Cold Cereal*. Balzer and Bray. 2012.
- Snicket, Lemony. *The Bad Beginning*. Harper Collins. 1999.
- Snicket, Lemony. *Who Could That Be at This Hour?* Little, Brown and Company. 2012.

**Kimberly Willis Holt**  
**BLOOMING AT THE TEXAS SUNRISE MOTEL**  
Henry Holt, 2017.  
ISBN: 978-1627793247.  
\$16.99, 328 pages.



*Blooming at the Texas Sunrise Motel* begins with young Stevie on a Greyhound bus heading off to live with a grandfather she doesn't know. Tragedy has recently struck her life and she must now start over at her grandfather's run-down motel in Texas. The mix of wonderful characters at the motel help to ease Stevie's transition to this new life, but does this grandfather she doesn't know at all actually want her there? Stevie's first person narrative allows the reader to jump right into her struggle as she tries to find a sense of belonging during a time of unbelievable grief.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- "I come from a line of hardworking people who never made much money but were rich in stories. My family's roots are very important to me. When you're looking for stories, look to your own heart."-KWH  
The above quote by the author can be found on the front page of her webpage. Write a short story that follows this advice.

#### ***Natural Sciences:***

- Gardening: The garden is an integral part of Stevie's story and she chooses her plants carefully. Plan a small garden plot as a class project. Research what plants work well in your area. Seeds or plants? Perennials or annuals? Colors? Sizes? The choices are endless!  
If resources allow, use your research and plant an actual garden. Once you have received the support of your teacher and school administration and have chosen an area of land to work on, you may want to ask your local Garden Center for donations or discounts. You could solicit gardening experts to help with this project, either as advisers or as workers.

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

- Apart from Stevie and Winston, there are many secondary characters in the novel that play important roles in the unwrapping of the plot. Pick 3 and explain their roles in the novel. Some ideas to think about:
  - What do they bring to the story?
  - What do they teach the main character(s)?
  - Are they essential to the plot?

### ***Health Sciences:***

- Mrs. Crumb suffers from narcolepsy. Research this condition and find out whether Ms. Holt has accurately depicted the condition. What causes it? How many people have it? Do narcoleptics usually fall asleep at the same time every day? Can a narcoleptic also be an insomniac?

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

- Why are plants and gardening so important in this novel?
- Why is Winston so opposed to the garden?
- Why does Winston not want to get close to Stevie?
- Why do Horace and Ida live at the motel?
- Where would you choose to live? At the motel or with Aunt Teresa and her family? Why?
- *Blooming at the Texas Sunrise Motel* is a very sad story. Does the author manage to include enough joy and happiness to balance out the sadness? Or is the novel simply too sad for readers your age?
- How do you think the information Stevie learns from Aunt Teresa will change her feelings about her parents?
- How do you think Winston and Theresa will feel about the bus tickets Paco found?

### **Author website:**

<http://www.kimberlywillisholt.com>

### **Additional resources:**

Book Club for Kids Podcast: *Blooming at the Texas Sunrise Motel*

<http://www.bookclubforkids.org/new-blog/2017/5/22/episode-45-live-from-the-gaithersburg-book-festival-blooming-at-the-texas-sunrise-hotel-by-kimberly-willis-holt>

### **Grief Resources:**

-The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children & Families

<https://www.dougy.org>

-*Children & Grief: Guidance & Support Resources* from Scholastic.

<http://www.scholastic.com/childrenandgrief/>

-The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN): *Childhood Traumatic Grief Resources for Youth.*

<http://www.nctsn.org/trauma-types/traumatic-grief/kids-teens>

-Mothers Against Drunk Driving  
<https://www.madd.org>

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

- Edge, Christopher. *The Many Worlds of Albie Bright*. Nosy Crow, 2016.
- Knowles, Jo. *See You at Harry's*. Candlewick, 2012.
- McGhee, Holly M. *Matylda, Bright & Tender*. Candlewick, 2017.
- Paterson, Katherine. *Bridge to Terabithia*. Thomas Crowell, 1977.
- Reynolds, Jason. *As Brave as You*. Atheneum, 2016.
- Rupp, Rebecca. *After Eli*. Candlewick, 2012.

**Victoria Jamieson**  
**ALL'S FAIRE IN MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**Dial, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-0525429990.**  
**\$20.99, 248 pages.**



Eleven-year-old Imogene (Impy) has grown up with two parents working at the Renaissance Faire, and she's eager to begin her own training as a squire. First, though, she'll need to prove her bravery. Luckily Impy has just the quest in mind—she'll go to public school after a life of being homeschooled! But it's not easy to act like a noble knight-in-training in middle school. Impy falls in with a group of girls who seem really nice (until they don't) and starts to be embarrassed. Impy has always thought of herself as a heroic knight, but when she does something really mean in order to fit in, she begins to wonder whether she might be more of a dragon after all.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- Study castles. Have students help build a castle for a classroom book nook.
- Take notice of the costumes people wore at the Renaissance Faire in the book. Have fun exploring clothing. There was a lot of meaning to how people dressed in the Middle Ages. For example, brighter colors, better materials, and a longer jacket length were usually signs of greater wealth. Most of the holy orders wore long woolen habits. Have students dress up as people from the Middle Ages. They could present or write an essay about their clothing choice and who it is they represent.
- *Picture the Middle Ages* by Linda Honan is an excellent resource for teaching.

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

- Create a mock stain glass project. Here's an example:  
<https://www.education.com/activity/article/faux-stained-glass-flower/>
- Create an illuminated manuscript. Here's an example:  
<http://www.mykidsadventures.com/illuminated-manuscript/>

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

- Have students write a biography of a famous medieval artist.
- Have students create a Medieval Times newspaper.

**Science:**

- Complete Dr. MacGregor's extra credit project. Hand out star maps and have students take them home and mark any constellations they see on the evenings or weekends.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Have you ever been to a Renaissance Faire? If so, what did you like/dislike about it? If you haven't, would you ever want to go? Would you rather play a part or be a visitor?
- Have you or anyone else you know ever been bullied? What happened? Did Imogene handle it well when she was bullied?
- How important do you think it is to fit in? Is there anything you would be willing to give up if it meant you could fit in more at school?
- Is school as bad as the book portrays? What do you like/dislike about your school?
- In the book, Imogene really messes up with her little brother. Have you ever done or said anything you regretted to a sibling? How about to a parent, or a friend? If so, how did you fix it?
- What makes a real friend?
- Who is your favorite character and why?

