

Literature Review Presents:

Best of 2015:

A Librarian's Guide to the Best Fiction, Nonfiction, and Graphic Novels for Grades K-12

If you only have a limited budget, these are your MUST-HAVE titles.

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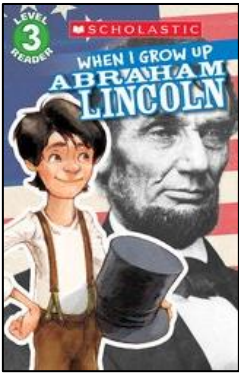
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Literature Review is sponsored by PSLA Teaching & Learning.

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Nancy Summers, presentation coordinator

Anderson, AnnMarie. *When I Grow Up: Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Scholastic, 2015. 978-0-545-60979-1. 32p. \$3.99. Gr. 1–3.



Review

In this biography, Abraham Lincoln describes his life for readers, beginning with his birth in a one-room Kentucky log cabin and ending with his assassination and burial in Springfield, Illinois. Speaking directly to readers, Lincoln introduces his family and highlights important events from all stages of his life. He describes helping out on the family farm, attending a one-room school house, travelling the Mississippi River, working as a store clerk, studying to become a lawyer, serving in the Illinois legislature and as a congressman, and winning the presidential election. **THOUGHTS:** The conversational style of writing draws readers in, and large, colorful illustrations help hold their interest. The text is not bogged down with detailed dates and facts but instead gives a general, age-appropriate overview of Lincoln’s life. A timeline helps reinforce key life-changing events, and a glossary reviews important words. Although no new ground is covered here, this book works well as an introduction to Lincoln’s life and will be a good fit for second or third grade biography units.

Anne Bozievich, Friendship Elementary, Southern York County

Biography

Book talk

“My name is Abraham Lincoln. I was born in this tiny one-room log cabin in Kentucky.”

Abraham Lincoln himself narrates this conversational biography, sharing the first-hand story of his life. Walk hand-in-hand with Lincoln as he shares details about his childhood home, his love of books, his first job at a general store, and his career as a lawyer. Watch as he and his family move to the White House and as Lincoln leads a nation through the Civil War.

Resources for Further Reading and Explanation

- Young Abe Lincoln primary sources - <https://www.nps.gov/webrangers/activities/abelincoln/>
- Abraham Lincoln’s Youth - http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/lincoln/aa_lincoln_youth_1.html

Barton, Bethany. *I'm Trying to Love Spiders (But It Isn't Easy)*. New York: Viking Press, 2015. 9780670016938. 32p. \$14.99. Gr K-3.



595; Spiders

Review

There are some books that speak to me immediately and make me wish that I wrote it. This is one of those books! Bethany Barton relates her struggles to accept, appreciate, and even enjoy spiders in a voice that will be relatable and persuasive to young readers. The one big catch, though, is that she is not quite able to overcome the impulse to squash the arachnids, leaving several large ink splots on the pages after she loses her cool. The facts about spiders are fascinating, and the illustrations and variety that she displays will be creepy and/or wonderful for spider loathers or lovers alike! This is a unique approach to a sensitive subject which will help kids ponder and persuade with some laughter mixed in. **THOUGHTS:** This is an excellent discussion for how to blend fiction and non-fiction together. It led to great conversations with my students about how to learn and be entertained at the same time.

Dustin Brackbill, State College Area School District

Book talk

The Official Spider Test - (from author and bn.com)

What do you do when you see a spider?

- Lay on a BIG spidey smoocheroo.
- Smile, but back away slowly.
- Grab the closest object, wind up, and let it fly.
- Run away screaming.

If you chose b, c, or d, then this book is for you! (If you chose a, you might be crazy.)

I'm Trying to Love Spiders will help you see these amazing arachnids in a whole new light, from their awesomely excessive eight eyes, to the seventy-five pounds of bugs a spider can eat in a single year! And you're sure to feel better knowing you have a better chance of being struck by lightning than being fatally bit by a spider. Comforting, right? No? Either way, there's heaps more information in here to help you forget your fears . . . or at least laugh a lot!

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Author website - <http://www.bethanybarton.com/>
- Two Writing Teachers blog - <https://twowritingteachers.wordpress.com/2016/01/14/im-trying-to-love-spiders-a-review-giveaway/>

Bissonette, Aimee. *North Woods Girl*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2015. 9780873519663. 32p. \$16.95. Gr. K-3.



Review

Each changing season brings something new to celebrate and someplace different to explore in this gentle intergenerational story about a city girl and her beloved grandmother who lives in the woods. The unnamed narrator loves visiting her grandmother in the north woods. In the springtime, they hike to the pond and peer through binoculars at the migrating ducks. In the summer, they rest in the evergreens' cool shade, and in the fall, they watch squirrels gather seeds and nuts. Winter is their favorite season, and they take moonlit walks through the cold snow, listening for hooting owls. Vibrant scratchboard and watercolor illustrations perfectly capture the love shared between grandmother and granddaughter. This title celebrates nature's quiet moments, suggesting that the simplest pleasures are sometimes best enjoyed with someone you care about the most. **THOUGHTS:** This title will tie in nicely with units about the changing seasons

since the girl and her grandmother have different traditions and activities for each time of year. It will also be a good fit for Grandparents Day celebrations since it depicts a free-spirited, active, outdoorsy grandparent.

Picture Book

Anne Bozievich, Friendship Elementary, Southern York County

Book talk

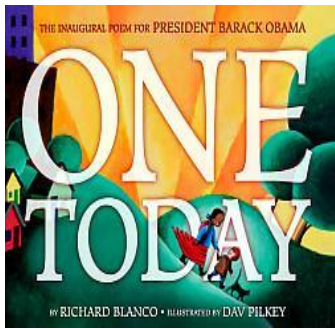
When Grandma tucks her pants into her oversized boots and grabs her walking stick, I run to catch up. There are a hundred little paths in the woods behind Grandma's house, and Grandma knows them all.

In the North Woods, each changing season brings something new to celebrate and someplace different for a young girl and her grandmother to explore. In the springtime, they hike to the pond and peer through binoculars at the migrating ducks. In the summer, they rest in the evergreens' cool shade, and in the fall, they watch squirrels gather seeds and nuts. Winter is their favorite season, and they take moonlit walks through the cold snow, listening for hooting owls. Come walk with them, celebrating nature's quiet moments and exploring all simple treasures the woods have to offer.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Aimee Bissonette's website - <http://aimeebissonette.com/>
- Claudia McGehee's website - <http://www.claudia-mcgehee.com/>
- Tips for Walking in the Woods - <http://www.active.com/parenting-and-family/articles/14-tips-to-explore-the-woods-with-your-family>
- National Walk in the Woods Day - <https://www.forestfoundation.org/-national-walk-in-the-woods-day->

Blanco, Richard. *One Today*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2015. unpagged. \$18.00. Gr. K - 3.



Review

Poetry has a gift for reaching an audience and finding commonalities and connections. Such is the gift that Richard Blanco and Dav Pilkey have created in this gorgeous picture book edition of *One Today*, the inaugural poem from President Obama's ceremony to begin his second term in office. The audience for its initial delivery was government leaders, but this version will reach even the youngest future leader with the journey of one family through one today. Pilkey's acrylic and India ink illustrations blanket every page in vibrant colors, often reflecting the rays of sunlight blending the sky and city together. The two children plus a cat walk their mother to work at a market and then go about their day exploring, reading, learning, listening, and seeing what the city has in store. The words and pictures are perfectly complementary in both the obvious and subtle text at work, creating connections

both intimate and broad. By the end of *One Today*, readers can appreciate the differences of our backgrounds, faith and family while understanding the bond and unity that comes with sharing the same sky and ground, sight and sound, color and light, day and night. **THOUGHTS:** With its starred reviews, and certain awards to come, this book will be a great addition to your library. Classes could build discussion questions around community topics or discover other famous inaugural poems and poets as extensions.

Picture book; Poetry

Dustin Brackbill, State College Area School District

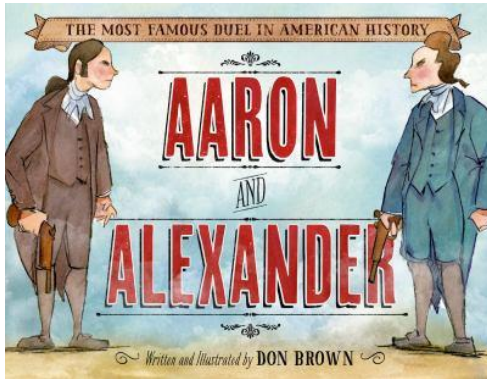
Book talk

If you were in charge of writing one poem to inspire America and honor an elected president, what would you try to say? Would you describe the people, the places, or the symbols of the U.S.? What connections and similarities would make for a meaningful poem? Read Richard Blanco's amazing poem and see the surprising illustrations from Dav Pilkey (from Captain Underpants fame).

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Teaching Books links *One Today* - <http://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?tid=47404>

Brown, Don. Aaron and Alexander: The Most Famous Duel in American History. New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2015. 978-1-59643-998-6. Unpaged. \$17.99. Gr. K-5.



Review

Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton's lives paralleled each other's in many ways; they were both orphaned at a young age; they were both very smart and studied at prestigious American universities; they both served bravely in the colonists' battle against Great Britain; they were even alike in size, having the word "little" as part of their nicknames. Author Don Brown says, "Aaron and Alexander could have been friends. They were alike in many ways. But the ways in which they were different made them the worst of enemies." The two men ended up on opposite sides of the political line after the American Revolution and influential but hot-tempered Hamilton often insulted Burr's politics and character in vicious ways. The day arrived when Burr could take no more, and he challenged Hamilton to a duel in which Burr fatally shot

Hamilton. Brown shares an unbiased view of the notorious duel that left Hamilton dead and Burr an outcast. The book contains an Author's Note and bibliography. **THOUGHTS:** Brown's signature style of concise wording and expressive watercolors succeeds in sharing a parallel of two important American figures and their tragic end.

973.4

Lindsey Long, Nye & Conewago Elementary Schools

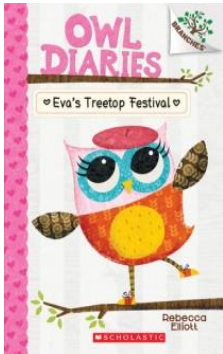
Book talk

(show a \$10 bill) Does anyone know whose face is on the \$10 bill? His name is Alexander Hamilton, and he was the first treasurer of the United States. He helped found our country along with many other important men including this one (show on book cover) named Aaron Burr. Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr had lots of things in common: they were both lawyers, they both worked with George Washington during the Revolutionary War, and they were both small in size! But these two men felt very, very differently about how our country should be run after the end of the war...and they became very bitter enemies because of it. After many years of insults and fighting, Aaron Burr challenged Alexander Hamilton to a duel...and one man died. History was changed forever! Find out what happened in "Aaron and Alexander: The Most Famous Duel in American History."

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Background Information - <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/duel/peopleevents/pande17.html>
- Don Brown - www.donbrownbooks.com

Elliott, Rebecca. *Owl Diaries: Eva's Treetop Festival*. New York: Scholastic, 2015. 978-0-545-68362-3. \$4.99.
Gr. 1-3.



Review

Eva Wingdale is an owl who loves drawing, going to school, and her new diary. On the first day of spring, the owl offers to organize the first ever Treetop Owlmentary Bloomtastic Festival. With the event only seven days away, Eva's not sure she can get everything done in time, so she asks for help from her fellow classmates. *Eva's Treetop Festival*, as well as the other books in this series, is written in diary format with speech bubbles. Each chapter includes lively and bright colored illustrations. **THOUGHTS:** This is a great choice for those readers who are too old for picture books, but too young for a more advanced chapter book.

Fantasy (Easy Chapter Book)

Anastasia Hanneken, School Lane Charter School

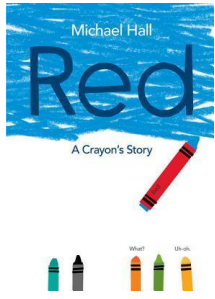
Book talk

What if you were asked to organize your town's festival? What would you plan? How would you get everything done? You would ask your friends, of course! Read *Eva's Treetop Festival* and find out what Eva does when she offers to organize the first ever Treetop Owlmentary Bloomtastic Festival!

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Fun owl facts - <http://easyscienceforkids.com/all-about-owls/>
- Owl facts for kids - <http://www.coolkidfacts.com/owl-facts-for-kids/>
- Journaling for children - <http://eightymphmom.com/2010/09/daily-journal-for-your-children-a-must-do.html>

Hall, Michael. *Red: A Crayon's Story*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2015. 978-0062252074. 40p. \$17.99. Gr. K-2.



Review

Red is actually a blue crayon, but his bright red label says otherwise. He desperately tries to “be” red, attempting to draw red things but, naturally, they just don’t look “right.” His parents and others try to help him be more red, even having him combine with other colors (but unlike red and yellow, he can’t make orange). By the end, with the help of a friend asking him to draw an ocean, he discovers his true self is indeed blue! **THOUGHTS:** A unique spin on being unique, with its clever double meaning on how society assigns “labels.” Younger readers will love the story at face value, while older students will appreciate the message of being true to yourself! Pair this with *Frankencrayon*, the newest by Michael Hall (imagine a Horrible Harry “stub people” type) and *The Day the Crayons (Quit and or Came Home)*. It could make for some great discussion among the K-2 set!

Picture Book

Lisa Weiss, Churchville Elementary School

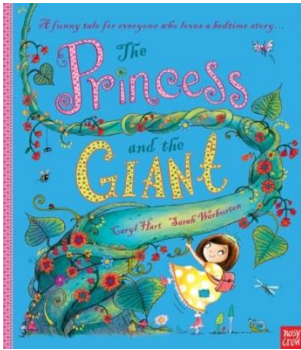
Book talk

Picture (or show) a box of crayons! What is your favorite color? What can you make with that color? What if you drew an object with the “wrong” color? In this story, Red is a crayon who, underneath his red label, is really blue. You may think that it’s no big deal, but he does get judged by his outside (but remember, it’s what’s inside that really matters)! Read on to hear about how Red tries his best to fit in and gets many offers of help, only to be really helped by a new friend who shows him his true color.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Harper Collins Publishers (link includes teacher guide and activity) - <https://www.harpercollins.com/9780062252074/red>
- History of Crayola Crayons - <http://www.crayola.com/about-us/company/history.aspx>
- Pair with related titles, such as Michael Hall’s *Frankencrayon*, the story within a story of a misfit monster crayon and a mysterious scribble. Or use as part of a unit with titles such as *The Day the Crayons Quit*, *The Day the Crayons Came Home* or *The Crayon Box That Talked*. (The latter also addresses being true to yourself.)

Hart, Carol, *The Princess and the Giant*. Sommerville, MA ; Candlewick Press, 2015. 978-0-7636-8007-7. 32 p.
\$16.99. Gr. PK - 2.



Review

Princess Sophie and her family have a problem. A giant is stomping in the castle at the top of the beanstalk next to their house and keeping them awake. Sophie asks questions, does some research, thinks and thinks, and then sets out with a plan. When Sophie reaches the Giant's castle, she overcomes her fears and offers him a snack to help him sleep better. And so begins Sophie's creative and thoughtful problem solving. Rather than judge the Giant based on reputation, she bravely puts herself in the Giant's shoes and offers her help. This inventive fairy tale twist is a wonderfully different story told in charming rhyme about a brave and creative princess. **THOUGHTS:** This is a great addition to a fairy tale unit, and even a great example of creative problem solving. It might also be fun to use this book to do a group rewrite of another fairy tale and use creative thinking to change the ending! Voted one of the

best picture book fiction titles for 2015 by Kirkus Reviews.

Fairy Tale/Fantasy

Donna Fernandez, Calvary Christian Academy

Book talk

The Princess asked her parents, "Why are giants mean and bad?"

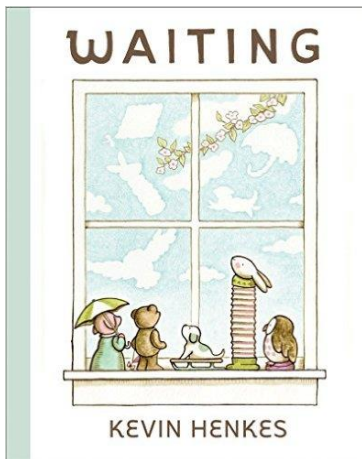
"Always have been," said her mother. "Always will be," said her dad.

Giants are always mean and bad, aren't they? Princess Sophie hears all of the village complaints but tries to think about the problem from a fresh perspective. She reads up on giants in all of the fairy tales she can find. What if the giant isn't mean but just lonely? What if he just can't sleep? If she can solve the mystery, then they all might just get some sleep! The princess sets out to solve the village giant problem with new ideas and a brave approach. This title will challenge readers of all ages to look at problems with a new perspective, show some understanding and perhaps you will even make a friend in the process!

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Caryl Hart's Website - <http://www.carylhart.com/>
- Teaching Children Problem Solving Skills - <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/how-you-can-help-children-solve-problems>
- *Suppose Wolf Were Octopus* K-2 by Michael Badgley; This book has stories with ideas for creative questioning and problem solving through alternate endings: <http://www.amazon.com/Suppose-Wolf-Were-Octopus-K-2/dp/0880922478>
- *Jack and The Beanstalk*: Visual story connection to a parallel fairy tale - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCpAYajmvo>

Henkes, Kevin. *Waiting*. New York: Harper Collins, 2015. 978-0062368430. 32p. \$10.00. Gr. K-3.



Review

Five toys: an owl waiting for the moon, a pig with an umbrella waiting for the rain, a bear with a kite waiting for the wind, and a puppy on a sled waiting for the snow, sit quietly on the windowsill. The soft pastels of clouds, rainbows, fireworks and rain along with the repeating patterns of text tell their story of patience and waiting as they each experience joy, sadness, surprise, friendship, gifts, and visitors. **THOUGHTS:** The story is profound, not in its moral or meaning, but in its ability to create this microcosm of pure childlike emotion with simple text and expressive illustrations.