**Author's Website:**

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

**Vermont Renaissance Faire:**

[www.vtgatherings.com/vtrenfaire/](http://www.vtgatherings.com/vtrenfaire/)

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

- Chmakova, Svetlana. *Awkward*. JY, 2015.
- Hale, Shannon. *Real Friends*. First Second, 2017.
- Holm, Jennifer L. *Sunny Side Up*. Graphix, 2015.
- Libenson, Terri. *Invisible Emmie*. Balzer + Bray, 2017.



**Terry Lynn Johnson**  
**FALCON WILD**  
**Charlesbridge, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-1580897884**  
**\$16.99, 176 pages.**



Karma is a thirteen-year-old homeschooler living and working at her family's Birds-of-Prey Education Center. She loves the birds and rarely talks of anything except them and falconry. She badly wants to become a certified falconer and is hoping to get her apprentice license when she turns fourteen. After a series of events, Karma, her younger brother Gavin and their dad must head to Canada to return her young gyrfalcon, Stark, to her rightful owner. Karma is not happy and the trip turns from bad to worse after a crash in the backcountry of Montana. Karma must use all her skills and strength to find help in this edge-of-your seat outdoor adventure.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Social Studies/Debate:***

- Karma is homeschooled. Do you think this is the right choice for her and her family? Would you like to be homeschooled? Do you have any friends who are homeschooled? Make a list of arguments for and against homeschooling. Pick teams of 3-4 students and each pick a side of this subject (affirmative team and opposing team). You will also need to pick a team of judges. Your teacher could be a judge.

If you have never held a classroom debate before, be sure to decide on rules/guidelines in advance. Here is some information to investigate further:

[https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/frame\\_found\\_sr2/tns/tn-13.pdf](https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/frame_found_sr2/tns/tn-13.pdf)

<http://www.teachhub.com/classroom-activities-how-hold-classroom-debate>

<https://busyteacher.org/7245-conducting-class-debate-essential-tips.html>

#### ***Language Arts & Creative Writing:***

- As in mentioned in the "Author's Note," there are a few scenes in which Ms. Johnson "chose to alter common practices for effect." The three scenes she mentions are Stark biting Karma, the time frame of Stark's owners contacting Karma's family, and the quickness with which Stark is able to hunt food for them. Can you think of any other scenes where she might have changed some things to speed up the action or to make the story flow better? Do you think it is okay for novelists to make these alterations? When is it ok? Can you think of other books you have read where the author also had to make these types of decisions? Write down your thoughts.
- Karma sees something in Cooper that makes her tell her dad to pick him up. Their

relationship does not start off well, but they may just end up as true friends. Do you have a friendship that had a rocky start? Write a story about this friendship, about how it started and how it grew and developed.

***Natural Science:***

- Research falconry, either online and/or in books. Write a report on your findings. After completing your research, do you think this is a sport you would be interested in trying?

*Local Falconry Organizations:*

-Green Mountain Falconry School

<http://www.greenmountainfalconryschool.com>

-New England Falconry

<http://www.falconryatwoodstockvt.com>

***Discussion questions:***

- What are the themes of *Falcon Wild*?
- Karma recites this mantra several times in the novel: "I am calm. I am not afraid. I am safety." What do you think it means? Why does she say it at those particular times? What would your mantra be?
- Do you find that many of the main characters in the novels you read are homeschooled? If so, why do you think that is?
- Why do you think Karma made her dad pick Cooper up?
- Why does Cooper come back and help Karma?
- "Being weird is much better when there's someone to be weird with." What does that mean and do you agree with it?
- Much of what Karma packed in her bag was extremely helpful in helping them survive. What would you add to her bag?

**Author website:**

<http://terrylynnjohnson.com>

**Author blog:**

<http://terrylynnjohnson.blogspot.com>

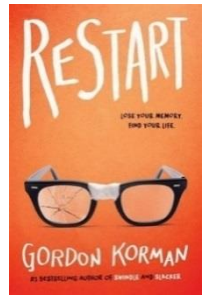
**Discussion guide:**

<http://terrylynnjohnson.com/pdfs/falcon-wild-curriculum-guide.pdf>

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

- Gebhart, Ryan. *There Will be Bears*. Candlewick, 2014.
- Craighead George, Jean. *My Side of the Mountain*. Puffin, 2004.
- Johnson, Terry Lynn. *Ice Dogs*. Houghton Mifflin, 2014.
- - -. *Overboard! Survivor Diaries* (series). Houghton Mifflin, 2017.
- Larson, Kirby. *Hattie Big Sky*. Delacorte, 2007.
- Paulsen, Gary. *Hatchet*. Atheneum, 1987.
- Rundell, Katherine. *The Explorer*. Simon & Schuster, 2017.

**Gordon Korman**  
**RESTART**  
Scholastic, 2017.  
ISBN: 978-1338053777.  
\$16.99, 256 pages.



Chase doesn't remember falling off the roof and hitting his head. He doesn't remember his family, his friends, or even his own name. When Chase wakes up with amnesia after a concussion, he learns that not only was he Hiawasse Middle School's football star, he was also its worst bully. This hilarious story is about school life, family, sports, friendship, and the choices we make about who we are and who we want to become. It also features a diverse and entertaining cast of characters.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- Compare *Restart* to other books in which the main character is a bully or is bullied, such as *Crash* by Jerry Spinelli, *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio, or *Middle School: How I Survived Bullies, Broccoli, and Snake Hill* by James Patterson. How would the 'old' and the 'new' Chase get along with characters from these other books? How would they get along with each other?
- Meet with a senior citizen to do a profile of his or her life. This could be a print interview, a video profile as in *Restart*, or an audio recording. What questions will you ask?
- Summarize the entire story from the point of view of a character other than Chase: Shoshanna, Brendan, Principal Fitzwallace, Mr. Solway, Aaron or Bear, etc. How would this character see the events of the story differently than Chase?
- Do an author study of Gordon Korman and some of his other great books.

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

- Chase gets amnesia after he hits his head. Learn about different types of amnesia and their causes on [Healthline.com](http://Healthline.com). Or learn about why we don't remember being babies on [Wonderopolis](http://Wonderopolis.com).

#### ***Art/Dramatic Art:***

- Create a script of a chapter of *Restart* that includes some of your favorite characters. Either film your book trailer or screenplay, or create a version using a computer coding program like [Scratch](#), or an app like Puppet Pals.