Picture Book

Robin Bartley, Davis Elementary

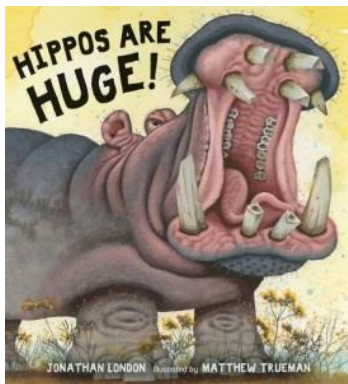
Book Talk

Some researchers suggest that we spend up to an hour each day waiting. That is approximately 5 years of our life. What do you do when you must wait...at the doctor's office, in line at the grocery store, in traffic, on hold on the telephone? Do you read, doodle, daydream? Do you look forward to waiting or do you dread it? In this book, you meet five toys that are sitting on the window sill each waiting for something: the moon, the rain, the wind, the snow and the stars. It would be an excellent read aloud for young grades to lead to a discussion on patience and appreciating the moment or a quiet one on one read aloud.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Willems, Mo. *Waiting is Not Easy*. New York: Disney-Hyperion, 2014. Print.
- McGuire, Andy. *Remy the Rhino Learns Patience*. New York: Harvest House, 2010. Print.
- Dewdney, Anna. *Llama Llama Mad at Mama*. New York: Viking, 2007. Print.

London, Jonathan, *Hippos are Huge!* New York: Candlewick, 2015. 978-0763665920. 32 p. \$16.99. Gr. K-3.



Review

This fun and engaging non-fiction title is a great, visually appealing look at these cute but not-so-cuddly creatures. Jonathan London provides easy to read, boldfaced facts about these fascinating creatures. He also provides more information in a smaller font at the bottom of each page, providing extra enrichment. The incredible illustrations by Matthew Trueman take up every inch of space on the page (reinforcing the fact that hippos really are huge!) and provide readers with a view of the inside of a hippo's mouth, hippos underwater, fighting male bulls flinging dung, and a sweet baby hippo taking his first breath. **THOUGHTS:** This will be an immediate hit for a non-fiction unit! Students will be drawn by the illustrations and kept reading by the fun content. The extra information in a smaller font on each page allows teachers or parents to add more details after the child has read the easier text aloud, or provides enrichment for the gifted student. A fun read

aloud for all. Voted one of the best non-fiction titles for 2015 by Kirkus Reviews.

Animals

Donna Fernandez, Calvary Christian Academy

Book talk:

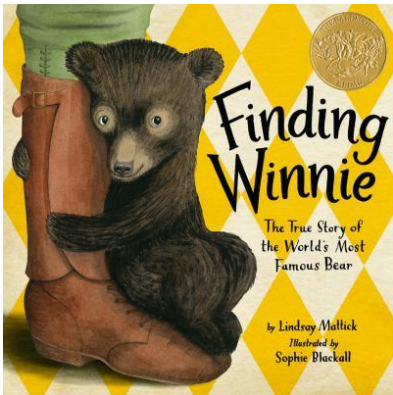
“Which do you think is the most dangerous animal in Africa? A lion? A crocodile? NO! Would you believe that the hippo is the most dangerous animal in Africa?”

Hippos may seem fun and cushy. They may seem slow and waddy. But did you know that none of those things are true? Hippos are FAST and very dangerous if they are protecting their families. This book has BIG pictures of hippos doing what hippos do! Swimming, yawning, wallowing in the mud, even babies playing. This book even has MORE facts in smaller print that can help you find out even more cool facts about this amazing HUGE creature!

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Jonathan London's website - <https://www.eduplace.com/kids/tnc/mtai/london.html>
- National Geographic Fun facts about Hippos - <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/hippopotamus/>
- San Diego Zoo Hippo facts - <http://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/hippo>
- Live Streaming of an African Watering Hole in Kenya - <http://explore.org/live-cams/player/african-watering-hole-animal-camera>

Mattick, Lindsay. *Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2015. 978-0-316-32490-8. \$18.00. Gr. K-3.



Review

While Winnie-the-Pooh may be the world's most famous bear, few people know that the beloved character is based on a real bear. Winnie's tale begins with author Lindsay Mattick's great-grandfather Harry Colebourn, a veterinarian travelling through Canada on his way to serve in World War I. When Harry sees a trapper and bear cub at a train station he knows that he shouldn't get involved, but his "heart made up his mind," and he buys the cub. Winnie's extraordinary adventures with Harry begin as she (yes, she!) travels to a military camp in Canada, then on to England where she serves as the mascot for the Second Canadian Infantry Brigade. When Harry is called to duty on the front lines in France, he knows he must leave Winnie behind in a safe place and she begins a new life at the London Zoo. She makes friends with zoo visitor Christopher Robin Milne and his author father, who writes stories about Christopher Robin and

bear Winnie-the-Pooh's adventures. **THOUGHTS:** Children are amazed to learn about the real Winnie and how her life inspired the classic character so many of us hold dear to our hearts.

This year's Randolph Caldecott Award winner will not disappoint. Sophie Blackall's artwork is beautiful, vivid, and captures the spirit of Winnie's relationships well, but it's Mattick's story that's the real stand-out. She tells the story as a mother telling a family-based bedtime story to her son Cole. At the end of the story readers are able to see real photographs of Winnie's life in the "album" that mother and son view during the story. I shared this story with many age groups at the elementary level and they all loved it. It's a winner.

Easy Fiction; Picture Book

Lindsey Long, Nye & Conewago Elementary Schools

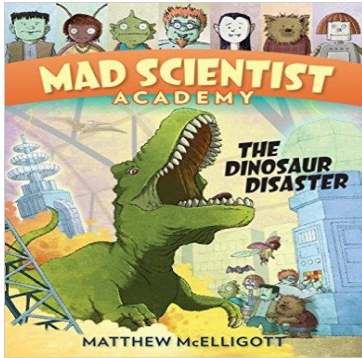
Book talk

Did you know that Winnie-the-Pooh is based on a real bear that lived 100 years ago? The real Winnie was a female bear who was rescued from a trapper by a veterinarian who was on his way to serve in World War I. He named her Winnipeg because that was the name of his home in Canada, but he just called her Winnie. He took Winnie along with him as he travelled with the military and they had lots of adventures together. One day, Harry received orders to go to France and he knew that Winnie would not be safe...so he took her to a special place where she would be loved and cared for. It's in this place that she meets some special new friends who make her name very famous. Who are these new friends? Does Winnie ever see Harry again? You'll find out when you read *Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear*.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Lindsay Mattick - <http://www.lindsaymattick.com/>
- "Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear," official book trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5crtUwQ19Y>
- Publisher's Page with Interviews, Videos, and an Educator Guide - <http://littlebrownlibrary.com/finding-winnie/>

McElligott, Matthew. *Mad Scientist Academy: The Dinosaur Disaster*. New York: Crown Books For Young Readers, 2015. 978-0-553-52374-4. Unpaged. \$17.99. Gr. K-5.



Review

When a group of kid monsters meet their teacher, Dr. Cosmic, on their first day at Mad Scientist Academy, the adventure begins and never stops! They spend the day learning about fossils, extinction, dinosaurs in the Mesozoic periods, and the pterosaurs. They are able to avoid a flaming meteor, oozing lava, and a moving group of robotic dinosaurs. The students are helped by their “Mad Scientist Handbooks” which fold out as helpful screens, touchpads, tools and gadgets. **THOUGHTS:** McElliott provides brilliant illustrations. The comical characters and entertaining plot are sure to fascinate even the most reluctant reader.

Graphic Novel

Anastasia Hanneken, School Lane Charter School

Book talk

What would you do if you visited a science museum and found an exploding volcano or robotic dinosaurs that came to life? This is exactly what happens to the kid monster students who visit the Mad Scientist Academy. Read this book to find out how the kids and teachers use their high-tech objects to escape.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Check out author Matthew McElligott - <http://www.matthewmcelligott.com/>
- Dinosaur information for kids - <http://www.kids-dinosaurs.com/>
- Fun science experiments for kids - <https://sciencebob.com/category/experiments/>
- Robot fun for kids - <http://fun-a-day.com/robot-activities-kids-will-love/>

Miyares, Daniel. *Float*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015. 978-1481415248. 48p. \$14.00. Gr. K-3.



Review

This wordless picture book tells the adventures of a father and son making a newspaper boat. Dressed in bright yellow rain gear against a monochromatic background, the boy ventures outside to launch it. The illustrations show varying perspectives, including an aerial view, of the boy as he shields his boat from the rain, floats it in puddles, and chases it as it is swept down the street and into a storm drain. When he sulkily returns home with his soggy ruined boat, his father dries him, sits him down with hot chocolate, and helps him make a paper airplane; this time heading out into a now bright sunny yellow day! **THOUGHTS:** A beautiful, heartwarming visual journey of a small moment in a child's life, a lovely homage to Ezra Jack Keats' tales of Peter.

Picture Book

Robin Bartley, Davis Elementary

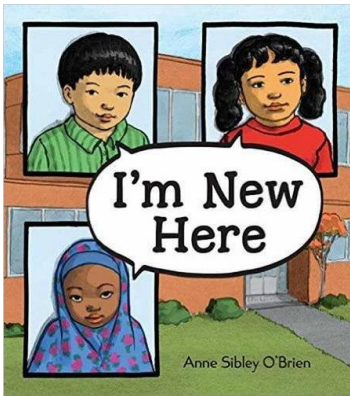
Book talk

When was the last time you spent time outside in the rain, playing in puddles and mud watching how the water drips and ripples and the pathways it makes as it travels along the ground, the street and into the gutter? Can you remember back to a time when a simple toy would keep you amused for an entire afternoon? Follow along in this beautiful picture book as a small boy takes his paper boat out into the rain and sails it across puddles, down streets, and finally, by accident, into the storm drain. Feel his disappointment as he retrieves it only to find it soggy and wet and trudges home, dejected, wet and cold. Remember the enjoyment of a warm drink and a caring parent to take you under their wing and make it all better.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Yonsuku, Kenshiro. *Folded Fun Beginner's Origami*. Spicebox, 2013.
- A short video demonstrating how to make a paper boat -<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wu5oKy4m5s>

O'Brien, Anne Sibley. *I'm New Here*. New York: Charlesbridge, 2015. 978-1580896122. 32p. \$16.99. Gr. K-3.



Review

What does it feel like to come to school and not know the language or anything about the culture where you are now living? This simple book takes a look at three immigrant children entering school in America for the first time. The author examines the shyness, confusion, sadness, loneliness, and fear that often accompanies being new. Each child faces their fears and begins to share and make friends and find their place in school.

THOUGHTS: This is a great discussion starter for a class about the courage it takes to keep trying to learn and fit into a new culture. The text is simple enough for an ESL read aloud, and may also help students who are struggling to assimilate into their new environment. Voted one of the best non-fiction titles for 2015 by Kirkus Reviews.

Juvenile Non-Fiction

Donna Fernandez, Calvary Christian Academy

Book talk

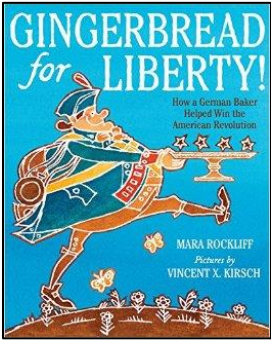
"Back home I knew the language. My friends and I talked all day long. Our voices flowed like water and flew between us like birds. Here there are new words. I can't understand them. The sounds are strange to my ears."

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to move to another country? A country where you didn't speak the language or understand the culture? Maybe in your homeland, you were a great reader, but now you must learn to read all over again. Maybe in your native language, you wrote amazing stories, but now you must learn to write all over again. New words, new people, new ways of doing things. All of it would feel overwhelming and a little scary. This book tells the story of three immigrant children who must re-learn all that they knew in their native country and learn how to fit in and make friends. It is a story of courage, friendship and hope.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Anne Sibley O'Brien's website - <http://www.annesibleyobrien.com/>
- *I'm Your Neighbor* Books: a project that promotes children's literature featuring children who are "new arrivals"- extensive list of recommended titles - <http://www.imyourneighborbooks.org>
- Coloring Between: Author's blog on "Race, Culture and Children's Books" - <http://coloringbetween.blogspot.com/>
- Meet Young Immigrants: stories of real kids who have recently immigrated to the United States - http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/immigration/young_immigrants/

Rockliff, Mara. *Gingerbread for Liberty: How a German Baker Helped Win the American Revolution*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015. 978-0-544-13001-2. 32p. \$17.99. Gr. 2–5.



Review

Christopher Ludwick was a Philadelphia-based baker known all over the city for his big heart and his delicious gingerbread. Hungry children followed their noses to his shop, admiring the spicy cookies decorated with sweet, white icing. But, in the summer of 1776, something other than the smell of gingerbread was in the air. Cries of “Revolution!” echoed up and down the streets. Ludwick, who was born in Germany, was a staunch Patriot. At age 55, he hung up his apron and volunteered his services to General Washington. After learning that Washington’s troops were threatening to leave due to lack of food, Ludwick rolled up his sleeves and fired up his oven. Throughout the Revolutionary War, Ludwick continued baking, and not just for the Continental Army. He volunteered for a secret, midnight mission to a British army camp where he successfully convinced hired Hessian soldiers to abandon the British troops and enlist with

General Washington after promising them full bellies. At the War’s end, after the British surrendered, Ludwick baked 6,000 pounds of bread to feed America’s hungry former enemies before returning to Philadelphia and his bakery.

THOUGHTS: This picture book biography of a little-known Revolutionary War hero is a wonderful addition to elementary collections. An author’s note at the end of the book outlines additional details about Ludwick’s life, and the endpapers include a recipe for baking gingerbread. While the story itself is unique, the illustrations steal the show. Illustrator Vincent Kirsch’s spirited watercolor pictures depict all characters as gingerbread people, and he sticks to a palate of mostly brown with white details. This title provides an accessible introduction to the American Revolution for the youngest readers while also showcasing a forgotten hero’s kind spirit and large heart.

Biography

Anne Bozievich, Friendship Elementary, Southern York County

Book talk

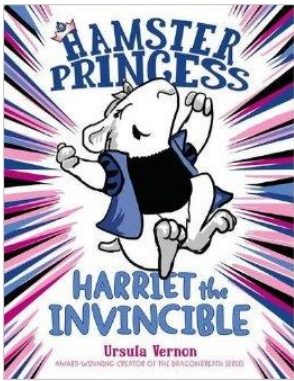
“No empty bellies here!” the baker bellowed. “Not in my America!”

Philadelphia-based baker Christopher Ludwick was known all over the city for his big heart and his delicious gingerbread. Hungry children followed their noses to his shop, admiring the spicy cookies decorated with sweet, white icing. But in the summer of 1776, something other than the smell of gingerbread was in the air. Cries of “Revolution!” echoed up and down the streets. Even though Ludwick was German-born, he was an American Patriot. After watching boys all over the city enlist, he hung up his apron and volunteered his services to General Washington as well. After learning that Washington’s troops were threatening to leave due to lack of food, Ludwick rolled up his sleeves and fired up his oven. For the remainder of the War, Ludwick continued baking, and not just for the Continental Army. He volunteered to go on a secret, midnight mission to a British army camp where he successfully convinced hired Hessian soldiers to abandon the British troops and enlist with General Washington instead, after promising them full bellies. At the War’s end, after the British surrendered, Ludwick baked 6,000 pounds of bread to feed America’s hungry former enemies before returning to Philadelphia and his bakery. Learn more about this little-known known Revolutionary War hero in this cookie-themed biography.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Mara Rockliff’s website - <http://www.mararockliff.com/>
- Vincent Kirsch’s website - <http://www.vincentxkirsch.com/>
- Publisher’s Weekly interview - <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-book-news/article/65002-gingerbread-for-liberty-serves-up-slice-of-revolutionary-history.html>
- Primary source document from the Library of Congress - https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/Lieber_Collection/pdf/Life-and-Character-ofChristopherLudwick.pdf

Vernon, Ursula, *Hamster Princess; Harriet the Invincible*. New York: Dial Books for Young Children, 2015. 978-0-8037-3983-3. 247 p. \$12.99. Gr. 1-4.



Review

Harriet is a new type of princess. She is fearless. She is adventurous. She is great at sword fighting and fractions! Harriet discovers that she will have something horrible happen to her on her twelfth birthday. So until then, Harriet decides that she must be invincible. She sets out on a quest with her faithful quail Mumfrey to rescue maidens from dragons and dragons from maidens. Meanwhile, the king and queen are shopping for the perfect prince to kiss Harriet when she falls asleep from the curse, but Harriet's adventures have scared off most of the princes of the land. How will Harriet defeat the evil Ratshade and break the curse? This spunky heroine romps through the pages with adventure after adventure. **THOUGHTS:** Similar to Ursula Vernon's hit series *Dragonbreath*, this is a fun mix of graphic novel and chapter book for the beginner. The author's sense of humor comes through throughout the book. This series is a great transition from early chapter books for your advanced first and

second grade readers. The comics and humor make it a favorite even up to third and fourth grades. Truly a fun and fearless hero for all! Voted one of the best fiction chapter book titles for 2015 by Kirkus Reviews

Fantasy

Donna Fernandez, Calvary Christian Academy

Book talk

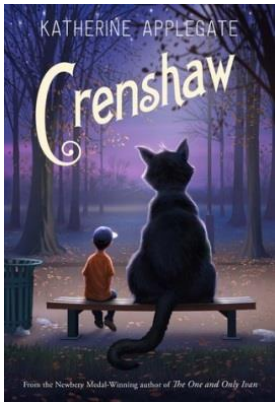
"Until I'm twelve, nothing can touch me! The curse needs me alive until I'm twelve or it can't operate!"

Harriet is not your average princess. Most princesses prefer to sigh and faint. Harriet loves math and sword fighting. When Harriet finds out that she was cursed to prick her finger on a hamster wheel and fall into a deep sleep on her twelfth birthday, she reacts in an unusual way. Knowing her fate makes her fearless! After all, if she is supposed to fall asleep at twelve, she has a lot to do before then! To defeat the evil Ratshade, she must use every bit of her wit and skill... and maybe even some fractions!

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Ursula Vernon's website - <http://www.ursulavernon.com/> (doesn't include Harriet books yet... a bit behind)
- Hamsters: Owning and Caring for your own Harriet - <http://www.petwebsite.com/hamsters.asp>
- Go on a Quest Like Harriet - <http://www.tvokids.com/games/yeoldeknightsquest>
- Want to know a little more about Harriet's faithful steed...uh quail, Mumfrey? Get quail facts here - <http://a-z-animals.com/animals/quail/>

Applegate, Katherine. *Crenshaw*. New York: Feiwel and Friends, 2015. 978-1-250-04323 245p. \$16.99. Gr. 3-6.



Review

Jackson is a rising fifth grader with some very grown-up problems. His family has fallen on hard times due to his dad's struggle with MS and his mom being laid off from her job as a music teacher. (Applegate makes a subtle point here as she simply mentions a music program being cut.) Money is tight, leading to hungry nights and yard sales of the family's belongings. Jackson, a firm believer in science and facts, wishes his parents would be honest with him about their situation and fears the family will again be living out of their minivan. This serious storyline mixes in with Jackson's imaginary friend Crenshaw, a huge cat that remakes his appearance for the first time in years. Crenshaw's calm wisdom at first irritates Jackson who tries to rationalize his existence. He eventually realized that the best advice comes from Crenshaw – that he, Jackson, can make his own decisions and needs to be honest with himself first. **THOUGHTS:** A story about friendship, love, loss and what really matters, this book is sure to touch readers. It is great as a read-aloud for grades 3-4 because it leads to appropriate discussion. It definitely

makes you think about what is important! A worthy follow-up to Applegate's *The One and Only Ivan*.

Realistic Fiction

Lisa Weiss, Churchville Elementary School

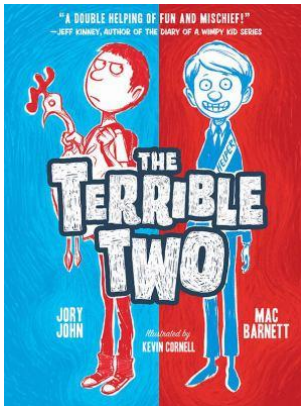
Book talk

Jackson's family is struggling, although it may not look like it from the outside. Money is tight, and they may need to leave their apartment... again. Fifth grader Jackson is old enough to realize this and wants to deal with it, but is still young enough at heart that his imaginary friend from first grade, Crenshaw, reappears. Crenshaw, a 6 foot tall human-like cat, comes to help Jackson through his tough times. With his guidance, Jackson learns about the power of friendship and family.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Teacher Resource Guide from the publisher - <http://images.macmillan.com/folio-assets/teachers-guides/9781250043238TG.pdf>
- Author site (just for Crenshaw) - <http://www.katherineapplegate.com>
- Organize a food drive! Go to your local food pantry or check out the one Applegate mentions, <https://www.nokidhungry.org>.

Barnett, Mac and Jory John. *The Terrible Two*. New York: Amulet Books, 2015. 978-1- 4197-1491-7. 217 p. \$13.95. Gr. 3-6.



Review

Holy cow! Miles is NOT excited about moving to Yawnee Valley, a sleepy town whose motto is “Come look at our cows.” Miles is a natural prankster and plans to wake up the town with his antics, but he quickly realizes that there’s another prankster at work in this town and he’s out of Miles’ league. When the prankster reveals himself to be Niles, class goody-goody, Miles is shocked and refuses Niles’ offer to join forces as the unstoppable Terrible Two. Eventually Miles comes around to the idea, and the boys pull off the greatest prank in Yawnee Valley history! **THOUGHTS:** A laugh-out-loud page-turner for kids and grown-ups alike. Give this one to students who love funny books with lots of illustrations, like Kinney’s *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series.

Humorous Fiction

Lindsey Long, Nye & Conewago Elementary Schools

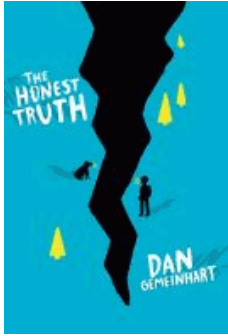
Book talk

Did you know that a dairy cow can make more than 25 gallons of milk a day? Or that cows can walk up stairs, but not back down? Miles Murphy knows these things, plus lots more about cows...they are the most exciting part of his new town, Yawnee Valley, and that’s not saying much. Miles was the king of pranks at his old school and plans to make his new town a bit more exciting by continuing his reign as Prank King...until he realizes that there’s already a Prank King in town, and he’s much better than Miles. When he reveals himself to Miles, he can’t believe his eyes OR his ears when the Prank King suggests that they join forces and become the Terrible Two. At first Miles isn’t interested, but when he finally agrees to the idea, the two boys come up with the biggest prank in Yawnee Valley history. Who is the Prank King, and what’s the plan for the Terrible Two? Find out in *The Terrible Two*. And good news...there’s a sequel called *The Terrible Two Gets Worse!*

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- *The Terrible Two* - <http://terribletwo.com/>
- *The Terrible Two*, official book trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=simJG3Omyvw>

Gemeinhart, Dan. *The Honest Truth*. New York, NY: Scholastic Press, 2015. 978-0-545-66573-5. 229 p. \$16.99.
Gr. 4-8.



Review

The Honest Truth explores decision making and anger and family and friendship at a raw level that will make this book an empathetic hit. Mark is a boy who has fought off cancer, but feels he is losing the battle. In response, he takes action and runs away from his Washington home on a quest to hike Mt. Rainier with his faithful dog Beau. Along the way are several fairly insurmountable obstacles, and his loving family and best friend Jessie to find him before it is too late. The chapters alternate between Mark's trip and Jessie's dilemma, with lots of perfect haikus mixed in (because they are his favorite thing to write). This is an amazing debut novel which is full of discussion points, gut wrenching twists and turns, and the honest truth of life.

Realistic Fiction; Adventure

Dustin Brackbill, State College Area School District

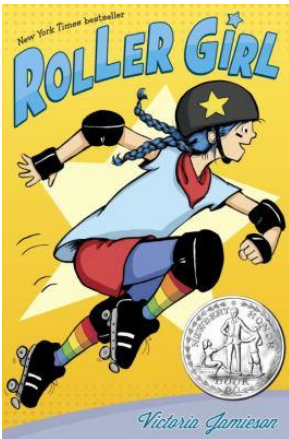
Book talk

The honest truth is that I couldn't put this book down. When a boy named Mark decides to run away from home for one last adventure, I was heartbroken and scared. When I followed his friends and family and faithful dog, I wanted to tell them the other side of the story. When strangers came into the mix, I never knew whether to trust them or tell Mark to keep running. In the end, the *Honest Truth* is a picture perfect narrative to the edge of Mt. Rainier.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Author website - <http://dangemeinhart.com/the-honest-truth/>
- TeachingBooks Interviews: *The Honest Truth* - <http://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?tid=42837&s=n>

Jamieson, Victoria. *Roller Girl*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2015. 978-1-489-88662-0. 240 p. \$17.89. Gr. 4-6.



Review

Astrid's mom loves to take her daughter and best friend Nicole for "Evenings of Cultural Enlightenment." Imagine her surprise when Mom takes them to a roller derby match! Astrid immediately falls in love with the fast pace and action of roller derby and decides to go to junior roller derby camp with best friend Nicole. That is until Nicole admits that she'd rather go to ballet camp along with Astrid's enemy Rachel. As the summer progresses and Astrid and Nicole pursue separate interests, their friendship also starts to come apart. Astrid quickly realizes that roller derby is much tougher than she expected, and so is dealing with a changing friendship. She eventually finds happiness with the outcomes of both, but it's a bumpy road for derby girl "Asteroid." **THOUGHTS:** Jamieson's authentic voice and quirky sense of humor ring true in dialogue and illustrations in this fantastic middle grade graphic novel. Sure to be a hit.

Jamieson's debut graphic novel will leave kids begging for more. I had a fifth grade boy thank me for recommending it to him...and it's largely a story about female characters, which I find is often an unlikely hit with boys. The story is so fresh and classic at the same time, and Jamieson's artwork is just perfect. Readers really know Astrid and her world by the end of the book. One word of caution: there are a few mild swear words. Read it, relish it, recommend it.

741.5 Graphic Novel

Lindsey Long, Nye & Conewago Elementary Schools

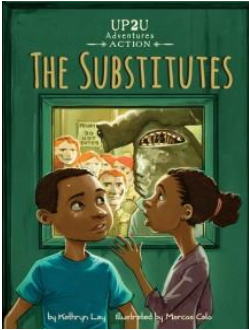
Book talk

Rainbow Bite, Winnie the Pow, Scald Eagle...what do these tough names have in common? These are nicknames of women who do roller derby! That's a sport full of hitting, bad falls, fierce competition, and of course roller skating. Astrid falls in love with roller derby and wants to go to junior derby camp with her best pal Nicole, but Nicole decides she'd rather go to ballet camp. Astrid learns that roller derby is way more tough than she'd thought, and so is dealing with a friend who seems like she's not really a friend anymore. Growing up is tough and Astrid learns that things aren't always as simple as they seem. Can Astrid make it in the tough world of derby? This graphic novel is great. If you like Raina Telgemeier's "Smile," check it out!

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Victoria Jamieson - <http://www.victoriajamieson.com/>
- Rose City Rollers Roller Derby (Jamieson's team, also featured in the book) - <http://www.rosecityrollers.com/>
- Book trailer - <http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/books/book-trailers/roller-girl>
- Five Questions with Victoria Jamieson - [http://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-daily/2015/08/14/five-questions-with-victoria-jamieson\(-em-roller-girl-em-\)](http://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-daily/2015/08/14/five-questions-with-victoria-jamieson(-em-roller-girl-em-))

Lay, Kathryn. *The Substitutes* (Up2U Adventure). Minneapolis, MN: ABDO, 2015. 978-1-62402-095-7. 79p. \$18.95. Gr. 3-5.



Review

Josh and Jenny's school is crawling with substitute teachers, and they are unsure where all their classroom teachers have gone. One day they return from lunch, only to find another new substitute in their classroom. They decide they must get to the bottom of this before these substitutes take over their school. **THOUGHTS:** Students will enjoy this adventure story. The story is fast paced and readers are able to choose their own adventure or path for the story. Place this in the hands of your reluctant readers.

Choose-Your-Own-Adventure

Anastasia Hanneken, School Lane Charter School

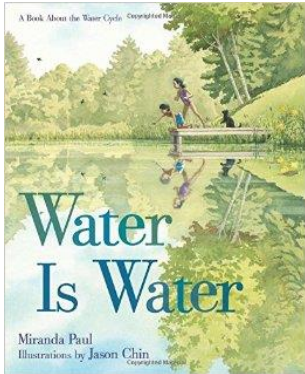
Book talk

What would you do if every teacher in your school was a substitute teacher? This is exactly what happened to Josh and Jenny. Follow along with them and choose your path as they discover what happened to the teachers in their school.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Author's homepage - <http://www.kathrynlav.com/>
- Do aliens really exist? - <http://discoverykids.com/articles/do-aliens-really-exist/>

Paul, Miranda and Chin, Jason. *Water is Water: A Book about the Water Cycle*. New York: Harper Collins, 2015. 978-1596439849. 40p. \$14.00. Gr. 1-5.



Review

A clever text written in verse which follows a brother and sister through the year highlighting the different phases and forms of the water cycle: precipitation, evaporation, condensation etc. At the back of the book is a “More about Water” section that contains more detailed information about the water cycle such as its forms, the percentages of water in plants and animals as well as its importance in our world and the need to protect and conserve it.

THOUGHTS: Paul’s book is an excellent resource for a unit on the Water Cycle which can provide a more practical view of the importance of water in students’ everyday lives.

553.7/333.911 Water/Water Conservation

Robin Bartley, Davis Elementary

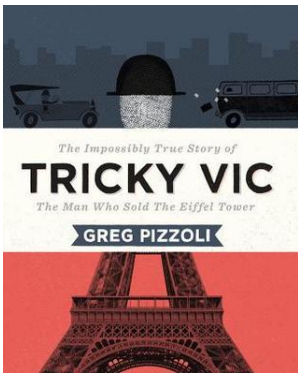
Book talk

66% of our body is made up of water. 80% of the earth is covered in water. Each of us uses 100 gallons of water a day...yet only 1% of the earth’s water is drinkable! This book is an excellent introduction to a unit on the water cycle and a discussion about water conservation with students. It shows a brother and sister throughout the year as they experience all the forms and phases of water from rain to fog, ice and snow. The reader not only sees the water cycle in action, but observes how integral water is to our everyday lives. This book is an excellent lead in for students to make connections to their own lives and experiences.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Facts and statistics about water conservation and usage - <http://encyclopedia.kids.net.au/page/wa/Water> (resource)
- Facts about the water cycle and world water supply, designed for kids - <http://www.watereducation.org/water-kids>
- Green, Jen. *Why Should I Save Water?* New York: Barron’s, 2005. Print.

Pizzoli, Greg. *Tricky Vic*. New York: Viking, 2015. 978-0-670-01652-5 39p. \$17.99. Gr. 3-6.



Review

With the subheading “The Impossibly True Story of the Man Who Sold the Eiffel Tower,” *Tricky Vic* sets out to explain what seems highly unlikely. This is the story of Robert Miller, aka “Count” Victor Lustig, a high-stakes con man who went from small schemes, to playing Al Capone to, yes, proposing to sell the Eiffel Tower for scrap metal. Each event in Miller’s life is richly described, and while his face is done only as a fingerprint (the author’s, actually!) the illustrations are chock full of primary sources – photos, documents, even his certificate of death. In addition to the colorful narrative, pages are adorned with additional facts, diagrams and humorous drawings. **THOUGHTS:** Pizzoli’s clever collage of illustration, photos and more blend well with his story-like fact-filled text. Whether you have heard of Tricky Vic, been to France, or none of the above, you will find yourself intrigued by this con artist extraordinaire! Use this book as a part of a unit on biographies, history of the time period (the Paris Exhibition), famous landmarks or even Alcatraz (tie in with the fictional *Al Capone Does My Shirts*).

364.16P Criminals/Biography

Lisa Weiss, Churchville Elementary School

Book talk

Have you ever been to France and seen the Eiffel Tower? Can you picture it from magazines or movies? Imagine now, that someone offered to sell it to you. Or, at least the metal from it. Would you believe it? This trick, this con, actually did take place, all with the help of a man named Robert Miller, aka “Count” Victor Lustig. Read about his long life of schemes, tricks, and cons leading up to his attempt to sell the Eiffel Tower for scrap metal! You’ll be amazed at what he got away with; all told through actual photos, documents and more. Author and illustrator Greg Pizzoli adds to the excitement with his whimsical drawings and sidebars full of facts.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Biographical Resources:
 - <http://www.biography.com/people/victor-lustig-20657385>
 - <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-smoothest-con-man-that-ever-lived-29861908/?no-ist>
 - <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/man-who-sold-eiffel-tower-twice-180958370/>
- Eiffel Tower Resources:
 - <http://www.tou Eiffel.paris/en/everything-about-the-tower/the-major-events.html>
 - <http://www.history.com/topics/eiffel-tower>

Selznick, Brian. *The Marvels*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2015. 978-0-545-44868-0. 665 p. \$32.99. Gr. 4-6.



Review

Brian Selznick has once again created a lavishly detailed story told both through illustrations and text. The illustrated story begins in 1766 with the story of Billy Marvel, whose ship is destroyed in a storm. He and his brother make it to land, only to have his brother, badly injured, pass away leaving Billy alone. The illustrations continue to tell the story of Billy's life in London, getting involved in the theater and the generations of famous actors to follow him. At a crucial moment, the story turns to text in 1990, in which we meet Joseph Jervis. A runaway from school, Joseph arrives at his uncle's house in London and thus begins a new story. Albert Nightingale appears quite the eccentric uncle, living in a museum-like house that he keeps frozen in time. Naturally curious, Joseph attempts to learn more about his uncle, the house, his family and eventually ties together the two stories – illustrative and narrative. **THOUGHTS:** Beautiful artwork instantly creates an emotional connection to the Marvel family, with intricate details including newspapers and letters. Readers of Selznick know the stories will eventually intertwine, yet it is deliciously drawn out as readers are given clues and random ideas to ponder. Profound quotes are sprinkled in the text, including the theme “You either see it or you don't.” Finishing the book leaves the reader a bit bereft, almost with a desire to read it over simply to be immersed in the world of the Marvels once again. This story gets to the heart of wanting to belong and also a need to tell one's story. Use this as a read-aloud with older students, especially if you have an Elmo projector to show the illustrated pages.

(It should also be noted that Joseph's uncle Albert has a relationship with another man. Selznick does not come right out and discuss homosexuality or AIDS but both are alluded to in the story. Younger readers will likely not pick up on these but older readers may; something to consider when recommending the book.)

Realistic Fiction; Fantasy

Lisa Weiss, Churchville Elementary School

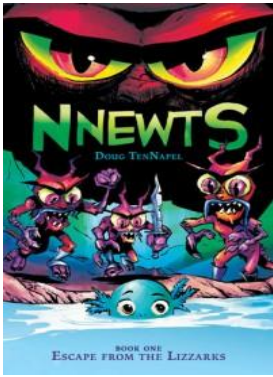
Book talk

The year is 1766. A ship tosses and crashes through a violent storm at sea, leaving one brother alone. Billy goes on to be part of the theater scene in London, starting a family whose generations continue in the theater. Flash forward to the year 1990. Joseph Jervis has run away from his school to his eccentric uncle, Albert Nightingale's house in London. Watch and read – through pictures and text – how Billy and Albert's stories come to life and intertwine, and not always in ways you'd expect.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Best resource - <http://www.themarvelsthebook.com> - It has the amazing book trailer made by the author with original artwork and articles explaining how he made it and the book. There are links to everything including the Dennis Severs house (model for Nightingale's) <http://www.dennissevershouse.co.uk/> and the Theater Royal Haymarket <http://www.trh.co.uk/>

TenNapel, Doug. *Nnews: Escape From The Lizards*. New York: Scholastic, 2015. 978-0-545-67646-5. 185 p. \$10.95. Gr. 4-8.



Review

The Nnews, a community of amphibians, live in the the village of Nnewtown. Herk is a young Nnewt who is confined to his home's spawning pool because his legs are not strong enough to support his body. When Nnewtown is attacked by the evil Lizzarks, Herk's parents are killed and he is forced to escape. On his journey he meets many new characters who give him the courage to confront the Snake Lord, the villain who replaced his strong legs with weaker legs.

This is the first volume of this new graphic novel series. The illustrations are very enjoyable and complete the story. Students cannot get enough of the graphic novel genre, and this book only add to the enjoyment with great pictures and an enjoyable storyline. **THOUGHTS:** Herk's adventures will

hold the attention of the most reluctant reader. This book is recommended for any elementary or

children's collection.

Graphic Novel

Anastasia Hanneken, School Lane Charter School

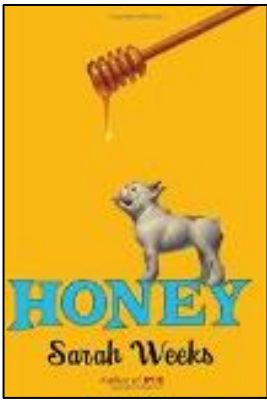
Book talk

What if you had to stay in one place because your legs were not strong enough to support your body? What if someone killed your family and you were forced to escape? Read *Nnews* and meet Herk who must live in his home's spawning pool because his legs are not strong enough to support his body. One day when Nnewtown is attacked by the evil Lizzarks, and Herk's parents are killed he is forced to escape. Read *Nnews* to find out how Herk handles this and what other characters he meets along the way.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- All about amphibians - <http://www.kidzone.ws/animals/amphibian1.htm>
- Doug TenNapel's website - <http://tennapel.com/>
- Information about graphic novels - <http://www.getgraphic.org/whatisagraphicnovel.php>

Weeks, Sarah. *Honey*. New York: Scholastic, 2015. ISBN 978-0-545-46557-1. 152pp. \$16.99. Grades 3–6.