***Discussion Questions:***

- How does Chase change in this novel? Which event or action besides the fall do you think has the greatest impact on his character?
- What do you think you would do if you were in Chase's situation, with no memories of your past life?
- How is Mr. Solway, the crotchety nursing home resident, a mirror character to Chase?

**Author's Website:**

<http://gordonkorman.com/restart>

<http://librisnotes.blogspot.com/2017/08/restart-by-gordon-korman.html>

**If you loved this title, you may like:**

-Holt, K.A. *House Arrest*. Chronicle Books, 2015.

-Korman, Gordon. *Schooled*. Disney-Hyperion, 2008.

-Patterson, James. *Middle School: How I Survived Bullies, Broccoli, and Snake Hill*. Little, - Brown for Young Readers, 2013.

-Pearsall, Shelley. *The Seventh Most Important Thing*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2015.

**Mary E. Lambert**  
**FAMILY GAME NIGHT AND OTHER CATASTROPHES**  
Scholastic, 2017.  
ISBN: 978-0545931984.  
\$16.99, 256 pages.



Annabelle has always managed to keep her friends outside the "five-mile radius" because the mess of her mother's hoarding is not something she wants the rest of the world to know about. Each member of her family deals with it in their own way, but with nobody in charge, will the situation ever change? Annabelle as narrator adds a great deal of humor to a seemingly hopeless situation as she tries to maintain some semblance of a normal life.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Language Arts/Creative Writing:***

- Each member of Annabelle's family has a unique way of responding to the hoarding. Describe each of them, including what they do to deal with the situation. Offer suggestions how each of them (including Grandma Nora) could positively change their approach to the problem.
- The novel ends with some hope, but it is not tied up neatly. Fast-forward 12 months. Write the first chapter of the sequel to *Family Game Night and Other Catastrophes*.

#### ***Creative Writing/Theatre:***

- Annabelle turns the scene where the family sits down to play a game (Chapter 8) into a very funny three-act play. Choose an awkward or uncomfortable event in your family's life and turn it into a short play. If you are fortunate enough to have never experienced such a scene, make one up. Be sure to introduce your characters properly, to choose your dialogue carefully and to set the scene.

#### ***Health Sciences:***

- Research hoarding. Think about the following when compiling your information:  
How does one become a hoarder? What is the estimated number of people who hoard in the US? What are some strategies for preventing hoarding? When does merely collecting a large number of items become the problem of hoarding?

-Mayo Clinic: *Hoarding Disorder*

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hoarding-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20356056>

-Psychology Today: *Hoarding Disorder*

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/conditions/hoarding-disorder>

-Time Magazine: *Hoarding: How Collecting Stuff Can Destroy Your Life:*

<http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1984444,00.html>

***Discussion questions:***

- How would you handle a family "secret" such as Annabelle's? Would you tell your friends?
- Are there things about your family that you don't want your friends to know?
- What does Annabelle think would happen if people knew about the state of her house?
- Why does Annabelle keep her room so empty?
- How important is the title to you when choosing a book to read? With a title like *Family Game Night and Other Catastrophes*, what would you have guessed this book was about? Does the title alone pique your interest?
- Why is the book called *Family Game Night and Other Catastrophes*?
- Why does Annabelle decide to not go to the lake with Rae? Did she make the right decision?
- Were you surprised when Annabelle's mom opened up the "Forbidden Room"? Why do you think she kept it that way?
- Why does Annabelle's dad come home when he does?

**Author website:**

<http://maryelambert.com>

**Interview with the author by Wendy McLeod MacKnight:**

<http://wendymcleodmacknight.com/interview-with-mary-e-lambert-author-of-family-game-night-and-other-catastrophes/>

**Interview with the author on *Just Another Teen Reading Books* blog:**

<http://justanotherteenreading.blogspot.com/2017/01/interview-with-mary-e-lambert.html>

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

-Gephart, Donna. *Lily and Dunkin*. Delacorte, 2016.

-Greenberg, Lauren Abbey. *The Battle of Junk Mountain*. Running Press Kids, 2018.

-Harrington, Karen. *Sure Signs of Crazy*. Little Brown, 2013.

-Klise, Kate. *Homesick*. Feiwel & Friends, 2012.

**Mike Lawrence**  
**STAR SCOUTS**  
**First Second, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-1626722804.**  
**\$14.99, 192 pages.**



Avani feels like a weirdo in her new town. It doesn't help when her parents make her join the Flower Scouts, a girls group who seem to have nothing better to do than makeovers. But everything changes when she's abducted by a friendly alien named Mabel. When she is allowed to join a troop of Star Scouts, she prepares for adventure and new experiences. Some scouts are friendly, others skeptical and not ready to accept a new species into the troop. Avani must push hard to prove that she is a worthy scout, but at least she has her optimistic attitude and the support of her new friends. This is the first book of a brand-new series.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- Write a background story about one of the other scouts? Based on what you know about them answer the following questions: What is their home life like? How long have they been a scout? What do they love about being a star scout?
- Write a story about what would happen if you were accidentally transported into the scouts.

#### ***Visual arts:***

- Draw a storyboard of your own scout challenge. What sort of other skills do you think scouts need to learn?

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

- At the end, Avani meets Jen, a Flower Scout who prefers NASA to talking about boys. Jen meets the other scouts and faints from the shock. Should Avani pretend the meeting never happened or try the introduction again?
- Would you tell your parent or guardian if you ended up in Star Scouts? Do you think they would believe you?
- Which scout badge would you try to earn first?
- Should Avani share some earth skills with the other scouts? What could she teach them about human life in the future?



- How do you feel about the author's portrayal of Avani versus the other Flower Scouts? Do you think it is an accurate representation of feeling left out in a group setting?

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

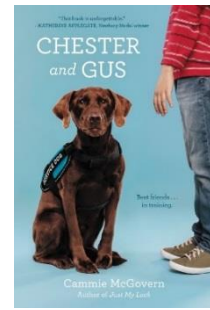
-Hatke, Ben. *Zita the Spacegirl*. First Second, 2011.

-L'Engle, Madeleine. *A wrinkle in time: The graphic novel*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2012.

-Maihak, Mike. *Cleopatra in Space book 1: Target Practice*. Graphix, 2014.

-Thompson, Craig. *Space Dumplins*. Graphix, 2015.