Review

Ten-year-old Melody and her widower father have always been extremely close, so Melody is shocked when she overhears part of a phone conversation where he calls someone “Honey.” Melody and her best friend, Nick, are determined to uncover the mystery woman’s identity, and information from Melody’s annoying six-year-old neighbor, Teeny, leads them to Royal, Indiana’s newest beauty salon, The Bee Hive. The point-of-view shifts several times throughout this story: at the Bee Hive, readers hear from its proprietor, Bee-Bee Churchill and from her small dog, Mo. Each character’s separate storyline ultimately connects, leading to a satisfying, if predictable, conclusion. This title will appeal to middle-grade students who enjoyed Weeks’s previous stories, including *Pie*, as well as realistic fiction and animal fiction titles.

THOUGHTS: I added this title to my collection in late spring, and for the rest of the year, it was popular with my fifth and sixth grade girls. Sarah Weeks’ *Pie* (2011) remains popular with my fourth, fifth, and sixth grade girls, so I was not surprised when they gravitated towards this book

as well. This book is appealing because of its timeless feel. It focuses on life in a small town, and the main characters are trying to get to the bottom of a realistic mystery: who is “Honey?”

Realistic Fiction

Anne Bozievich, Friendship Elementary, Southern York County

Book talk

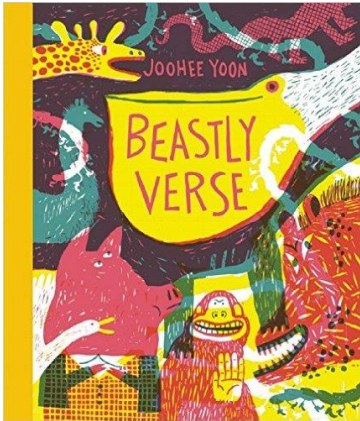
Honey. That’s what started the whole thing. It’s what awakened Melody Bishop in the middle of the night, and what she was still thinking about the next morning when she got up. Maybe she had misheard, she told herself. After all, she had been half-asleep. Or maybe she had dreamed it. But deep down, Melody knew she hadn’t been dreaming, and she was certain about what she had heard. Honey.

What would you do if you awoke in the middle of the night and heard your father talking on the phone, calling someone “Honey?” Would you try to uncover the mysterious stranger’s identity? That’s what 10-year-old Melody does after overhearing her widower father’s late-night conversation. Her quest leads her to the town’s newest beauty salon, The Bee Hive, and to its proprietor, Bee-Bee Churchill. Bee-Bee and her little dog, Mo, have their own stories to share, and it isn’t long before Melody realizes there may be more than one puzzle that needs pieced together in this small town.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Sarah Weeks website - <http://sarahweeks.com/>
- How to Make Your Own Nail Polish - <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Your-Own-Nail-Polish-Color>

Yoon, JooHee. *Beastly Verse*. New York: Enchanted Lion, 2015. 978-1592701667. 48p. \$16.00. Gr. K-5.



Review

A collection of 16 animal poems from a wide variety of styles and authors such as Lewis Carroll, D.H. Lawrence, Laura Richards and Robert Desnos. Selected for their childish appeal, this menagerie of creatures, both real and imagined, are elevated by Yoon's bold, bright, almost fluorescent 3-color illustrations which overlap to create additional shades, striking patterns, and playful layouts. **THOUGHTS:** This creative display of verse, printmaking, drawing and color is a must for any children's poetry collection.

821; Poetry

Robin Bartley, Davis Elementary

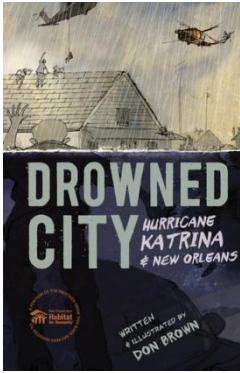
Book talk

Children love animals as well as rhyme. This colorful picture adventure is the perfect addition to a poetry unit. The collection features a wide variety of examples from different authors such as: Lewis Carroll, DH Lawrence, Laura Richards and Robert Desnos, accompanied by Yoon's eye catching illustrations. The book could easily be used by an art teacher to incorporate during poetry month, to exemplify print-making, shades, and patterns. Teachers could pair with non-fiction texts (ex: Nature's Children series) for students to further research individual animals.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Lewis, J. Patrick. *National Geographic Book of Animal Poetry*. New York: National Geographic, 2012. Print
- Paben, Gail. *Poetry of Animals*. New York: Peppertree, 2016. Print.
- *Nature's Children* series by Grolier.

Brown, Don. *Drowned City: Hurricane Katrina & New Orleans*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015. 978-0-544-15777-4. \$18.99. Gr. 7-12.



Review

Illustrator and author Don Brown narrates this graphic novel about the 2005 Hurricane Katrina, from its meager beginnings as a tropical storm to the devastating destruction that left the city of New Orleans forever changed. While the storm was powerful enough to flood the city, the conditions after were the most shocking; police abandoned their posts; communication lines failed; shelters ran out of food, fuel, and water; the flooded water turned black with oil and trash, and federal, city and state aid did not come for almost a week. Brown's images are murky and morose, reflecting a town wrecked and forgotten. Importantly, the graphic novel provides a timeline of the event, showing that it took more than two months for the water to be pumped from the city. Published at the tenth anniversary of Katrina, this powerful graphic novel is an important, factual look at one of America's worst recent natural disasters. **THOUGHTS** An essential addition to any teen graphic novel collection.

976.3; Louisiana History

Vicki Schwoebel, Friends' Central School

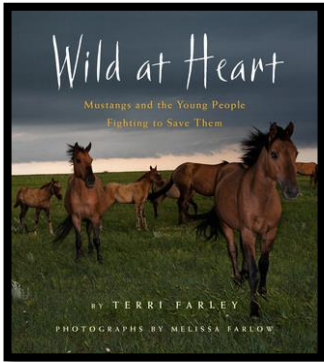
Book talk

What is it like to live through a hurricane? What happens when the reinforcements fail, the flood waters turn black with oil, and help doesn't come for 5 days? Take a journey with Don Brown through the devastating life of one of America's most deadly hurricanes, Hurricane Katrina, which hit Louisiana in August 2005. Here you will discover the harsh destruction of natural disasters, and the often harsher aftermath that can leave a city decimated. This is a must read for any graphic novel fan or for fans of Brown's fantastic previous work, including *The Great American Dust Bowl* and *Aaron and Alexander: The Most Famous Duel in American History*.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- "Books by Don Brown." Books by Don Brown. N.p., 2012. Web. <<http://www.booksbybrown.com/>>.
- "Hurricane Katrina." Hurricane Katrina - Facts & Summary. A&E Networks, n.d. Web. <<http://www.history.com/topics/hurricane-katrina>>.
- Hurricane Katrina: The Storm that Drowned a City. NOVA, 2006. DVD.
- Inside Hurricane Katrina. National Geographic, 2010. DVD.
- Ouellette, Jeannine. Hurricane Katrina. Edina, MN: ABDO Publishing Co, 2008. Print. Essential Events 1.

Farley, Terry, and Melissa Farlow. *Wild at Heart: Mustangs and the Young People Fighting to Save Them*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015. 978-0-544-39294-6. 196p. \$19.99. Gr. 6 and up.



Review

Almost any casual library browser will be drawn to *Wild at Heart's* beautiful cover and the many striking images included inside the book. The photographs alone will entice readers to enter the intriguing world of wild mustangs, and the fascinating story will hold their interest throughout thanks to the way Terry Farley has expertly structured this piece of nonfiction to both entertain and educate. She opens with the story of Velma Johnson, a.k.a. "Wild Horse Annie," and her heroic early advocacy for wild horses. She then covers how wild horses live, including their family structure and battles for dominance, before moving into the grim situation these iconic animals currently face. Readers will be shocked to learn that when mustang bands outgrow their population limits (as set by the Bureau of Land Management), they are subjected to "gathers" and sold by the pound to slaughterhouses. Though these horrifying scenes are depicted in an age-appropriate manner, the closing chapter on young people fighting to save wild horses is (thankfully) uplifting as well as

enlightening. Excerpts of this carefully documented work will be applicable to units on biodiversity, conservation, political advocacy, and youth activism. **THOUGHTS:** *Wild at Heart* is a worthy addition to all libraries, middle school on up, and will be a special favorite among animal lovers of all ages.

599.6; Wild Horses

Amy V. Pickett, Ridley High School

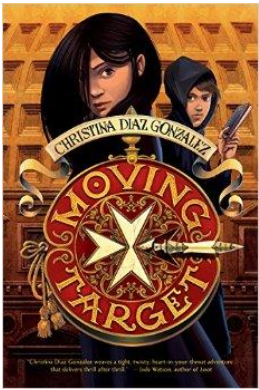
Book talk

I challenge you to look at the beautiful photograph on the cover of *Wild at Heart* and not pick up the book! Spoiler: you are going to pick up the book and enter the intriguing world of wild mustangs. Their fascinating story will hold your interest until the very last page! After all, it's tough to picture a more iconic American image than a beautiful, strong horse running across the plains. But believe it or not, this symbol of America isn't as free, or even as safe, as you might think. Not everyone agrees that these horses should roam freely. Terri Farley opens the book with the story of Velma Johnson, a.k.a. "Wild Horse Annie," and her lifelong work to protect wild horses. The author also covers how and where wild horses live, as well as the grim situation these animals currently face. You will be shocked to learn that when mustang bands outgrow their population limits, they are rounded up and sold by the pound to slaughterhouses. Though these scenes are horrifying, the closing chapter on young people fighting to save wild horses is both enlightening and uplifting. **You** might even be motivated to get involved in the fight to save wild horses! This book, especially the photographs, will be a special favorite if you are an animal lover of any age! *Wild at Heart* by Terri Farley, with photography by Melissa Farlow.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Terry Farley on Twitter - @Terri_Farley
- Terry Farley's Web Site - <http://terrifarley.com/>
- Terri Farley on Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/terrifarley/>
- Melissa Farlow on Twitter - @mkfarlow
- Dukehart, Coburn. "Capturing Icons of the American West - While They Still Run Free." *PROOF: Picture Stories*. National Geographic Society, 6 Jan. 2016. Web. 18 Apr. 2016. <<http://proof.nationalgeographic.com/2016/01/06/wild-mustangs-young-people-fighting-to-save-them-melissa-farlow/>>.
- American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign - <http://www.wildhorsepreservation.org/>
- Video about Shingletown, California's Wild Horse Sanctuary - <https://vimeo.com/72209613>
- National Wild Horse and Burro Program page from BLM.gov - <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/whbprogram.html>
- *Wild at Heart* Discussion Questions - http://terrifarley.com/wah_discussion_questions.shtml

Gonzalez, Christina Diaz. *Moving Target*. New York: Scholastic, 2015. 978-0-545-77318-8. 248p. \$17.99. Gr. 6-8.



Review

Living in Rome unfortunately began to feel ordinary and even boring for 8th grader Cassie. This feeling changes after her Papi, an art historian, hugs her and says they must leave for safety. Then, shortly after, her father is shot. As Papi is in pain, Cassie learns of a secret organization that is after her, and she is advised to trust no one and go to see Brother Gregorio. Cassie wishes also to seek the help of her best friend, Simone. There is the Spear of Destiny that has been around for thousands of years that creates a power struggle. They are given a ring of protection to wear. There they meet Asher, nephew to Gregorio. Cassie has a difficult time convincing Simone to get rid of her cellphone as others could be tracing their moves with the device. Next they face a riddle regarding the dying town and escape the half-ear man. The end of the book contains many turns in the plot. **THOUGHTS:** Readers that begin the journey with *Moving Target* will be ready to join the lead characters in the forthcoming book of the series, *Return Fire*. (Scholastic, 2016)

Action/Adventure; Mystery; Fantasy

Beth McGuire, Wendover Middle School

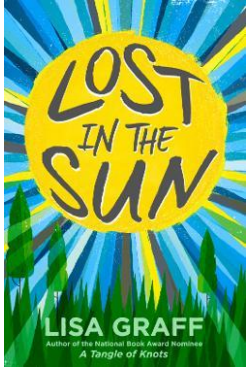
Book talk

Moving to Rome sounds like it should be one great experience after another, but for eighth grader Cassie, times become boring. Unexpectedly, her father tries tell Cassie a truth he has kept a secret, before he is shot. From then on Cassie is trying to stay one step ahead of the secret organization that wants to destroy her. There's also a desire to find and maintain the Sphere of Destiny that can change the course of path for the world. If you like adventure with a splash of mystery, *Moving Target* is the book for you. The series will continue with *Return Fire*.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Author Website - <http://www.christinagonzalez.com/index.html>
- Scholastic Book Trailer - <http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/books/book-trailers/moving-target>
- Author Interview - Inspiring Latina: Christina Diaz Gonzalez Spills On Her YA Adventure "Moving Target" - <http://www.latina.com/lifestyle/inspiring-latina/christina-diaz-gonzalez-author-moving-target>

Graff, Lisa. *Lost in the Sun*. New York: Philomel Books, 2015. 978-0-399-16406-4. \$16.99. 289p. Gr. 5-8.



Review

Trent would like to forget his fifth grade year altogether, but the tragic accident with a hockey puck that took a classmate's life continues to haunt him. As a therapeutic act, he plies his journal with sketches of alternative causes leading to Jared's death. Hoping middle school will provide a fresh start, he can't shake the feeling that everyone in town hates him, except Fallon Little. Shrouded in mystery, Fallon won't hesitate to tell anyone the story behind the scar on her face. She makes up one ludicrous anecdote after another. Her peers think she's more than a little odd, and oftentimes she's the target of bullying. When Trent defends her against the town bully, and the rage builds in his chest until he pummels the kid, Fallon suddenly withdraws from the friendship claiming her parents won't let her hang out with Trent. Problems at school intensify for Trent when he discovers he may not pass sixth grade because he refuses to participate in gym. Mrs. Emerson provides an alternative to failing in which he must assist in a weekend basketball clinic to help younger players improve their skills. The director partners him with Annie Richards, the sister of the boy Trent killed in February. Making amends isn't easy until Trent takes the advice of his teacher and starts speaking truths. **THOUGHTS:** A poignant story of friendship and healing that has readers cheering for Trent.

Realistic Fiction

Christine Massey, JWP Middle School

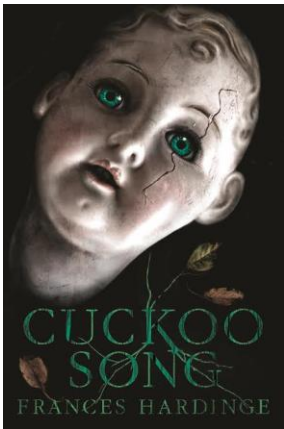
Book talk

“ ‘I didn't do it on purpose, obviously,’ says twelve-year-old Trent Zimmerman. ‘Kill Jared Richards, I mean...But accident or not, Jared Richards died, and I was the reason, so what was the difference? Either way, I killed him.’ ” Trent is plagued with guilt after a tragic accident during a pick-up hockey game on the ice. Just when life can't seem to get any worse, his relationship with his dad sinks to an all-time low and his younger brother has befriended Jared's little sister. Then Trent accepts the friendship offered by Fallon Little, “the girl with the scar”. Full of humorous brotherly pranks, unconditional love, and acceptance, this story is brimming with lovable, quirky characters and an authentic middle school protagonist.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Educator Guide - <http://www.lisagraff.com/lost-in-the-sun.html>
- Educator/Librarian Resources - <http://www.lisagraff.com/resources.html>

Hardinge, Frances. *Cuckoo Song*. New York: Amulet, 2015. 978-1-4197-1480-1. \$17.95. 416p. Gr. 6-12.



Review

Triss's family is struggling to recover from the devastating death of her brother during The Great War. Tragedy nearly strikes again when Triss practically drowns in "The Grimmer" while vacationing with her family. Their immediate return to town and the comforts of home provide a pithy interim when mystery materializes in the form of letters from her deceased brother, threats to the family from The Architect, and monetary demands from her brother's ex-fiance, Violet. Triss herself cannot fully comprehend her own changes, dirt and dead leaves on her floor and in her hairbrush, the undeniable hatred from her sister Pen, and a voracious appetite that food alone will not gratify. After an encounter with an eccentric tailor, Triss's life is suddenly in grave danger, and she discovers a surprising ally in Pen and a solicitous confidant in Violet. The only way to save herself is to find out what happened at "The Grimmer" and to the true Triss. She embarks on an adventure that takes her into the underbelly of

the city, into a secret and forbidden community and has her face a formidable enemy willing to do anything to save himself and his community. **THOUGHTS:** Magical promises, unlikely bonds, and dubious alliances keep readers guessing until the final page. Vivid language and complex characters create a fantastical tale comparable to classic folklore.

Historical Fiction; Supernatural

Christine Massey, JWP Middle School

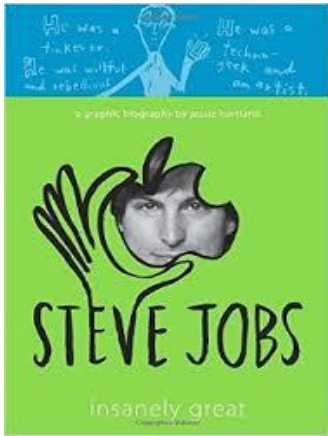
Book talk

"Her head hurt. There was a sound grating against her mind, a music-less rasp like the rustling of paper. Somebody had taken a laugh, crumpled it into a great, crackly ball, and stuffed her skull with it. *Seven days*, it laughed. *Seven days*." Triss is baffled by the changes that have taken place since her horrific near-death accident. Her dolls are talking to her, dead leaves and dirt are left behind in her sheets, and she is terrified of scissors. It has left her completely baffled. When she accidentally discovers that her brother, previously thought to have died in the Great War, may still be alive, Triss is plunged into a strange world inhabited by equally peculiar creatures who are intent on changing the fate of the world.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Author Video - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLExiYQ_wNY
- Similar Titles - *The Sleeper and the Spindle* by Neil Gaiman, *Ruby Redfort: Look into My Eyes* by Lauren Child, and *Blackberry Blue* by Jamila Gavin

Hartland, Jessie. *Steve Jobs: Insanely Great*. New York: Schwartz & Wade, 2015. 978-0-307-98295-7. 240 p. \$22.95. Gr. 7 and up.