**Cammie McGovern**  
**CHESTER AND GUS**  
**HarperCollins, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-0062330697.**  
**\$16.99, 272 pages.**



This inspiring and gripping novel is about the remarkable bond between Chester, a service dog, and ‘his person,’ Gus. Chester is a Labrador retriever who flunked service dog school. Gus is an autistic boy who seems to understand what’s going on around him, but who doesn’t speak, and retreats from people for no apparent reason. *Chester and Gus* is the story about how these two are brought together. Chester narrates the story, which gives a wonderfully realistic picture of autism and the challenges and triumphs faced by sufferers and their families.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- Write about an event - either historical, something from the news, or from your own life - from the point of view of an animal who may have been there at the time. How does this unique point of view affect how you write about this event? How would your account be different if it were told from your point of view? Who else would give an interesting point of view on this event: a senior citizen, a recent immigrant to this country, etc?

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

- Learn how you can become involved with helping shelter animals at your local animal shelter, or at [www.petakids.com/save-animals/help-shelter-animals/](http://www.petakids.com/save-animals/help-shelter-animals/)

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

- Learn about animal intelligence through sites such as <https://wonderopolis.org/wonder/can-animals-read>, and videos such as “The Dog Who Knows 1,000 Words” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6479QAJuz8&feature=youtu.be>, featuring Neil DeGrasse Tyson. Nancy Castaldo’s *Beastly Brains: Exploring How Animals Think, Talk, and Feel* (HMH, 2017) is also a great resource. What are some effective ways to train intelligent animals?
- What can it feel like to be autistic? Here are several video simulations to help you understand the sensory overload some autistic people experience: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/news/news-item/5-video-simulations-help-you-experience-sensory-overload>. If you had an autistic friend or family member, what could you do to help make them feel more comfortable when you were together?

**Discussion Questions:**

- What obstacles does Chester overcome to meet his goal of being a service dog? How does his mindset affect his ability to succeed?
- Neither Gus nor Chester has the ability to communicate easily with others. How are their situations similar? How are they different?
- Why do you think Gus is so drawn to Mama, the cafeteria worker at his school?
- Why do you think Cammie McGovern chose to write *Chester and Gus* using Chester's perspective?
- What do you think Chester loved most about being a service dog?

**Author's Website:**

<http://www.cammiemcgovern.com/chester-and-gus/>

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

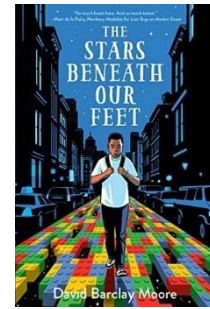
- Applegate, Katherine. *The One and Only Ivan*. HarperCollins, 2012.
- Lord, Cynthia. *Rules*. Scholastic Press, 2006.
- McGovern, Cammie. *Just My Luck*. HarperCollins, 2016.
- Rorby, Ginny. *How to Speak Dolphin*. Scholastic Press, 2015.
- Shotz, Jennifer Li. *Max: Best Friend, Hero, Marine*. HarperCollins, 2015.

**David Barclay Moore**  
**THE STARS BENEATH OUR FEET**

**Knopf, 2017.**

**ISBN: 978-1524701246.**

**\$16.99, 294 pages.**



Even since Lolly’s older brother Jermaine was killed during an act of gang violence, his feelings swing from mad to sad with no in-between. The only comfort Lolly feels is when he’s building with Legos. When a staff member at the community center in the Harlem, New York, projects where he lives provides him with his own space to build, Lolly is able to temporarily shield himself from his grief and the dangers he and his friend Vega face on the street every day.

**Curriculum Connections**

***STEM:***

- To learn about innovative ways to use LEGO products in your classroom follow this link: <https://education.lego.com/en-us>
- Take an architecture tour through your town. Bring along a camera and take pictures of different types of architectural styles. Prepare a Powerpoint or other type of digital presentation that explains various facets of each style and what makes them unique.
- As a group, choose one important building in your community. Why did your group choose this building? What makes it’s unique? How old is it? What purpose does it serve? Do you think this building will still serve the same purpose in 50 years? How can you create a representation of this building using recycled or found materials?

***Social Studies:***

- Lolly lives in a section of New York known as Harlem. Harlem has a rich cultural history that may not be well known to many. With a partner, each choose one of Harlem’s famous past residents to research. Each person will create a list of 5 questions for their partner to ask them in a recorded mock TV interview setting. Some former Harlem residents include: <https://www.biography.com/people/groups/famous-harlem-residents>

***Language Arts:***

- Read the poem “Dreams” by Langston Hughes. What connections can you make to the sentiment of this poem and Lolly’s life?

***Discussion Questions:***

*Follow this link for an extensive list of discussion questions:*

<https://www.perma-bound.com/static/TPR/000458257.pdf>

- Why do you think Lolly decided to take apart all the Lego kits that he previously worked so hard to put together?
- What is Lolly's relationship with his dad like? Is he a positive influence on Lolly?
- Do you think Lolly ever got suspicious about where all the "free" Legos Yvonne brought home really came from?
- What do you think draws Lolly to the architecture of New York City? How does this interest help him form a friendship with Rose?
- How does Lolly react when Vega shows him the gun that he got from Frito? Why do you think he reacted that way?

**Author's Website:**

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

**NPR Interview:**

<https://www.npr.org/2017/09/16/551457577/a-boy-grows-up-in-harlem-in-the-stars-beneath-our-feet>

**David Barclay Moore Interview:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gO5kNLJR3hg>

**Audio Book Excerpt:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTRSW2OY50Y>

**If you liked this, you'll love:**

- Booth, Coe. *Kinda Like Brothers*. Scholastic, 2014.
- Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Bucking the Sarge*. Wendy Lamb, 2004.
- Fleischman, Paul. *Seedfolks*. HarperTeen, 1997.
- Reynolds, Jason. *Ghost*. Atheneum, 2016.