Review

This latest biography of Steve Jobs is much like the beloved products he designed; it is deceptively simple and accessible. However, when one looks deeper, the detail and the level of thought that went into this book becomes obvious. Like most biographies, *Insanely Great* starts with Jobs' birth, talks about his major life events in a mostly chronological fashion, and ends with his death in 2011. This book is unique in that it is told in a graphic format. It pictures Jobs as a brilliant man who is obsessed with simplicity of design and wants to make the perfect product for consumers. However the book does not shy away from some of the negative aspects of Jobs' personality. He was a rule-breaker from his earliest days, was often difficult to get along with/work for, and had a tendency to abandon people who did not fit into his life anymore (including the mother of his first child and, arguably, Steve Wozniak, the technical genius behind Apple's designs). This book will appeal to students who might not be taken with the more traditional Steve Jobs biographies out there.

THOUGHTS: *Insanely Great* is easy to understand, the drawings are engaging, and it places Jobs' inventions in a larger historical context. Steve Jobs would probably have been quite happy with this telling of his life story.

92 Biography

Susan Fox, Washington JSHS

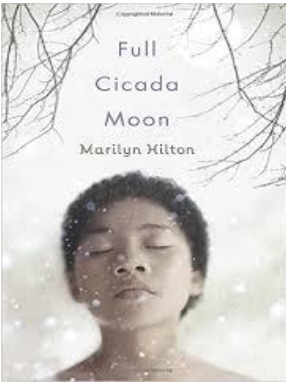
Book Talk

Do you have an iPhone or an iPad or an iPod? If so, your life has been touched by Steve Jobs and the Apple Company. What is it about the design of these products that makes them so addictive? Why do eager customers line up on city streets, waiting hours for the newest Apple device? To find the answer to these questions, you need to know something about Steve Jobs and the way he thought. *Insanely Great* is an insanely great graphic biography about the man and the company who have helped make the world what it is today.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- "Steve Jobs." *Bio.com*. A&E Networks Television. 2016. Web. <http://www.biography.com/people/steve-jobs-9354805>
- Linzmayer, Owen W. "30 Pivotal Moments in Apple's History." *Macworld*. IDG Consumer & SMB, 2016. Web. <http://www.macworld.com/article/1050112/macworld/30moments.html>
- "Welcome to USPTO Kids!" *USPTO Kids*. United States Patent and Trademark Office, 27 Oct. 2014. Web. <http://www.uspto.gov/kids/index.html>
- Wozniak, Steve. "Featured Links." *Woz.org*. N.p., n.d. Web. <http://www.woz.org/>

Hilton, Marilyn. *Full Cicada Moon*. New York: Dial, 2015. 978-0-525-42875-6. 400 p. \$17.99. Gr. 5-8.



Review

It's 1969, and Mimi Yoshiko Oliver and her mother are finally moving to Vermont to be with Mimi's father. Mimi's father is a college professor, but their new neighbors are not used to living with people who are different, especially with someone like Mimi, who is half black and half Japanese. Mimi's father tells her to, "Be kind, be respectful, and persist." She finally decides to make a stand when she discovers that she will not be allowed to take shop. Only boys are able to take shop; girls "need" to learn how to sew and cook. She peacefully protests the school's policy but ends up getting suspended. During the time she is away, her classmates show their support by staging a sit-in. This is all happening during a time of tremendous social change; protests over the Vietnam War are raging on and the Apollo Space Program is putting a man on the moon. Change is also beginning to take place in Mimi Yoshiko Oliver's corner of Vermont and her life will never be the same.

Historical Fiction; Verse

Susan Fox, Washington JSHS

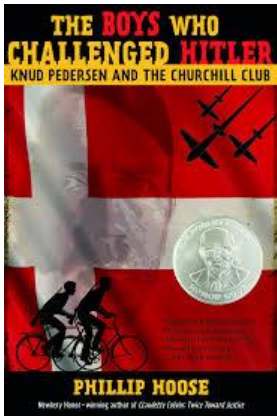
Book talk

Imagine being the only person like you. A stranger in a strange land. Even though Mimi Yoshiko Oliver is from California, she is the only person of mixed race- half black, half Japanese- in the small Vermont town where her father is a college professor. Fitting in is tough. Some people are openly hostile, others whisper and stare. Mimi makes friends, but she is never invited to their homes. Mimi loves science and wants to be an astronaut which makes her seem even more different. But, it is the 1960s and change is in the wind. Mimi may just have the power to reach her dreams. As she says, "I am not Other, I am half my Japanese mother, half my black father, and all me."

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- "Multiracial Children." *Multiracial Children*. American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychology, Mar. 2011. Web. https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Multiracial-Children-071.aspx
- "Vietnam Online: An Online Companion to Vietnam: a Television History." *American Experience*. PBS. Web. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/>
- "Apollo 11 Mission Overview." *Apollo 11*. NASA, 17 Sept. 2015. Web. http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/apollo/missions/apollo11.html
- "The King Philosophy." *The King Philosophy*. The King Center, 2014. Web. <http://www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy>

Hoose, Phillip. *The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pederson and the Churchill Club*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2015. 978-0374300227. 198 p. \$19.99 Gr. 7-12.



Review

In April 1940, the German army invaded Denmark. The Danish government, seeking a minimum of control did not fight back. Winston Churchill described Denmark as “Hitler’s tame canary” (45). Many Danish citizens were ashamed, but what could they do? Fighting back, as the invaded Norwegians were doing, would result in the establishment of a Nazi government and the same horrific executions and city burnings that were happily reported by the Germans, but fourteen-year-old Knud Pederson of Odense, Denmark, was ashamed of his country, and that shame turned to anger. As he and his friends discussed the changes, they began to scheme about sabotaging the Nazi plans. If no one else would fight back, they would. Their “Churchill Club,” named after the honored English leader, was soon born. The boys twisted or smashed directional signs, then vandalized or torched German vehicles on a daily basis, always leaving their signature: a spray-painted blue mark. Soon Knud’s family moved far north to Aalsberg, for his father’s work, and he and his brother built a second trusted group to be the Churchill Club.

Members of the Odense group remained in contact, and they encouraged each other along, eventually stealing a variety of weapons, and becoming well-known and well-hunted. The boys were caught, interrogated, tried, and jailed. Their determination was not swayed. They found they had helped to ignite greater Danish opposition. Emboldened by the teenagers’ actions, Danes nationwide fought back, sabotaged Nazi work, and refused to abide by their government’s compliance. **THOUGHTS:** This remarkable history reads like an adventure tale, with danger at every turn. Knud, in his late-eighties, worked tirelessly to accurately share the details and answer questions from American author Hoose two generations later, not familiar with Danish culture or language. Hoose’s writing and research shines through the pages. This is well-documented, first-rate and engaging non-fiction, not to be missed. Highly recommended for all middle and high school collections. It includes photos, epilogue, bibliography, chapter notes.

I undertook the reading of this book out of interest in the well-known Danish resistance of Nazi command of their government. What I learned was that a group of teenagers was one match that sparked more to resist. Initially, many (not all) Danish politicians and adults acquiesced to Nazi demands out of understanding of the high cost of resistance. However, when the teenagers of the Churchill Club were caught and jailed, the shame felt by those same adults led them to action. As a result, Denmark became a nation known for its refusal to allow Danish Jews to be removed to concentration camps. Notably, in 1943, 7,200 Jews were wisely ferried out of the country by boat. These actions and more might never have happened if not for these brave young men. The details of their story are wonderfully shared by Knud Pedersen, and his pride in each member of the group is apparent. Knud died in 2012, just as the manuscript was being completed for publication. He died a recognized Danish hero, and he will inspire many young people to come.

940.54: World War II

Melissa Scott, Shenango High School

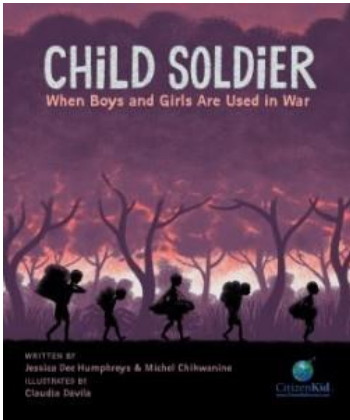
Book talk

Read the first five paragraphs of chapter one.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Book Trailer - <http://us.macmillan.com/theboyswhochallengedhitler/philliphoose>
- Dahr, Mahnaz. “The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: An Interview with Phillip Hoose.” *School Library Journal*. WordPress, 8 Jun. 2015. Web. 4 April. 2016.
- Elygren, Jennifer. *The Whispering Town*. Dreamscape. 2015. CD. Gr. 2-4.
- Hopkinson, Deborah. *Courage and Defiance: Stories of Spies, Saboteurs, and Survivors in World War II Denmark*. New York: Scholastic, 2015. Gr. 9 and up.
- Levine, Ellen. *Darkness Over Denmark: The Danish Resistance and the Rescue of the Jews*. New York: Scholastic, 2001. Print. Gr. 5-12.
- Levitin, Sonia. *Room in the Heart*. New York: Scholastic, 2003. Print. Gr. 5-8.
- Preus, Margi. *Shadow on the Mountain*. New York: Amulet, 2012. Print. Gr. 5-8.
- “The Rescue of Denmark’s Jews.” *yadvashem.org*. Yad Vashem: The Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority, 2015. Web.
- “Rescue of the Jews of Denmark.” *ushmm.org*. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2015. Web.

Humphreys, Jessica Dee and Michel Chikwanine. *Child Soldier: When Boys and Girls Are Used in War*. Illustrated by Claudia Davila. Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press, 2015. 978-1-77138-126-0. 48 p. \$17.95 Gr. 5-8.



Review

This *SLJ* star reviewed graphic novel is a harrowing nonfiction memoir that provides an overview of the Democratic Republic of Congo leading up to the story beginning in 1993. Children craft their own soccer balls of paper and plastic bags. During a soccer game, rebel militias arrive. Michel is hopeful that his father, a civil rights lawyer, won't let the rebels succeed, but there is nothing that can stop them at the time. The kids are taken and later cut with a knife while the rebels place "brown brown" (gunpowder and cocaine mixture) in the wound. After being blindfolded, five-year-old Michel is ordered to kill his best friend. The book is powerful and the resources provide ways that children can make differences in the world. **THOUGHTS:** Consider cataloging this book with the graphic novels. Students that enjoy graphic novels might not find the book in the 300's, and they might gain a great deal by reading this graphic novel. This book provides a story of growing up that may be unknown to students.

NF Graphic Novel; Child Soldiers

Beth McGuire, Wendover Middle School

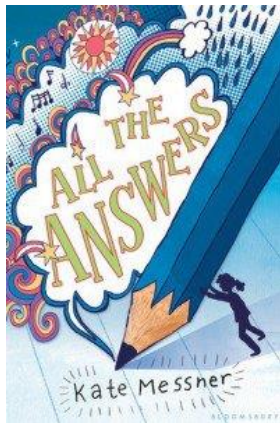
Book talk

Batman, Squirrel Girl, and the Flash have their own comics. Have you read a comic about children growing up in the Democratic Congo back in the 1990s? In *When Boys and Girls are Used in War*, we are presented with a nonfiction memoir where children had to face unbelievably perilous situations. Read this nonfiction graphic novel to uncover the truth and learn how you can help others from becoming a child soldier.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Primary Sources included in the book
 - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child <http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchildfriendlylanguage.pdf>
 - Impact of Armed Conflict on Children <http://www.unicef.org/graca/>
 - The Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Guards - <http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/ParisPrinciples310107English.pdf>
- Publisher's webpage - <http://www.kidscanpress.com/products/child-soldier>

Messner, Kate. *All the Answers*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015. \$16.99 978-1-61963-374-2. 248 p. Gr. 5-8.



Review

In need of a pencil, Ava finds a basic blue pencil in the junk drawer at home. Normally, Ava struggles with test anxiety, but she notices when she takes her math test that the pencil can answer the questions. Ava later learns that the pencil will address fact based questions, and she shares this with her best friend Sophie. The questions go beyond school questions and move onto crush questions and topics related to family members. Why is it that her mother calls her own father by his first name? In *All the Answers*, Ava learns that a magical pencil is not the way to find every answer. Ava learns more about friendship, family, love and trust, while discovering information about the pencil that she never dreamed to be possible. With a little bit of magic and a lot of heart, readers will connect to Ava and her parents of opposite political belief, her academic goal setting brother, her sister who changes her name on a name tag since there are some many Emma's in her classroom, her grandmother ready to pray for all in need, and her best friend with a zest for shopping, fashion and latest trends. **Thoughts:** With the

increase use of technology and even lead pencils, students tend not to use a traditional wooden pencil outside of state testing exam. The book allows readers to ponder what they would do if they found a pencil with the qualities from the story.

Realistic Fiction; Magic

Beth McGuire, Wendover Middle School

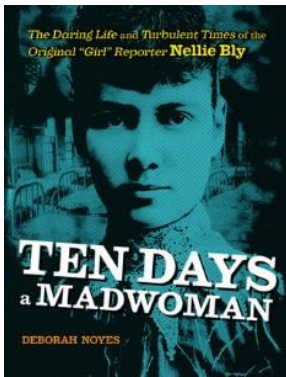
Book talk

Difficult test tomorrow? Make sure you study. Oh, you had activities after school and didn't have time to study? What if you found out that an old pencil you found could help you with the test answers? Ava finds a magical pencil and the pencil can answer questions beyond test material to answer questions regarding a personal or emotional nature. Where *if anywhere* should Ava draw the line or put away the pencil to find out *All the Answers*? What would you do if you were in Ava's place?

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Additional books by Kate Messner
 - *The Brilliant Fall of Gianna Z.*
 - *The Exact Location of Home*
 - *Sugar and Ice*
 - *Eye of the Storm*
 - *Wake Up Missing*
 - *Capture the Flag*
- Kate Messner's website - <http://www.katemessner.com/>

Noyes, Deborah. *Ten Days a Madwoman: The Daring Life and Turbulent Times of the "Original" Girl Reporter Nellie Bly*. New York: Viking, 2016. 978-08037-40174. 144p. \$18.99. Gr. 5-12.



Review

Elizabeth Jane Cochran, known to family and friends as “Pink” became known to the world through her journalism as Nellie Bly. Noyes opens her book with a focus on Bly’s journalistic stunt that brought her instant fame: be committed to an insane asylum and report on the conditions there. Never one to back down from a challenge, her own or anyone else’s, Bly completed the assignment, not without a good deal of fright, which she easily shared with readers: “Who could tell but that the strain of playing crazy and being shut up with a crowd of mad people might turn my own brain and I would never get back” (19). Her honesty, her daring act, and her focus on the personal suffering revealed many cruelties: “. . .take a perfectly sane and healthy woman, shut her up and make her sit from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. on straight-backed benches, do not allow her to talk or move during these hours, give her no reading and let her know nothing of the world or its doings, give her bad food and harsh treatment, and see how long it will take to make her insane” (58) “What, excepting torture, would produce insanity quicker than this treatment?” (53). This reporting also catapulted her to fame and wide readership, “a full-time job at [the *New York*] *World* and her own byline, quite an achievement at a time when most newspaper reports ran anonymously” (69). A host of imitators sprung up as well. Noyes gives the most time to Bly’s undercover work in Blackwell’s Island Lunatic Asylum and to her widely followed “round the world in 80 days” work (she did it in 76 days), leaving many other assignments breezily covered (who wouldn’t want to read more of her World War I reporting, or social work uncovering inequality and scams?). Noyes follows Bly’s personal life including her astounding marriage at 30 to 70-year-old businessman and millionaire Robert Livingston Seaman. After his death, she successfully managed his Iron Clad Manufacturing Company and was proud of it. Reading Noyes’ work, it is easy to believe that Bly is unstoppable which is all the more remarkable when Noyes relates the sexism of the time. “If you want to do it, you can do it. The question is, do you want to do it?” She did it. **THOUGHTS:** Well-researched, well-written, and well-packaged, this is a must-have for any middle and high school, especially schools in Bly’s native Pennsylvania.

Biography

Melissa Scott, Shenango High School

Book talk

Nellie Bly had ambitious goals for a woman at the end of the nineteenth century when the few female journalists were relegated to writing columns about cleaning or fashion. The journalistic stunt that skyrocketed her to fame was feigning insanity, being committed to the notorious asylum on Blackwell’s Island, and writing a shocking exposé of the clinic’s horrific treatment of its patients. Discover how the world came to follow her enthralling career in “stunt” journalism that raised awareness of political corruption, poverty, and abuses of human rights.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Bly, Nellie. *Ten Days in a Mad-House*. New York: Ian L. Munro, [1887]. Web. <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/bly/madhouse/madhouse.html>
- Fritz, Arthur. “Nellie Bly, The Pioneer Woman Journalist, A Resource Website.” *nellielyonline.com* Tri Fritz, n.d. Web. Includes links to Bly’s articles.

Pennypacker, Sara; Jon Klassen, ill. *Pax*. New York: Balzer + Bray, 2016. 978-0-06-237701-2. 276 p. \$16.99.
Gr. 5-8.



Review

Pax, the fox, has been a part of Peter's life since he was a young boy. Shortly after his mother died, Peter found the orphaned kit, and the two became inseparable. When the story begins, Peter's father is going off to war (the time and place of the war is not specified). Peter is sent to live with his grandfather and is forced to release Pax back into the wild. Almost as soon as he arrives at his grandfather's, Peter knows that leaving Pax was a huge mistake; Pax is completely domesticated and will never survive. Peter decides to go back home, over three hundred miles, to find Pax. On his journey, Peter breaks his foot and is taken in by a war amputee named Vola. Pax also receives life-saving help from a group of foxes who teach him how to live in the wild. Over the course of their journeys, the boy and his fox change. Peter develops a newfound maturity, while Pax becomes wild. Eventually, the two are reunited with each other and with Peter's father, but nothing is the same as before. **THOUGHTS:** *Pax* is reminiscent of many

beloved boy and animal tales of the past, and it is destined to become a classic in its own right. The spare, but eloquent, fox-speak used throughout the book conveys the horrors of war (maybe even more than human words). This is a book that is accessible to everyone from middle grade students to adults. Readers of all ages will cry over and love this story

Fantasy

Susan Fox, Washington Jr./Sr. High School

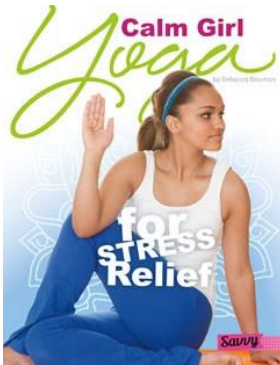
Book talk

My boy always called me "Pax". Every day when he came home from school he would call me. Things have changed now; they feel dark and scary. Something is coming and my boy's father is going away to fight it. But why are they driving me up this road in the forest, and why is my boy crying? Why are they forcing me out of the car into this place that's quiet and lonely (and is *someone* going to feed me)?? I don't know what is happening, but now I need to learn how to survive. I just hope my boy and I will find each other again sometime soon.