**Paul Mosier**  
**TRAIN I RIDE**  
**HarperCollins, 2017.**  
**ISBN 978-0062455734.**  
**\$16.99, 178 pages.**



Twelve-year-old Rydr is a survivor. She spent her childhood with a drug addicted mother who had many “public embarrassments” that often resulted in Rydr being placed with social services or sent to live with her chain-smoking grandmother until her mom got out of jail. The temporary stays at her grandmother’s house in the ugly part of Palm Springs become permanent when Rydr’s mother dies from an overdose. But California isn’t home for long. When Rydr’s grandmother dies, Rydr is sent on a train bound for Chicago to live with a great-uncle she’s never met. Ryder is hungry and alone. She spends the small stipend social services gives her for food on her journey at the terminal before even boarding the train. Wanting to hide that she is broke and hungry, Rydr devises crafty money-making schemes to buy food from the train’s cafe car. It is through these money-making escapades that Rydr meets people who will forever change her life and be changed by her and where she’ll understand what family means.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Language Arts/Poetry:***

- One of the passengers Rydr meets on the train is Carlos, a poet who has been invited to ride the train and write poetry about his experience. When he asks Rydr what she thinks about poetry she replies, “I feel like I don’t always understand it.” Carlos says that is a similar reaction people have when looking at modern art. He explains, “Poems are just art objects painted with words. Sometimes they look like things you recognize, and sometimes not.”  
Use this as a springboard for exploring poetry and books written in verse.
- Read and interpret poetry beginning with the poem on the last page of *Train I Ride*. Read books written in verse or books that include poetry like *Free Verse* by Sarah Dooley, *The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary* by Laura Shovan, *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson, or *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander.
- There are lots of online resources to use to introduce and explore poetry writing.  
[Read Write Think](http://www.readwritethink.org/search/?resource_type=16&type=28): 8 different lessons on different forms of poetry.  
[http://www.readwritethink.org/search/?resource\\_type=16&type=28](http://www.readwritethink.org/search/?resource_type=16&type=28)  
[Scholastic Poetry resource](https://www.poetryarchive.org/teach-poetry/lesson-plans) with ideas to help students read, write and share poetry.  
<https://www.poetryarchive.org/teach-poetry/lesson-plans>

#### ***Additional poetry resources:***

-NEA collection of resources <http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/bringing-poetry-to-the-classroom-grades-6-8.html>

-School Library Journal Resources for National Poetry Month  
<https://www.slj.com/resources/slj-resources-for-national-poetry-month/>

***Social Studies/Geography:***

- Visit Amtrak’s website and explore the [Southwest Chief Route](#) Rydr traveled to go from Los Angeles to Chicago. Have students research the states traveled through including California, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri and Illinois.

***Citizenship/Social-Emotional:***

- Some of Rydr’s friends give her merit badges before she leaves the train. Tenderchunks rips his merit badges off his scout shirt questioning what scoutmasters really know about merit. Explore the concept of merit (being good or worthy of praise) and have students create badges for one another acknowledging each other’s merits.

***Discussion Questions:***

- Why does Rydr hide her hunger and her story from people?
- Why did Dorothea give Rydr a badge for being “crafty” or resourceful? Do you think she was? What about Neal’s badge for Rydr in the shape of a heart for being strong? In what ways does Rydr show strength?
- Lola, Rydr’s counselor back in California, offers her some advice before she leaves for Chicago: “Work at becoming the best person you want to be. And love yourself. Only then can you really trust your feelings and the intentions of others.” What do you think of this advice? How did she come to understand the meaning of this advice?
- How did the people Rydr met on the train change her and how did she change them?
- There is a statement on the cover of the book, “She found her family before she found her home.” How does this statement relate to the story?
- Moloch is the biblical name of a Canaanite god associated with child sacrifice. Why did the author include mention of this god in the story?

**Author’s website:**

<https://novelistpaulmosier.wordpress.com/>

**Social Media Contacts:**

Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/paul.mosier1?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/paul.mosier1?ref=br_rs)

Twitter: @mosier\_paul

**If you loved this, you’ll like:**

- Bayard, Louis. *Lucky Strikes*. Henry Holt and Co., 2016.
- Carter, Caela. *Forever or a Long, Long Time*. HarperCollins, 2017.
- Crowder, Melanie. *Three Pennies*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2017.
- Dooley, Sarah. *Free Verse*. G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, 2016.
- Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. *One for the Murphys*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2012.
- O'Connor, Barbara. *Wish*. Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2016.



**Celia C. Perez**  
**THE FIRST RULE OF PUNK**  
**Viking, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-0425290408.**  
**\$16.99, 336 pages.**



Twelve-year-old Malú is not pleased when her mom accepts a professorship in Chicago - over a thousand miles away from her home in Gainesville. She would much prefer to stay behind with her super-cool, punk-rock, Indie-record-store-owning dad rather than make the trek with the “SuperMexican.” But Chicago it is and Malú is soon immersed in the world of mean girls, candy necklaces and being called a coconut. Malú struggles with how best to express who she is, as she learns how to embrace the talents, interests and heritage she inherited from each of her very different parents. With info on how to make your own zine, including samples such as “A Handbook for Coconuts,” “Senorita Germs,” and “SuperMexican,” this novel will appeal to artists, musicians and any middle-schooler who struggles with how to fit in without losing his or her identity.

### **Curriculum Connections**

#### ***Music:***

- On Celia C. Pérez's website, she lists her *The First Rule of Punk* playlist (<http://celiacperez.com/playlist/>) with links to all of the songs. Listen and share your thoughts. Which songs, if any, did you like especially like?
- Create your own musical playlist with songs that fit with the story of your life.

#### ***Visual Arts & Creative Writing:***

- Zines! Research the history of zines. What exactly is a zine? How long have they been around?
- Create a zine, or a chapter of a zine, about something that interests you. Ms. Pérez's favorite zine supplies are a long-arm stapler, glue sticks, and watercolor pencils. What supplies were essential for you when creating your zine?

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

- How do you feel about the dress code at José Guadalupe Posada Middle School? What about the school deciding that the Co-Co's music isn't "family-friendly" enough to be included at the Fall Fiesta?
- If you disagreed with a rule at your school, how would you go about getting it changed?

As a class, choose a rule you think ought to be changed. Write a letter to your school administration stating reasons why you believe this rule is no longer relevant or appropriate.

**Music:**

- Research punk rock music. What bands are important in the history of the genre? Are there still punk rock bands or musicians today? Do they still call themselves punk rock?

**Discussion questions:**

- Why do they call Malú a coconut?
- How do you feel about the dress code at José Guadalupe Posada Middle School?
- Why does Malú have such a hard time with her mom, specifically with the ethnic heritage?
- Why do she and her dad get along so well?
- What is the First Rule of Punk? What are the other Rules of Punk?
- Do you have any rules you use to guide your life?
- Why does Malú get so upset with Joe?
- Why is Mrs. Hidalgo such an important person for Malú's character?
- What are some of the things Malú did well in trying to make it work at her new school? What are some things you think she could have done differently?

**Author website**

<http://celiacperez.com>

**Additional resources:**

Interview on NPR with the author:

<https://www.npr.org/2017/09/01/547964121/celia-perezs-new-novel-the-first-rule-of-punk-comes-with-advice-for-adolescents>

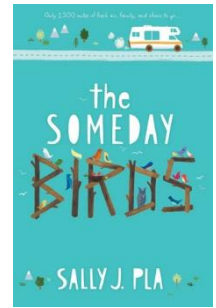
**If you loved this, you'll like:**

-Korman, Gordon. *Born to Rock*. Hyperion, 2006.

-Munoz Ryan, Pam. *Esperanza Rising*. Scholastic, 2000.

-Snyder, Laurel. *Bigger Than a Breadbox*. Random House, 2011.

**Sally J. Pla**  
**THE SOMEDAY BIRDS**  
**HarperCollins, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-0062445766.**  
**\$16.99, 336 pages.**



Dealing with the changes in his routine since his dad returned home injured from the war in Afghanistan hasn't been easy for Charlie. His life takes another unexpected and unwanted twist when his dad is sent far away to receive medical care. Charlie reluctantly embarks on a cross-country road trip along with a three-legged dog, his boy-crazy sister, pesky twin brothers and a mysterious caretaker in hopes of reuniting with his father and viewing some of his elusive "Someday Birds" along the way.

### **Curriculum Connections:**

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

- Using a map of the US and the landmarks Charlie visited, map out the route he must have taken to get from San Diego to Virginia. Using the map scale, determine how many miles it is. Have students map out a road trip they would like to go on. How many miles is it? Why did they pick that route? What are some of the things they would hope to see along the way?
- Ludmilla is from Sarajevo. Have students research the tumultuous history of this country and compare and contrast it to life in Vermont. Students can use Venn Diagrams to show their findings.
- Read students "Flowers From Sarajevo" and ask them to write a response to how it made them feel.  
<https://www.amazon.com/Flowers-Sarajevo-John-McCutcheon/dp/1682630005>

#### ***STEM: Cooking***

- \*Make your own Baked Chicken Nuggets

"I've figured out that no matter where you get dragged in this world, you can usually survive by ordering the chicken nuggets." (Charlie)

Recipe here: <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/ree-drummond/chicken-nuggets-2770460>

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

- Have students draw a quick outline of a body, which will represent Charlie, on a piece of

notebook paper. Using evidence found in chapters 1-12 have students write any known details about Charlie inside the body. On the outside students can write any questions about Charlie they might have.

- Be like Charlie and his dad and create your own Someday List. Your Someday List can include: places you want to go, things you want to try, animals or birds you want to see, or people you want to visit. Be sure to include a few a few challenges or wild cards on your list to remind yourself that “anything could happen.”

***Music:***

- Create a road trip playlist of songs that you would choose for key, emotional parts of the novel. Explain why you chose to include each song

***For more great curriculum ideas visit this website:***

[http://www.thisismarciecolleen.com/uploads/1/7/5/0/17505457/someday\\_birds\\_guide\\_final.pdf](http://www.thisismarciecolleen.com/uploads/1/7/5/0/17505457/someday_birds_guide_final.pdf)

***Discussion Questions:***

From [www.sallyjpla.com](http://www.sallyjpla.com)

- Describe Charlie. What is he like? What did you like about him? Are there any ways that you are like Charlie?
- Charlie has some autistic and OCD disabilities, but this is never mentioned outright in the story. Why do you think the author chose not to label Charlie?
- When Ludmilla is telling Charlie her story about Sarajevo, Charlie keeps thinking about hummingbirds. Why? What is he trying to tell Ludmila with the hummingbirds?
- What was your favorite bird that Charlie saw and why? What birds would you put on a "Someday" list?
- After Charlie gets hurt on the water slide, he says that getting hurt wasn't as bad as the fear of getting hurt. What does he mean? Have you ever experienced something like that?
- How did Charlie's relationship with his family members change over the course of the book? Do you think the changes were because Charlie changed, or because his family changed, or both?

**Author's Website:**

<https://sallyjpla.com/>

**Book Trailer:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghaOliL3XM4>

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

-Clements, Andrew. *Extra Credit*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2009

-Paulsen, Gary. *Road Trip*. Wendy Lamb Books, 2013

-Schmidt, Gary D. *Okay for Now*. Clarion Books, 2011

-Sloan, Goldberg Holly. *Counting by Sevens*. Dial Books, 2013

**Jason Reynolds**  
**PATINA**  
**Atheneum, 2017.**  
**ISBN 978-1481450188.**  
**\$16.99, 233 pages.**



The second book in Jason Reynold’s *Track* series focuses on Patina “Patty” Jones, the fastest girl on the team who thinks anything other than first place is “Fake. But real.” Real, like the stress of navigating a new fancy school complete with hair flippers, kids with parents who own lots of stuff including boats, and group projects that stress Patty out. Real, like the responsibility of taking care of her little sister now that they have to live with Momly and Uncle Tony and only see Mom on Sundays at church. Real, like the fear and worry about her Ma’s diabetes and the fear of losing more of her family. Real, like the challenge of being part of a team whether in social studies class or on the track. Patty has always taken care of things herself, but as she faces some new challenges in school, on the track, and in her life, she learns that it is okay and sometimes necessary to rely on others.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- In English, Patty’s teacher is teaching poetry and the class is reading “The Charge of the Light Brigade” by Tennyson. It was written six weeks after a British Light Brigade followed orders to charge Russian forces during the Battle of Balaclava in the Crimean War. Brainstorm important current events or events in your own life and write a poem that captures the essence and the emotion of the event.

#### ***Social Studies/Art History:***

- Patty is part of a research group in history class tasked with researching a famous woman from the past. The group decides to research artist Frida Kahlo. Research the life and art of Frida Kahlo and create a self-portrait in the style of Frida Kahlo. Expand this project to include other women from history. Florence Joyner, Harriet Tubman and Sally Ride are other women mentioned in the book.

#### ***Science and Health:***

- Patty’s mother has diabetes, “the sugar” as she calls it, and has her legs amputated as a result of this disease. Research to learn more about the causes, symptoms, and treatment of the disease. The [American Diabetes Association](http://www.diabetes.org) ([www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)) is a good starting

place for research.