Resources for Further Reading and Explanation

- "The Effects of War on Children." *The Effects of War on Children*. War Child UK, 2014. Web. <https://www.warchild.org.uk/issues/effects-war-children>
- Bradford, Alina. "Foxes: Facts & Pictures." *LiveScience*. TechMedia Network, 2016. Web. <http://www.livescience.com/27168-foxes.html>
- Gillam, Erin. "An Introduction to Animal Communication." *Nature.com*. Nature Publishing Group, 2014. Web. <http://www.nature.com/scitable/knowledge/library/an-introduction-to-animal-communication-23648715>
- "Helping a Child Cope with the Death of a Parent." *Kidshealth*. Pediatric Society of New Zealand/ Starship Foundation, 2016. Web. <http://www.kidshealth.org.nz/helping-child-cope-death-parent>

Rissman, Rebecca. *Yoga for You*. North Mankato, MN: Capstone Press, 2015. \$25.49 ea. 64p. Gr. 4 and up.
Calm Girl: Yoga for Stress Relief. 978-1-4914-2121-5.
Fit Girl: Yoga for Fitness and Flexibility. 978-1-4914-2120-8.
Smart Girl: Yoga for Brain Power. 978-1-4914-2119-2.
Strong Girl: Yoga for Building Strength. 978-1-4914-2122-2.



Review

Although recommended for grades 4-8, *Yoga for You* is a great series for all students and their families. Each title in the series focuses on yoga for specific results: stress relief, strength, fitness and flexibility, and mental alertness. Titles are broken down into sections about how one's feeling, the history of yoga, lifestyle changes, and the yoga poses themselves. All yoga poses are two-page spreads with step-by-step instructions and pop-out boxes with modifications to help increase the benefit of yoga. **THOUGHTS:** This is a must-have series for all schools (I have it both in print and eBook). I love this series and have used it myself and with my family for family yoga. It's fun for the adults and kids. Plus, the interactive eBooks are great for phys. ed. classes.

Exercise; Fitness

Erin Parkinson, Lincoln JSHS, Ellwood City

Book talk

(Strike a basic yoga pose)

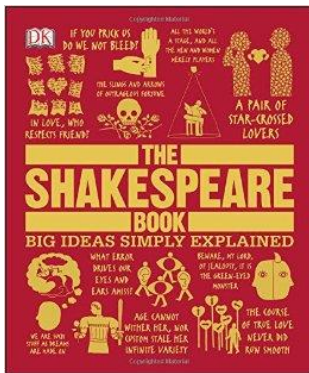
Do you feel stressed out or overwhelmed? Do you want to become more flexible or stronger? How's your brain power? With just a few minutes of yoga a day, you can become stronger, more flexible, gain brain power, and relieve your stress. *Yoga for You* provides specific yoga instructions for girls to build muscle tone, feel more relaxed, and find a calming center. Each book focuses on a different aspect of life and the yoga presented helps to alleviate or strengthen that area. With just a few minutes a day, you can be stronger, more focused, and less stressed out. "Om"

(Strike a basic yoga pose)

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Yoga Kids - <http://yogakids.com/>
- Yoga for Kids on Youtube - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmeTZGr_R5Q
- Buckley, Annie. "Yoga for Kids." *Parents*. Meredith Corporation, 2016. Web. <http://www.parents.com/fun/activities/indoor/yoga-for-kids/#page=1>
- "Why Yoga and Kids Go Together." *PBS Parents*. PBS, 2016. Web. <http://www.pbs.org/parents/food-and-fitness/sport-and-fitness/why-yoga-and-kids-go-together/>
- Henningsen, Kristin MS. "The Benefits of Yoga for Children." *Center for Health and Wellness*. Kaplan Higher Education Corporation, 2011. Web. <http://healthandwellness.kaplan.edu/articles/yoga/The%20Benefits%20of%20Yoga%20for%20Children.html>

The Shakespeare Book. New York: DK, 2015. 978-1-4654-2987-2. 352 p. \$25.00. Gr. 7-12.



Review

The cover of this book says it all---"Big Ideas Simply Explained." *The Shakespeare Book* offers readers an easy to understand overview of each of Shakespeare's plays (and major poems). A brief biographical introduction to Shakespeare is also included. Each chapter presents a timeline of the events in the play, a summary of the plot and a description of major characters. Major themes are identified and discussed. In addition, Shakespeare's influences/inspirations in writing each play are identified. Most chapters are four pages long, however major plays (*Macbeth*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Hamlet*, etc.) have lengthier entries. The text is supplemented by a variety of high-quality color photos and illustrations of Shakespearean productions. Charts are also included to help explain major plot points and character relationships (for example, the entry on *Romeo & Juliet* features a family tree that outlines the relationships between the characters). **THOUGHTS:** This volume offers libraries an

affordable and reader friendly overview of the works of William Shakespeare. While the average chapter may only be four pages long, quite a bit of information is included within those pages. Of particular note are the discussion of themes within each play and the illustrations, particularly the informative charts. Readers with an interest in Shakespeare's poetry may also find the chapters on major Shakespearean poems/sonnets informative.

822.33; Literature

Elizabeth Henry, Lampeter-Strasburg HS/MS

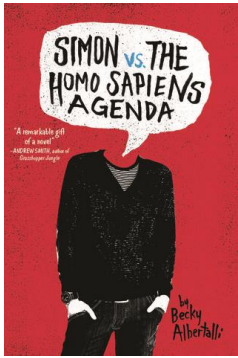
Book talk

"To read, or not to read, that is the question" (to paraphrase William Shakespeare). In the case of *The Shakespeare Handbook*, the answer is a definite "to read." Confused about a Shakespeare play you are reading in class? In a muddle about the characters and their motivations? Can't remember who's been murdered, who's in love or who's been cursed? Not a problem—just pick up the *Handbook* to find out the basics about every Shakespearean play's plot, characters and themes. Don't face "*double, double, toil and trouble*" in class assignments—read the book today!

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* - <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/>
- *Discovering Literature: Shakespeare (The British Library)* - <http://www.bl.uk/shakespeare>
- *Folger Shakespeare Library* - <http://www.folger.edu/>

Albertalli, Becky. *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*. New York: Balzer + Bray, 2015. 978-0-06-234867-8. 303 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9 & up.



Review

Simon Spier hasn't exactly been hiding the fact that he's gay, but he's not ready to announce it yet either. So, when a classmate spies him e-mailing a mystery boy he's falling for, Simon is blackmailed into setting him up with a female friend. Simon will do almost anything to protect "Blue," his e-mail pal, who is more hesitant to come out. ("Why do only gay people have to come out? "Straight people really should have to come out, and the more awkward it is, the better," Blue writes while debating how to broach the subject with his parents.") Simon longs to meet Blue in person, and their strings of flirty, funny e-mails will have readers rooting for that outcome, too. Simon is an endearing character with a slew of loving friends and family which makes his emotional journey easier than it may be for others. The strong supporting cast is similar to that in Jenny Han's *To All the Boys* books, which pulls the reader into a supportive circle, as idealistic as it might be.

THOUGHTS: This book is a solid addition to LGBT collections, but the sincere romance between Simon and Blue makes it an easy pick for most readers of that genre as well.

Realistic Fiction; LGBT; Romance

Kristen Rowe, Plum Senior High School

Book talk

Simon Spier hasn't exactly been hiding the fact that he's gay, but he's not ready to announce it yet, either. His world is turned upside down when a classmate finds out he's been e-mailing back and forth with a mystery boy he has a crush on and threatens to expose them unless Simon sets him up with a girlfriend. Simon struggles to appease his blackmailer, friend and crush without blowing it all up. Will he succeed? Will he get the chance to meet his crush? Will anything work out?

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Author's website - <http://www.beckyalbertalli.com>
- Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network - <http://www.glsen.org>
- Gay-Straight Alliance Network - www.gsanetwork.org
- Trevor Project -- free hotline for suicidal LGBTQIA+ youth - <http://www.thetrevorproject.org>

Aveyard, Victoria. *Red Queen*. New York: HarperTeen, 2015. 978-0-605-85200-6. \$17.99. 383p. Gr. 9 and up.



Review

Mare Barrow is a Red, the lowest class of citizen in Norta. Silvers, who rule Norta, do not bleed red blood like the reds. Instead, they bleed silver and have powers that allow them to control elements of nature, the mind, and others. Living in the Stilts, Mare has learned to thieve her way through life to provide for her family. As she nears her eighteenth birthday and conscription (a life in the army due to lack of skill), she has accepted her future until her best friend, Kilorn, loses his apprenticeship and must enter conscription. Mare has always felt the need to protect Kilorn, so she sets out to steal enough to buy their freedom. An attack by the Scarlet Guard, a Red rebel group, ruins her plan to escape, so Mare does the only thing she knows and runs. As she pickpockets outside of a tavern, she's caught, but instead of being punished her capture gives her a silver coin worth much more than the pennies Mare has stolen. Soon after this encounter, Mare is taken to Summerton, the royal's summer home, where she is to serve the royal family and high houses. With conscription no longer looming over her, Mare accepts a life of servitude,

but during Queenstrial, Mare falls from a balcony into an electrified dome and is not burned up. Instead, lightning surges from Mare, and she almost kills the front-runner for future queen. Mare shouldn't have powers; she's a Red, yet she just summoned lightning and electricity. The royals must cover up Mare's powers because Reds cannot be equal to Silvers, and they cannot kill her because too many questions would arise. Queen Elara creates a ruse in which Mare is betrothed to Prince Maven. As Mare is schooled in all things Silver, she learns of the evil living in the royal family and high houses. When approached by the Scarlet Guard to fight against the Silvers, she accepts and learns that her betrothed, Maven, is also a sympathizer and has joined the Scarlet Guard. As they work together to learn more about the guard and help them rebel against the Silver ruling class, Mare learns that trust should not be given lightly and anyone can turn at any moment.

THOUGHTS: A mash-up of *The Selection* by Kiera Cass, *The Grisha Trilogy* by Leigh Bardugo, and *Trial by Fire* by Josephine Angelini, give *Red Queen* to readers who enjoy fantasy, adventure, and realistic characters who are challenged to figure out what they believe in order to stay alive (and keep those they love alive).

Fantasy

Erin Parkinson, Lincoln JSHS, Ellwood City SD

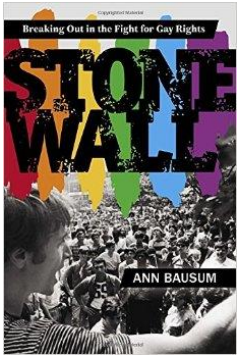
Book talk

What would you do if on your eighteenth birthday you were conscripted into the army and so was your best friend whose father had died in the army? Would you look for a way out? Mare does. She's determined to save herself, her family, and her best friend Kilorn; but how? When she's caught pick-pocketing, in order to try to buy Kilorn's and her freedom, instead of being arrested, she is taken to the royal family's summer home to serve them. A life of servitude is better than the army; right? As Mare adjusts to her life serving the royal family and the wealthy families of Norta, she learns that she is not a normal Red. Mare has the power to control electricity, but only Silvers, the royal family and wealthy families of Norta, are supposed to have Silver blood and the powers that come along with it. What is Mare to do? Go along with the ruse that she is a long-lost Silver princess or risk death to share her Red secret and join the rebel army to fight the Silvers? Who can Mare trust with her secrets? Find out in *Red Queen* by Victoria Aveyard.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Author's website - <http://victoriaaveyard.com/>
- Author's blog - <http://victoriaaveyard.blogspot.com/>
- Follow Victoria Aveyard on Twitter - @VictoriaAveyard
- Baver, Kristin. "Q&A with Victoria Aveyard." *Publishers Weekly*. PWxyz LLC, 19 Feb. 2015. Web. <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/65625-q-a-with-victoria-aveyard.html>
- Read-alikes:
 - *The Selection* series by Kiera Cass
 - *The Grisha Trilogo* by Leigh Bardugo
 - *The Worldwalker Trilogy* by Josephine Angelini

Bausum, Ann. *Stonewall: Breaking Out in the Fight for Gay Rights*. New York: Viking, 2015. 978-0-670-01679-2. 120p. \$16.99. Gr. 9 and up.



Review

A thorough history of the gay rights movement from the 1960s on, this book examines the social climate and discrimination leading up to the Stonewall riots and gives a riveting, unbiased account of the riots themselves, which includes photographs and eyewitness quotes. The book goes on to analyze the advancements made and setbacks suffered by gay rights activists following the riots. The author pays particular attention to gay pride marches, the AIDS epidemic, and hot-button issues such as gays in the military and gay marriage. Source notes and a bibliography are included at the end of this excellent addition to LGBT nonfiction collections. **THOUGHTS:** This book reads more like a story than other LGBT nonfiction selections on the market. The use of photographs and quotes from actual eyewitnesses to the riots really makes readers feel like the event is unfolding right before their eyes. I would definitely recommend this title to those looking

to build a collection on the history of gay rights. It would pair nicely with Betsy Kuhn's *Gay Power!: The Stonewall Riots and the Gay Rights Movement, 1969* or with any of David Levithan's fiction selections. I should warn potential buyers, however, that the information on gay marriage is already outdated, as the book was published prior to the nationwide legalization of same-sex marriage in June of 2015.

323.3; Stonewall Riots; Gay Rights

Julie Ritter, Montoursville Area High School

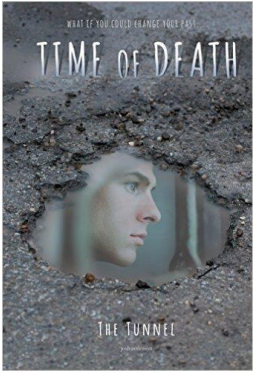
Book talk

Picture an angry crowd yelling obscenities at the police...throwing coins, glass bottles, and bricks at the police...surging forth to push and pound on police cars until they rock unsteadily on their wheels. This was the scene one hot June night in 1969. The police had just raided the Stonewall Inn, a well-known gay bar in New York City. At this time, being gay was a criminal offense in the U.S., so raids on gay bars happened often. This time, however, the gays decided to fight back. The riot served as a catalyst for the gay rights movement in America. Read all about the movement's advancements and setbacks leading up to and following the Stonewall Riot of 1969 in this book. You'll view photographs and read eyewitness accounts of the riot that will make it all so real you'll feel like you're right there with the protestors, heart racing with excitement and sweat dripping down your back on that steamy night in June.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- *American Experience: Stonewall Uprising*. Dir. Kate Davis and David Heilbroner. PBS, 2011. DVD.
- Carter, David. *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2010. Print.
- *Stonewall*. Dir. Roland Emmerich. Perf. Jeremy Irvine, Johnathan Rhys Meyers, Jonny Beauchamp, Joey King, and Caleb Landry Jones. Lionsgate, 2016. DVD.
- "Stonewall Riots: The Beginning of the LGBT Movement." *Civilrights.org*. The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights/The Leadership Conference Education Fund, 22 June 2009. Web.
<http://www.civilrights.org/archives/2009/06/449-stonewall.html>

Anderson, Josh. *The Tunnel - Time of Death*. Minneapolis: Epic Press, 2016. 978-1-68076-064-4. \$22.50. 208p. Gr. 9 and up.



Review

Are some things, no matter how terrible, horrific or unbearable, destined to happen no matter what choices you make? If you could go back in time to alter your future, would you do it? This is exactly the opportunity Kyle Cash is given in Josh Anderson's *The Tunnel*, part of the *Time of Death* series. After smoking weed and taking shots of tequila before school one morning, Kyle wrecks into a school bus causing all of the students and the driver on board to die. When given the chance to travel back to 1998, before he was born, to talk his dad into stopping him from making this fateful mistake, Kyle jumps at it. But, he soon is forced to ask himself if it's worth all of the risk? Will it work, or will the Kyle of 2015 still end up in in prison? **THOUGHTS:** The *Time of Death* series is a great set of books for struggling readers who don't want to show their peers that they struggle. The cool topics hook readers, and the short chapters with larger print makes the time spent reading fly by. I would definitely put this in the hands of a student who needs a good book

and some confidence.

Realistic Fantasy

Laura Ward, Fox Chapel Area High School

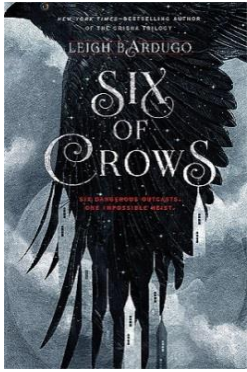
Book talk

We all have trouble finding something that appeals to reluctant readers, especially to boy reluctant readers. Maybe it's just me. But I found the perfect fit in Josh Anderson's *Time of Death* series. The first title is *The Tunnel*, and it will hook any reader. The idea of going back in time to fix all of the mistakes that we've made is appealing no matter how big or how small the mistake. *The Tunnel* gives an interesting perspective that certain things are meant to happen no matter what changes we make in life or in the past. Yes, it's a little confusing, but it's a great book for reluctant readers. Seriously, check it out.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Drug Prevention 4 Teens - <http://www.dea.gov/pr/multimedia-library/publications/prevention4teens.pdf>
- Preventing drug abuse - <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/preventing-drug-abuse-best-strategy>
- Josh Anderson on the web - <https://www.lernerbooks.com/contacts/3118/Josh-Anderson>

Bardugo, Leigh. *Six of Crows*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2015. 978-1-6277-9212-7. 480 p. \$18.99. Gr 9-12.



Review

Kaz Brekker, aka Dirtyhands, is the most infamous criminal in Ketterdam. As a notorious master of lockpicking, disguise, and thievery, Kaz leads a gang of misfits known as the Dregs. Each member is unique - Inej, trained as an acrobat, known as The Wraith; Nina, a Grisha Heartrender who can manipulate internal organs; Jesper, a gambler with a secret; Matthias, a prisoner trained to hunt and kill Grisha, and Wylan, a boy with a penchant for explosives. When Kaz is offered a small fortune for breaking a prisoner out of the impenetrable Ice Court, he knows only the right crew can help him pull off the job. So, Kaz and the Dregs set off towards the frozen city of Fjerda, uncovering dark and deadly secrets along the way. Leigh Bardugo outdoes herself in this outstanding, well-crafted story that takes place two years after the best-selling Grisha Trilogy. Told from five different narratives, the life and often heartbreaking history of each character is drawn out as the story progresses. **THOUGHTS:** An excellent addition to the world of YA

fantasy; look for the next book in the series to hit shelves in September 2016.

Fantasy

Vicki Schwoebel, Friends' Central School

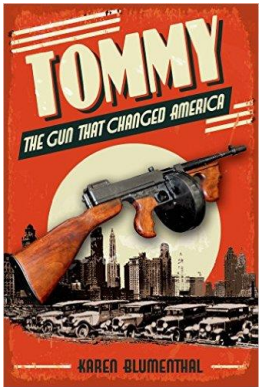
Book talk

You're about to pull off the perfect heist. For a staggering sum of money, you need to break a prisoner out of an impenetrable, maximum security prison. Piece of cake, right? After all, you're the best criminal around. But you'll need help; you can't do it alone. Who will you recruit? It's hard to choose- there's the Grisha who can damage internal organs; the sharpshooting gambler with a debt to repay; the Councilman's son with a penchant for pyrotechnics; the stony prisoner with deep-seated hatred for the Grisha; and the loyal gang member with lynx-like agility, who might also hold a piece of your heart. There's a nasty rumor floating around that someone you trust might also betray you, and who you pick will determine if you succeed. So can you do it? Can you trust these six enough to pull off the perfect heist?

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- *The Grishaverse*. MacMillan, 2016. <http://grishaverse.com/>
- *Leigh Bardugo's Website*. <http://www.leighbardugo.com/>

Blumenthal, Karen. *Tommy: The Gun that Changed America*. New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2015. 978-1-62672-084-8. 232 p. \$19.99. Gr. 7 and up.



Review

During WWI, John Thompson began developing the Thompson submachine gun in order to assist American soldiers engaged in trench warfare. Because the war ended before development was complete, however, Thompson and his associates had to find a new market for what became known as the Tommy gun. They instead promoted the gun as a protective weapon for police, military men, bankers, and other big business owners. Although sales flyers insisted that the Tommy gun was “on the side of law and order,” the fact that there was little regulation of gun sales meant that Tommy guns soon fell into the hands of gangsters and criminals. Set during the turbulent 1920s and 1930s, this book is chock-full of photographs and exciting stories about several notorious historical figures, including Al Capone, George “Machine Gun” Kelly, John Dillinger, Baby Face Nelson, and J. Edgar Hoover. An excellent addition to any social studies curriculum, the book includes a thorough bibliography of sources for further research and takes a careful look at the way the Tommy gun impacted society and triggered a debate about gun control

that continues even today. **THOUGHTS:** This book is very well-written and read more like a thriller, especially during the chapters that focused on famous American gangsters. I could see the book appealing to boys looking for a “cops and robbers” story. It will also appeal to history buffs and gun enthusiasts. Written in easily accessible language and containing many primary source photographs, this book would be well-suited for lower-level and reluctant readers as well. It is definitely a must-have addition to U.S. history collections!

683 Firearms or 973 U.S. History

Julie Ritter, Montoursville Area High School

Book talk

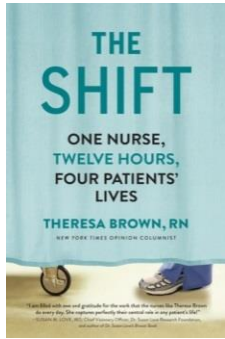
What happens when guns fall into the wrong hands? Complete and utter chaos. Seven defenseless men shot down while their backs are turned and their hands are in the air. A hailstorm of bullets flying into a police car and killing four law enforcement officers. Banks being robbed. Convicts escaping prison. Read about these crimes and more in *Tommy: The Gun that Changed America*, and learn about the ways in which the Thompson submachine gun changed lives, impacted American society, and triggered a debate about gun control that continues today.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Canfield, Bruce. “Thompson Submachine Gun: The Tommy Gun Goes to War.” American Rifleman. National Rifle Association of America, 15 Feb. 2011. Web. <http://www.americanrifleman.org/articles/2011/2/15/thompson-submachine-gun-the-tommy-gun-goes-to-war/>
- Helmer, William J. *The Gun That Made the Twenties Roar*. New York: Macmillan, 1969. Print.
- Yenne, Bill. *Tommy Gun: How General Thompson’s Submachine Gun Wrote History*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2009. Print.

*The author provides a bibliography with additional resources at the end of the book.

Brown, Theresa. *The Shift: One Nurse, Twelve Hours, Four Patients' Lives*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin, 2015. 226p. \$24.95. Gr. 9 and up.



Review

We all know that nursing is hard; that nurses are often overlooked, underpaid, and way underappreciated. *New York Times* Opinion Columnist, Theresa Brown, sets out to change that perception - even a little bit - in *The Shift*. Brown gives an inside look at her day from when she rises before the sun to when she arrives at home after her twelve hour shift at a Pittsburgh hospital. Her day begins with three patients all with varying types and stages of cancer and as she's given a fourth patient with an unusual unpredicted infection. The reality of how busy nurses are, how little doctors respect the nurses on their floor, and how demanding some patients are is vivid in this honest portrayal of one day in a nurse's life. **THOUGHTS:** This is great non-fiction that reads almost like a novel. Although heavy with medical lingo at times, Brown makes sure to define everything for those of use not familiar with medical terms. This would be perfect for a student

interested in a career in the medical field.

616.02; Medicine, Nursing

Laura Ward, Fox Chapel Area High School

Book talk

Career clusters and career exploration are some of the latest buzzwords flying around in the world of education. What better way for kids to learn about the demands of a career in nursing than from New York Times columnist, Theresa Brown. In *The Shift*, Brown chronicles a day in her life as an oncology nurse. As expected, things don't go as planned, and she has to make hard decisions. Because Brown has a background in writing this is able to hold your attention even though some of the more detailed medical explanations. I am a homer and since *The Shift* is set in Pittsburgh it's a homerun with me!

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Titles that will help select a career:
 - *150 Best Jobs for Your Skills* by Laurence Shatkin
 - *50 Best Jobs for Your Personality* also by Laurence Shatkin
- Official Website - www.TheresaBrown.com
- Follow Theresa Brown on Twitter - [@TheresaBrown](https://twitter.com/TheresaBrown)

Conkling, Winifred. *Radioactive! How Irene Curie & Lise Meitner Revolutionized Science and Changed the World*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Young Readers, 2016. 978-1-61620-415-0. 227 p. \$17.95. Grades 7 and up.



Review

Radioactive! is a dual biography of two women, Irene Curie-Joliot and Lise Meitner, who were pioneers in the field of nuclear physics. Irene Curie was the daughter of Marie and Pierre Curie. While the elder Curies were known for their pioneering work on naturally radioactive elements, Irene and her husband, Frederic Joliot, discovered artificial radioactivity (i.e., that a stable element could be bombarded by radioactive particles to form new radioactive elements). Irene and Frederic Joliot-Curie's work led to a deeper understanding of the atom, and Lise Meitner relied on this understanding to discover nuclear fission.

Both women lived in the early 20th century, so their scientific accomplishments were minimized. Meitner faced an extra challenge as a woman of Jewish ancestry working in Germany during World War II. Hitler's policies forced her to flee Germany with little notice (even though she was a practicing Christian) and her male colleagues took credit for her work. This is a fascinating look at the lives and work of two talented women. **THOUGHTS:** *Radioactive!* is, first and foremost, a biography about two very interesting women. Some basic background is given into the science of nuclear physics, but readers looking for a scientific volume may be disappointed. This book is an essential purchase, however, for any school looking to promote awareness of women in science.

539.7, Nuclear Physics

Susan Fox, Washington Jr./Sr. High School

Book talk

What is it like to be a woman in a man's world? Irene Curie and Lise Meitner knew all too well. Each woman spent hours in a laboratory experimenting with particles unseen by the human eye. Each woman struggled against pressures in their past (Irene against the reputation of her famous parents, Marie and Pierre Curie; Lise against the Jewish ancestry that forced her to leave her homeland). But one thing is true; despite the factors working against them, Irene Curie and Lise Meitner made impressive contributions to the field of atomic science. They may not have been recognized during their lifetimes, but we know their contributions now. Get to know these two scientists who have made it easier for each of us to be what we want to be, even if it is not something considered to be "women's work."

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Student Energy. "Nuclear Fission." *Fission*. Web. <https://www.studentenergy.org/topics/fission>
- "Irène Joliot-Curie - Facts." *Irène Joliot-Curie - Facts*. Nobel Media AB, 2014. Web. https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/chemistry/laureates/1935/joliot-curie-facts.html
- "ANS Nuclear Cafe." *ANS Nuclear Cafe*. American Nuclear Society, 14 Feb. 2012. Web. <http://ansnuclearcafe.org/2012/02/14/lise-meitners-fantastic-explanation-nuclear-fission/>
- "Nuclear Weapons." *Union of Concerned Scientists*. Union of Concerned Scientists. Web. <http://www.ucsusa.org/nuclear-weapons#.VxRPmDArLIU>

Essential Literary Themes (series). Minneapolis: ABDO, 2016. 112 p. \$24.95 ea. Gr. 7-12.

Anderson, Jennifer Joline. *The Antihero*. 978-1-62403-501-3.

Bacher, Lindsay. *Biblical Allusions*. 978-1-62403-802-0.

Bodden, Valerie. *Coming of Age*. 978-1-62403-803-7.

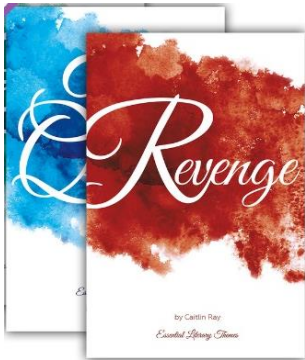
Bosco, Maryellen Lo. *Fall from Grace*. 978-1-62403-804-4.

Burling, Alexis. *The Hero*. 978-1-62403-805-1.

Combs, Maggie. *Love*. 978-1-62403-806-5.

Hamen, Susan E. *The Quest*. 978-1-62403-807-5.

Ray, Caitlin. *Revenge*. 978-1-62403-808-2.



Review

The eight book series, *Essential Literary Themes*, explores some of the most popular recurring literary themes present in literature, poetry, and film. Each volume selects four works of literature, poetry, or film and offers a chapter long overview of each work. Each work is also the subject of a separate analysis chapter in which the work is connected to an aspect of the overall theme. Sidebars breakdown and explain the thesis statements and supporting arguments present in the analysis. Other potential analysis and essay options are presented offering the reader suggestion for further exploration of the work/theme. An overview of how to write/construct analysis style essays is also included. **THOUGHTS:** This series is a worthy addition to any secondary school where literary (or film) related research is conducted. The text is easy to understand and accessible

to teens. The analysis chapters and well as the further analysis suggestions will no doubt spark inspiration for students searching for essay topics on the selected works presented.

810; Literature

Elizabeth Henry, Lampeter-Strasburg HS/MS

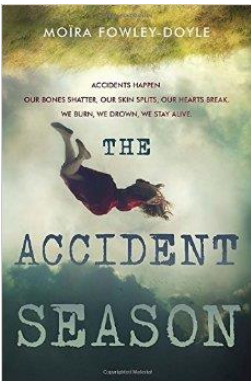
Book talk

Do you know what Disney fairy tale movies, the poetry of Shakespeare and the books *Divergent* and *Of Mice and Men* have in common? The answer—each of these works revolves around the theme of love. Love...Revenge...A Fall from Grace. You may have never thought about it, but many works of literature and film feature popular recurring themes that have been around since the dawn of storytelling. Pick up any of the books in the *Essential Literary Themes* set to explore eight of most common themes found in works both old and new. You might just find some inspiration for that essay your language arts teacher just assigned.....

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- *Annenberg Learner: Literature-Analyzing Theme* - <http://www.learner.org/interactives/literature/read/theme1.html>
- *Identifying Themes and Literary Analysis (Bucks County Community College)* - <http://www.bucks.edu/media/bcccmcdialibrary/tutoring/documents/writing/Identifying%20themes.pdf>
- Readalikes/Similar Books: *Bloom's Literary Criticism* (various series), Infobase Publishing.

Fowley-Doyle, Moira. *The Accident Season*. New York: Kathy Dawson Books, 2015. 978-0-525-42948-7. 291p. \$17.99. Gr. 9 and up.



Review

Every October, Cara and her family suddenly become extremely accident-prone. Having no explanation for all of the cuts, bruises, and tragedies during this time, they refer to this month as the accident season and simply prepare for it as best as they can. This year, however, Cara notices that a strange girl named Elsie appears in every single one of her photos and begins to wonder if there is a connection between this mysterious girl and the accident season. As she searches for Elsie, family secrets are uncovered, relationships develop, and Cara's entire world comes crashing down as everything she thought she knew about the accident season is turned upside

down. **THOUGHTS:** An interesting mix of mystery, suspense, romance, paranormal fiction, and realistic family dynamics make this an intriguing read. Although the story starts out slow, the plot picks up about halfway through, and plot twists and turns will keep readers hooked from this point on. Fans of E. Lockhart's *We Were Liars* will especially enjoy this title. Some sensitive subjects,

such as teenage drinking and sexual abuse, make this book more appropriate for high school audiences.

Paranormal Fiction

Julie Ritter, Montoursville Area High School

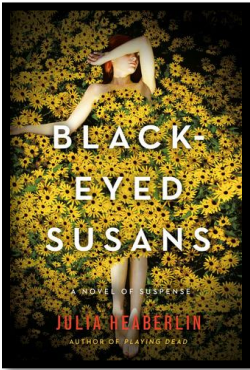
Book talk

Time to batten down the hatches: it's accident season again. Every October, Cara and her family become extremely and unexplainably accident-prone. Bruises appear. Bones get broken. When the accident season is especially bad, people even die. This year, Cara is determined to figure out why these things keep happening before she loses someone else close to her. As she begins to ask questions and unearth family secrets, however, Cara realizes that maybe she is unprepared to accept the truth about the accident season. If you think you can handle learning the truth, then this book is for you.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- "Child Sexual Abuse." *MedlinePlus*. U.S. National Library of Medicine, 7 Mar. 2016. Web. <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/childsexualabuse.html>
- Diaz, Shelley. "Ghost Stories That Aren't: Moira Fowley-Doyle on 'The Accident Season.'" *Slj.com*. School Library Journal, 17 Aug. 2015. Web. <http://www.slj.com/2015/08/interviews/ghost-stories-that-arent-moira-fowley-doyle-on-the-accident-season/#>
- Fowley-Doyle, Moira (@moirawithatrema). *Twitter.com*. Twitter. Web. <https://twitter.com/moirawithatrema>
- "Injury Prevention and Control." *National Center for Injury Prevention and Control*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Web. <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/>

Heaberlin, Julia. *Black-Eyed Susans*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2015. 978-0-8041-7799-3. 354 p. \$17.99. Gr. 10 and up.



Review

When Tessie was sixteen, she was abducted and then left for dead in a field of black-eyed Susans along with the remains of the killer's other victims. Despite some substantial gaps in her memory, Tessie testified against Terrell Darcy Goodwin, who was sentenced to Death Row. Now, Tessa is a single mother in her 30s with a teenaged daughter of her own. Terrell's execution is just months away when someone plants a bed of black-eyed Susans outside her bedroom window. Afraid that her "monster" is still at large, and still watching her, Tessa becomes involved in the legal effort to exonerate Terrell. But the clock is ticking, and Tessa still can't trust her own memories. Chapters alternate between 16-year old Tessie and present-day Tessa, giving the book solid crossover appeal. A subplot about the role of Lydia (Tessie's BFF) in the Black-Eyed Susan case gathers dangerous momentum as the two narratives converge. This adult thriller is an edge-of-your seat mystery with TONS of appeal for teen readers! **THOUGHTS:** *Black-Eyed Susans* is a wonderful example of a crossover novel that is a natural fit for mature and/or avid teen readers.

The novel is a delight to book talk because it has so many great hooks to snag readers' interest: the abduction of a young girl, the ticking clock as a (possibly) innocent man faces execution, and even some romance. After the first book talk, students were lining up to get their hands on the book!

Mystery

Amy V. Pickett, Ridley High School

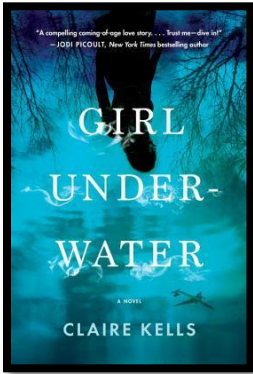
Book talk

Tessie was sixteen when she was abducted, held captive for two days, and then left for dead in a field of black-eyed Susan wildflowers along with the remains of the killer's other victims. After (mostly) recovering from the "conversion disorder" that left her with amnesia and temporary blindness, Tessie testified against Terrell Darcy Goodwin, who was sentenced to Death Row. Now, Tessa is a single mother in her 30s with a teenaged daughter of her own. Terrell's execution is just months away when someone plants a bed of black-eyed Susans outside her bedroom window. Afraid that her "monster" is still at large, and still watching her, Tessa gets involved with the legal team working to prove Terrell's innocence before time runs out. But the clock is ticking, and Tessa still can't trust her own memories. Chapters alternate between 16-year old Tessie and present-day Tessa; the two storylines eventually come together with a shocking reveal. This edge-of-your-seat thriller will snag and hold your interest with the abduction of a young girl, a possibly innocent man facing execution, a dramatic relationship between two best friends, and even some romance. *Black-Eyed Susans* by Julia Heaberlin.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Julia Heaberlin on Twitter - @JuliaThrillers
- Julia Heaberlin website - <http://juliaheaberlin.com/>
- Conversion Disorder page from the Mayo Clinic - <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/conversion-disorder/basics/definition/con-20029533>
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, www.missingkids.com, 1-800-THE-LOST
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder page on TeensHealth from Nemours - <http://teenshealth.org/en/teens/ptsd.html>
- RAINN | Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, www.rainn.org or 1-800-656-HOPE

Kells, Claire. *Girl Underwater*. New York: Dutton, 2015. 978-0-525-95493-4. 291 p. \$26.95. Gr. 10 and up.



Review

College sophomore and competitive swimmer Avery Delacorte is en route to Boston for Thanksgiving when her flight crashes into a remote lake in the Rocky Mountains. Against all odds, Avery, her teammate Colin Shea, and three young boys survive the impact and make it to shore. Scenes of their high-stakes alpine survival are intercut with Avery's recovery in the hospital, her efforts to return to campus and rejoin the team, and her unwillingness to face Colin and the boys again. Tension mounts with every page as the reader wonders, why is Avery so sure she let them all down out there? If she is meant to be with her college boyfriend, Lee, then why does her mind keep wandering back to Colin? And, can she swim again without memories of the ordeal overwhelming her? **THOUGHTS:** This debut novel by Philadelphia native Claire Kells could easily have been published as YA. With athletics, adventure, suspense, and spine-tingling romance, it's one of the best crossover books of 2015! The audiobook production is read by the wonderful Julia Whelan, who also lent her voice to *The Impossible Knife of Memory* and *I'll Give*

You the Sun, among **many** other titles. Playing a sample of this stellar audiobook would be a great way to interest students in the novel and audiobook alike!