***Astronomy:***

- Becca is a member of Patty's research project group and they meet at her home to work on it. Patty is at first shocked and then awed by Becca's completely black room until she switches a light and a galaxy of stars and constellations appear on the ceiling and walls. Spend some time stargazing and learning about the constellations. Some suggested sites are listed in this National Geographic post. <http://www.natgeotraveller.in/skys-the-limit-handy-stargazing-apps-websites/>

***Physical Education:***

- Patty is assigned to be the anchor of a 4x800 relay team. Relying on others to win a race is not something Patty is used to and her teammates are not too sure about Patty either. The coach has the team practice the waltz to learn to move their bodies in sync with one another. In doing this, they will also learn how to focus on the person they need to give or grab the baton from during the relay. The box step is the [basic waltz step \(https://youtu.be/NBKTN6c\\_MEQ\)](https://youtu.be/NBKTN6c_MEQ) and this video gives a demonstration that students can easily follow. Waltz on!
- Coach is working hard to help the relay team improve passing off the baton. There are many YouTube videos offering techniques for and demonstrations of baton exchange. Watch this video and give it a try. <https://youtu.be/z2aJZ2jq57o>

***Discussion Questions:***

- Why does Patty keep to-do lists in her head?
- Why can't Patty and Maddy live with their mom?
- Why did Patty start running and why does she keep running?
- How is school different for Patty at Chester Academy?
- Why did Patty go back and run the extra laps with Lu, Sunny and Ghost at the end of track practice?
- What do Patty and Mumly have in common?

- In what ways did Patty change from the race at the start of the novel to the race at the end?

**Author Website:**

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

**Interview with Jason Reynolds on CBS:**

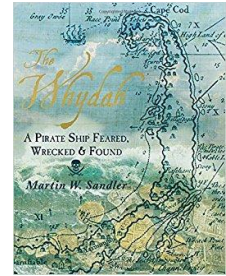
<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/jason-reynolds-writes-for-youth-searching-for-themselves-as-characters/>

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

- Asher, Diana Harmen. *Sidetracked*. Harry N. Abrams, 2017.
- Myers, Walter Dean. *Kick*. Harper Teen, 2011.
- Van Draanen, Wendelin. *The Running Dream*. Alfred A Knopf, 2011.
- Williams-Garcia, Rita. *P.S. Be Eleven*. Amistad, 2013.



**Martin W. Sandler**  
**THE WHYDAH: A PIRATE SHIP FEARED, WRECKED AND FOUND**  
Candlewick, 2017.  
ISBN: 978-0763680336.  
\$19.99, 159 pages.



The *Whydah*, commissioned in London and launched in 1716 as a slave ship, was captured shortly thereafter by pirates under Black Sam Bellamy, who made the ship his flagship. Just two months later, the *Whydah* – now loaded with ill-gotten treasure – ran aground and wrecked off the coast of Cape Cod. In 1984, marine archaeologists discovered the wreck, whose artifacts have given us a fascinating – and surprising – look at pirate life.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- Research and compare the treasure of the *Whydah* with other famous treasure shipwrecks that have been recovered. Other shipwrecks could include: *Belitung*, *SS Central America*, *SS Republic*, *Diamond*, *SS Gairsoppa*, and the *Atocha*.

For additional information on the ship visit the Whydah Pirate Museum website:  
<https://www.discoverpirates.com>

- Did you know that Vermont has some famous shipwrecks? Explore the following Vermont shipwrecks: *A.R. Noyes*, *Champlain II*, *General Butler*, *Philadelphia*, and many others.

#### ***Reading:***

- Read excerpts from the classic book, *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson and compare the lives of the pirates on *The Whydah* with Stevenson's pirates. Stevenson's book has become the common vision of pirates even though it was a total work of fiction.

#### ***Geography:***

- Map the major voyages of *The Whydah* on a map of the Atlantic Ocean. Where was it launched? What were some of the routes it took? Where did it wreck?

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

- How did people become pirates?
- How did the residents of Cape Cod respond to the shipwreck? Does this surprise you?

- How did the *Whydah* become a shipwreck?
- How does the life of a pirate on the *Whydah* compare to the pirates in the recent “*Pirates of the Caribbean*” movies?
- Why is marine archaeology so important? What has been learned from the wreck of the *Whydah*?

**Podcast Interview with Martin W. Sandler:**

<http://candlewickpodcast.com/candlewick-press-presents-martin-w-sandler>

**If you liked this, you may like:**

- Babbit, Natalie. *Jack Plank Tells Tales*. Michael Di Capua, 2007.
- Fox, Paula. *The Slave Dancer*. Bradbury, 1973.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure Island*. Cassell, 1882.

**Holly Goldberg Sloan**  
**SHORT**  
**Dial, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-0-399-18621-9**  
**\$16.99, 304 pages.**



Julia is very short for her age, but by the end of the summer run of *The Wizard of Oz*, she'll realize how big she is inside, where it counts. She hasn't ever thought of herself as a performer, but when the wonderful director of *Oz* casts her as a Munchkin, she begins to see herself in a new way. As Julia becomes friendly with the poised and wise Olive—one of the adults with dwarfism who've joined the production's motley crew of Munchkins—and with her deeply artistic neighbor, Mrs. Chang, Julia's own sense of self as an artist grows. Soon, she doesn't want to fade into the background—and it's a good thing, because her director has more big plans for Julia!

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- Explore idioms. Have students draw a picture of the literal meaning and figurative meaning of an idiom of choice.
- Have students pick a character from the book who plays a role in the *The Wizard of Oz*. Write an essay telling how their real life is similar to that of their role and how it is different.
- Talk about musical theatre. Play audio clips from various songs taken from musicals and discuss different types of musical theatre. Ask students what their favorite is and why.
- Read L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* then watch the movie. Talk about/research some of the differences. Example: Dorothy's slippers.

#### ***Multiculturalism:***

- Create a lesson plan on dwarfism. PBS has one for grades 6-8 here:  
<http://www.pbs.org/pov/bigenough/lesson-plan/>

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

- Julia talks a lot about making a scrapbook of her summer. Have students make their own scrapbooks about their summer or another time in their life.
- Have students create a brochure or a poster advertising a production.

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

- In the novel, Julia shifts from apprehension and self-doubt to exhilaration when she tries new things. Do you get nervous to try new things? When have you been surprised to discover you liked something you thought you'd hate?
- Julia puzzles over idioms. What idioms are you curious about? How can you find out what they mean or how they came into being?
- Who is your favorite character and why?
- How is Julia's story similar to Dorothy's in *The Wizard of Oz*? What lessons do both girls learn?
- Have you ever lost a pet? If so, how did you overcome your grief?
- Would you rather write a play or direct one? Why?

**Author's Website:**

<http://hollygoldbergsloan.com>

**Interview with the Author:**

<https://youtu.be/S1YfXtJRxFk>

**National Museum of American History:**

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/treasures/wizard-of-oz>

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

-Beasley, Kate. *Gertie's Leap to Greatness*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016.

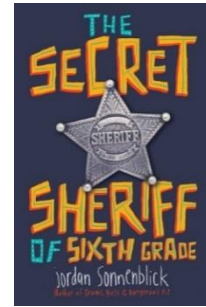
-Federle, Tim. *Better Nate Than Ever*. Simon & Schuster, 2013.

-Holm, Jennifer L. *Turtle in Paradise*. Random House, 2010.

-Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. *Fish in a Tree*. Nancy Paulsen, 2015.

-Telgemeier, Raina. *Drama*. Graphix, 2012.

**Jordan Sonnenblick**  
**THE SECRET SHERIFF OF SIXTH GRADE**  
Scholastic, 2017.  
ISBN : 978-0545863209.  
\$16.99, 208 pages.



Maverick Falconer is small for his age, but he is big on justice. He's determined to make a positive difference this year, at school and at home. Unfortunately, nothing seems to go as planned. He keeps ending up in the Assistant Principal's office and his mom is spiraling out of control with bad boyfriends and drinking. This story teaches that heroes have faults and sometimes villains aren't all that bad. Maverick's understanding of heroism evolves as he tries his best and often falls short as a self-appointed secret sheriff.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- Write down five rules that would make your school a better place. Compare your list with a friend's list. Are the rules similar or different?
- Write a letter from Maverick to his mom at rehab.

#### ***Visual arts:***

- Maverick created a collage in class about himself. Try telling your life story in pictures. Use collages or create a comic strip that gets across the milestones of your life. Who are the heroes in your story?

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

- Maverick realizes late in the book that his father was just like all of his mother's boyfriends. Why do you think he didn't make this connection before? Is his father still a worthy hero?
- Who is Maverick's best friend?
- Maverick spends Thanksgiving alone. What would you do if you were alone during a major holiday? Would you feel lonely or happy for some freedom?
- What do you think will happen when Maverick's mom returns?

#### **Author's website:**

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

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

- Gantos, Jack. *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998.
- Gebhart, Ryan. *There Will Be Bears*. Candlewick Press, 2014.
- Paterson, Katherine. *The Great Gilly Hopkins*. Thomas Y. Crowell Co, 1978.
- Ursu, Anne. *Breadcrumbs*. Walden Pond Press, 2011.

**Lauren Wolk**  
**BEYOND THE BRIGHT SEA**  
**Dutton, 2017.**  
**ISBN: 978-1101994856.**  
**\$16.99, 304 pages.**



Twelve-year-old Crow and her adoptive father, Osh, an artist, live in a cottage pieced together from shipwrecks on one of the Elizabeth Islands off the coast of Massachusetts in the 1920s. Crow is loved by Osh and by Miss Maggie, their fierce and independent neighbor on the neighboring island of Cuttyhunk, but is shunned by the other islanders. As Crow begins to wonder about her history and heritage, she uncovers increasingly dangerous secrets. Why are their lights on abandoned Penikese Island? Why was Crow sent to sea in a boat as a baby? Who were her parents? Is there really buried treasure on Penikese? And, ultimately, Crow discovers what means the most to her.

### **Curriculum Connections**

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

- Find the Elizabeth Islands, Cuttyhunk, and Penikese on a map. Research the islands. Who are the Elizabeth Islands named for?
- Many people believe that Captain Kidd – the pirate who inspired Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* - might have buried treasure on one of the Elizabeth Islands. Research Captain Kidd. See “Seeking Pirate Treasure: Captain Kidd’s Sunken Ship” at <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/22/science/seeking-pirate-treasure-captain-kidd-s-sunken-ship.html>.
- Research the Penikese Island leper colony. See “The First Leprosy Patients Arrive on Penikese Island” at <https://www.massmoments.org/moment-details/first-lepers-arrive-on-penikese-island.html>.

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

- What is leprosy? Learn about it here: <https://science.howstuffworks.com/life/biology-fields/leprosy.htm>.
- The only animals other than people to get leprosy are armadillos. Learn about it here: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/how-armadillos-can-spread-leprosy-180954440/>.

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

- The ink used to write letter Osh found with Crow when she washed up on shore had dissolved in the water so that only a few words remained. In a sense, it was like blackout poetry, in which words on a page are blacked out until only a few remain to make a poem. Try it. See <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/john-depasquale/blackout-poetry/>.

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

- Osh made his own paints from plants. Collect ingredients and make some of your own. See “Paints Made from Berries and Nature” at <http://www.instructables.com/id/Paint-Made-from-Berries-Nature/>.
- Paint a picture!

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

- Crow likes being named for a crow because crows are clever birds who seem out of place on the islands. Does this make sense for her? If you were named for a bird, which one would you choose? Why?
- Is it a good thing, not to feel pain?
- “You don’t need to go to school,” Osh tells Crow. “Miss Maggie has already taught you your letters and numbers. If you’re hungry enough, you’ll learn to fish and farm. The rest is salt and pepper.” What do you think?
- When Osh first arrived on the island, why did he bash a hole in his boat?
- Osh tells Crow “What you do is what you are.” Do you think that’s true? Why or why not?
- Why are people afraid of things they don’t understand?
- Why does Crow give all the treasure away?

### **Author’s Website:**

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

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

- Atkinson, Elizabeth. *The Island of Beyond*. Carolrhoda, 2016.
- Chalfoun, Michelle. *The Treasure of Maria Mamoun*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2016.
- Paterson, Katherine. *Jacob I Have Loved*. HarperCollins, 2003.
- Paulsen, Gary. *The Island*. Scholastic, 2006.
- Snyder, Laurel. *Orphan Island*. Walden Pond Press, 2017.



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

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



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