Realistic Fiction

Amy V. Pickett, Ridley High School

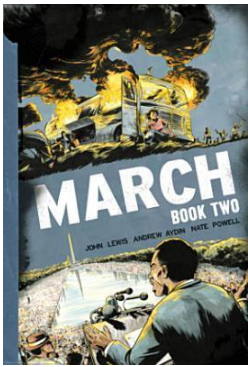
Book talk

Avery Delacorte is a sophomore and competitive member of the swim team at her California college. She is headed home to Boston for Thanksgiving when her flight crashes into a remote lake in the Rocky Mountains. Against all odds, Avery, her teammate Colin, and three young boys survive the impact and make it to shore. Far from civilization and not sure when (or if) they will be rescued, they group faces freezing temperatures, limited supplies, and a looming blizzard. Scenes of their high-stakes alpine survival are interwoven with Avery's recovery in the hospital, her attempts to return to campus and rejoin the swim team, and her unwillingness to face Colin and the boys again. Tension mounts with every page as you try to figure out why Avery is so sure she let them all down out there. A love triangle also develops as Avery's mind wanders back to Colin again and again, even though she truly believes that she's meant to be with her college boyfriend, Lee. Meanwhile, will she ever be able to swim again without memories of the ordeal overwhelming her? With athletics, adventure, suspense, and spine-tingling romance, Claire Kells' debut novel has it all! *Girl Underwater* by Claire Kells.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Claire Kells on Twitter - @kathkells
- Claire Kells' website - <http://www.clairekells.com/>
- Kells, Claire. "I'd Rather Drown Than Quit: Claire Kells on *Girl Underwater*." *Signature*. Penguin Random House. 3 Apr. 2015. Web. 18 Apr. 2016. <<http://www.signature-reads.com/2015/04/id-rather-drown-than-quit-claire-kells-on-girl-underwater/>>.
- "Learn Wilderness Survival Skills" with the help of BackpackingTheRockies.com - <http://backpackingtherockies.com/wilderness-survival-skills/>
- Penguin Random House's *Girl Underwater* page - <http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/317237/girl-underwater-by-claire-kells/9780525954934/>
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder page on TeensHealth from Nemours - <http://teenshealth.org/en/teens/ptsd.html>

Lewis, John. *March: Book 2*. Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions, 2015. 978-0-606-36547-5. \$19.95. Gr. 8-12.



Review

In this second installment of the planned graphic novel trilogy, Congressman John Lewis continues his incredible, heroic narrative of the fight for equal rights during the Civil Rights movement. Now travelling all over the south in the early 1960s, Lewis and the Freedom Riders focus on non-violent protests, only to find themselves countered with increasing hostility and violence in their “quest for human decency” (16). Juxtaposed against the inauguration of the United States’ first African-American President Barack Obama in 2009- almost 50 years later- Lewis recounts sit-in, stand-ins, bus boycotts, and ultimately, the 1963 March on Washington. Many of these protests led to vicious, brutal attacks on the peaceful Riders, as well as jail time for many, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The artwork by Nate Powell is particularly moving, adding incredible depth to John Lewis’s compelling narrative, while also humanizing many contested political figures.

THOUGHTS Readers of all ages should pick up this novel as well as *March: Book 1*, and it should be required reading for all history classes teaching about the Civil Rights movement.

323.1; Civil Rights

Vicki Schwoebel, Friends’ Central School

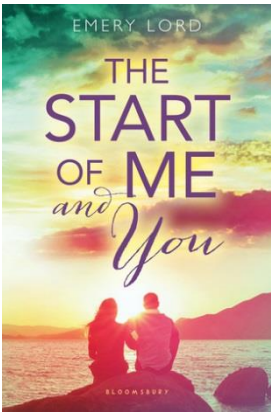
Book talk

The year is 1961. Where you live, you are constantly denied services because of the color of your skin. You cannot vote, you cannot eat in certain restaurants, or watch movies at certain theaters, and you definitely cannot sit in certain seats on a bus, all because of the skin you were born in. This is the reality for many Americans in the South, who face daily discrimination, hostility and violence just for being black. This amazing graphic novel is written by John Lewis, who is now a United States Congressman. But, just a little more than 50 years ago, he was denied many of the very same services we access today. Here he details his story- the sit-ins, stand-ins, and boycotts, which eventually lead to the nomination of America’s first black president, Barack Obama.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- The Book Archive. *John Lewis: The Civil Rights Movement - From Freedom Rider to Congressman (2013)*. YouTube. YouTube, 9 Jan. 2015. Web. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTEPfaaZEjA>>.
- “Civil Rights Exhibitions and Presentations.” *Exhibitions and Presentations - Civil Rights - Themed Resources*. Library of Congress, n.d. Web. <<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/themes/civil-rights/exhibitions.html>>.
- Goldsmith, Francisca. “A Teacher’s Guide to March Book Two.” *March Book Two Teachers Guide*. Top Shelf Comix, n.d. Web. <<http://www.topshelfcomix.com/guides/march-book-two-teachers-guide.pdf>>.
- Lewis, John. “Speech at the March on Washington.” 28 Aug. 1963. *Voices of Democracy*. N.p., n.d. Web. <<http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/lewis-speech-at-the-march-on-washington-speech-text/>>.
- *Rep. John Lewis’ Speech at the 1963 March on Washington*. Vimeo. Vimeo, LLC, n.d. Web. <<https://vimeo.com/70657416>>.

Lord, Emery. *The Start of You and Me*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015. 978-1-61963-359-9. 373p. \$17.99. Gr. 8-12.



Review

For the past year, Paige Hancock's life has been defined by one event--the drowning death of her first boyfriend, Aaron. Seemingly everywhere she goes she is the focus of pitying looks from her friends and neighbors. She feels guilty when she has a good time. As her junior year gets underway, Paige is resolved to move on and make some changes in her life. On her to-do list are things like joining a club at school and dating again--maybe her former crush Ryan Chase is available. When Paige joins the high school quiz bowl team, however, it's Ryan's cousin Max she finds herself connecting with and falling for. Paige must break through her fear of loss in order to enter into a relationship and begin living again. **THOUGHTS:** This sensitive portrayal of life, love, and loss will appeal to readers of Sarah Dessen, Morgan Matson, Deb Caletti and Susane Colasanti.

Realistic Fiction

Elizabeth Henry, Lampeter-Strasburg HS/MS

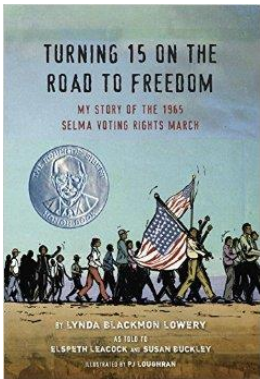
Book talk

Paige is tired of being *that* girl—the girl everyone stares at with pity. It's been that way for the last year, ever since her first boyfriend died in a swimming accident. So she decides to start to junior year by making some changes. Goal #1: Begin to date again. Her old crush Ryan Chase just happens to be available... Goal #2: Get involved. There's got to be a club at school that she could join, right? When Ryan's slightly nerdy cousin Max recruits Paige for the Quiz Bowl team, she finds herself developing connections and relationships in unexpected places. Will Paige be able to face her fears of loss and move beyond the tragedy that has seemingly defined her? To find out, pick up *The Start of Me and You* today.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- *Emery Lord* - <http://www.emerylord.com>
- *Teens Health: Grief and Loss* - <http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/someone-died.html>

Lowery, Lynda Blackmon. *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March*. New York: Dial Books, 2015. 978-0-8037-4123-2. 127 p. \$19.99. Gr. 7 and up.



Review

Lynda Blackmon Lowery was the youngest marcher on the 1965 Selma to Montgomery march for voting rights. In this book, she recounts this experience as well as other key events during the civil rights movement to which she was a witness, including speeches by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., nonviolent sit-ins, and Bloody Sunday. The text is broken up by both colorful illustrations and black and white photographs from the time period. The book also includes brief biographies of lesser known civil rights activists who lost their lives in the days before and after Bloody Sunday, as well as lyrics to a couple of freedom songs. The author's voice really comes out in the narrative, making the reader feel as though he or she is right there in the middle of the action. A solid addition to any middle or high school history collection. **THOUGHTS:** This would be an outstanding choice for reluctant readers. Not only is it a quick read, but it is very engaging and easy to follow. Fans of Melba Patillo Beals' *Warriors Don't Cry* would also enjoy this title.

323.1196; Civil Rights Movement

Julie Ritter, Montoursville Area High School

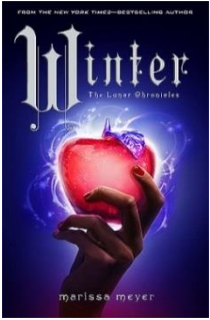
Book talk

Imagine this: you've just knelt down in the road to say a peaceful prayer when you hear several popping sounds. Suddenly, a cloud of gas is burning your lungs and your eyes. You can't see and you can't breathe. Before you can get up and run, someone comes up behind you and starts beating you. This was just one of Lynda Blackmon Lowery's terrifying experiences as a participant in the Selma to Montgomery march for voting rights. If you want to know what life was like as a black teenager during the 1960s, you can read about this experience and more in her book, *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom*.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Harmon, Rick. "Timeline: The Selma-to-Montgomery Marches." *USA Today*. USA Today, 6 Mar. 2015. Web. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/03/05/black-history-bloody-sunday-timeline/24463923/>
- *Selma*. Dir. Ava DuVernay. Perf. David Oyelowo, Tom Wilkinson, Carmen Ejogo, Giovanni Ribisi, Alessandro Nivola, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Tim Roth, and Oprah Winfrey. Paramount, 2014. DVD.
- "Voting Rights Act (1965)." *Our Documents*. National History Day, the National Archives and Records Administration, and USA Freedom Corps, n.d. Web. <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=100>

Meyer, Marissa. *Winter - The Lunar Chronicles*. New York: Feiwel and Friends, 2015. 978-0-312-64298-3. \$22.99. 823p. Grades 9 and up.



Review

Two words: emotional rollercoaster. That is the only way to describe Marissa Meyer's *Winter*, the conclusion to *The Lunar Chronicles*. Every time you think that Cinder and her ragtag team of revolutionaries are going to finally overthrow the evil Queen Levana of Luna, something happens. The group gets separated; someone is captured; someone is taken over by a Lunar using their brainwashing power. Every. Single. Time. All 800 plus pages. Every time you get hope; it is dashed away. This is action-packed and keeps readers on the edge of their seats until the very end.

THOUGHTS: This is a fantastic conclusion to the series. It's a fun and fresh take on classic fairy tales, complete with a happy ending; even if it rips your heart apart time and time again getting to the happy ending.

Fantasy

Laura Ward, Fox Chapel Area High School

Book talk:

Princess Winter has longed been the beloved Princess of Luna, even though her evil Step-Mother Queen Levanna has tried at every turn to dismiss her. When the missing Princess Selene, also known as Lin Cinder, returns to Luna to take her rightful spot on the throne, Winter knows that the right thing to do is help her long-lost childhood friend. Cinder again teams up with Cress, Scarlet, Wolf, Emperor Kai and Thorne along with the help of Princess Winter and her guard, Jacin. *Winter* is the conclusion to the *Lunar Chronicles* and brings everything a good final book should to the series. Be sure to check out *The Fairest* and *Stars Above* for more stories with these beloved, and not so loved, characters.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration:

- Other title by Marissa Meyer:
 - *Fairest*
 - *Stars Above*
 - *Heartless* (coming soon)
- Marissa Meyer's official website - <http://www.marissameyer.com/>
- Follow Marissa Meyer on Twitter - @marissa_meyer

Ness, Patrick. *The Rest of Us Just Live Here*. New York: Harper Teen, 2015. 978-0-06-240316-2. \$17.99. 317p. Gr. 9 and up.



Review

Life is what it should be for Mike Mitchell and his friends as they enter the final weeks of their senior year. Mike is preparing to go away to college in a different state despite his increasing OCD loops where he gets caught doing the same thing over and over (and over). His sister, Mel, seems to have her eating disorder under control as she heads to the East Coast to start the pre-med track in college, and their mom is launching her campaign for a spot in the US Congress. Work. Prom. Graduation. Everything is as normal as can be, except for the one strange occurrence that keeps happening: the “indie kids” keep inexplicably dying (“You know the ones with the black-rimmed glasses and the names straight out of the 1950’s, Finn and Dylan and Satchel and about three other Finns”). *The Rest of Us Just Live Here* is the story of the non-indie kids living everyday life, mixed in with the indie kids saving the world....again. **THOUGHTS:** The issues are real, but so is the hope that gets this group of tight-knit friends through the rough times. I love the indie kid parts mocking current dystopian/fantasy young adult fiction.

Realistic Fantasy

Laura Ward, Fox Chapel Area High School

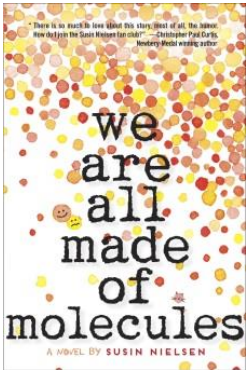
Book talk:

From Carnegie Medal winning author, Patrick Ness comes the powerful and thought-provoking *The Rest of Us Just Live Here*. What if you are not the chosen one? What if you are not one of the indie kids selected to save the world? You're not Katniss or one of the Finns. For some, graduating and going to prom is just a little more important than saving the world from the vampires....again. The quick-wit and satire may be hard for some younger students to grasp, but the struggles are real and readers will grow to love the characters. If you loved Joss Whedon's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* then you are sure to love *The Rest of Us Just Live Here*.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration:

- Follow Patrick Ness on Twitter - @PatrickNess
- Official Website - www.patrickness.com
- Patrick Ness in the news - www.theguardian.com/books/patrick-ness
- Other books by Patrick Ness:
 - *A Monster Calls*
 - *The Knife of Never Letting Go*
 - *Monsters and Men*
 - *More Than This*

Nielsen, Susin. *We Are All Made of Molecules*. New York: Wendy Lamb Books, 2015. 978-0-553-49686-4. 248p. \$16.99. Gr. 7 and up.



Review

Stewart and Ashley are complete opposites: Stewart is a nerdy 13-year-old boy who struggles to fit in socially, while Ashley is a beautiful 14-year-old girl who is at the top of the social ladder. When Stewart's father and Ashley's mother decide to move in together, both Stewart and Ashley are forced to make some adjustments. Ashley ignores Stewart's attempts to befriend her, and Stewart struggles to fit in at his new school until he tells Jared, a boy who is bullying him in gym class, that he is Ashley's stepbrother. When Stewart begins relaying messages to Ashley from Jared, her crush, she finally starts to tolerate Stewart. As their relationship grows, Stewart tries to convince Ashley both that Jared is a jerk and that she should mend relations with her estranged father. Narrated by both Ashley and Stewart in alternating chapters, this humorous book takes a lighthearted look at such serious topics as bullying, sexual orientation, dysfunctional family relationships, teenage drinking, and teenage sex. **THOUGHTS:** Because of Stewart's struggle to

fit in despite his endearing personality, I could see this book being a hit with fans of R.J. Palacio's *Wonder* or Sharon Draper's *Out of my Mind*. It might, however, be more suitable for mature readers, as there are scenes in which Jared tries to get Ashley to have sex with him as well as scenes involving teenage drinking. Because Stewart is a victim of bullies and Ashley's father is a homosexual, this book could spark insightful conversations on these topics and would therefore be an excellent addition to both bullying and LGBT collections.

Realistic Fiction

Julie Ritter, Montoursville Area High School

Book talk

Ashley's opinion of her family is simple: "My family is FUBAR." In case you're wondering, FUBAR is military slang for "Effed Up Beyond All Recognition"...except in the military they don't say "effed." She used to have the perfect family until her dad decided that he was gay and moved out. Now, her mom is moving Leonard (her new boyfriend) in, along with Stewart, his freakazoid of a son. Talk about unfair! How is Ashley supposed to maintain her popularity at school when "Spewart" is trying to befriend her? Is Ashley's life about to get even more FUBAR, or will the two eventually resolve their issues and develop a good relationship? You'll have to read this entertaining and heartfelt book, told from both Ashley's and Stewart's point of view, to find out.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- "Bullying." MedlinePlus. U.S. National Library of Medicine, 25 Mar. 2016. Web. <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/bullying.html>
- *National Bullying Prevention Center*. PACER Center. Web. <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/>
- *Stopbullying.gov*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Web. <https://www.stopbullying.gov/index.html>
- *Susin Nielsen*. Susin Nielsen, 2014. Web. <http://susinnielsen.com/>

Oakes, Stephanie. *The Sacred Lies of Minnow Bly*. New York: Dial Books, 2015. 978-0-803-74070-9. \$17.99. 398p. Gr. 9 and up.



Review

“I am a blood-soaked girl” (Oakes 1). Thus begins the story of Minnow Bly and her journey from the mountains of Montana to juvenile detention. Raised from a young age in the secluded, polygamous, Kevinian cult, Minnow remembers a world outside of the Community but has been taught (brainwashed) to believe that that world is evil and sinful, and only the Community and the Prophet can protect people from the Gentiles and the war between God and the unbelievers. After the Prophet receives a prophecy from God (also known as Charlie), Minnow’s fate is set; she is to become his next wife. When she refuses her fate and runs away, she is caught and her hands are chopped off as penance for her disobedience. Handless, she is returned to the “maidenhood” room to prepare for marriage, but during an evening of fellowship in Prophet Hall, Minnow’s mother releases her from seclusion, and she is able to escape into the woods. She runs to her best friend Jude’s cabin in the woods, where together, Jude and his father care for Minnow. As she heals, Minnow realizes that she must return to the community to save her twelve-year old sister, Minnow’s replacement as the Prophet’s new

wife. Caught trying to save a brainwashed Constance, Minnow and Jude are subjected to death by the community. Minnow survives, escapes to the world, beats a man to near death, and ends up in juvenile detention. Jude is beaten to death; his body disappearing as the Community is burned to the ground. Told through flashbacks and dialogue, the story of Minnow’s experience in the community unfolds as a story of strength, cruelty, friendship, fear, and love. **THOUGHTS:** This debut novel is exceptional. It received starred reviews from *Booklist*, *Publisher’s Weekly*, and *VOYA* and was a 2016 William C. Morris Award finalist. This is a must-have for all high school libraries.

Realistic Fiction; Suspense

Erin Parkinson, Lincoln JSHS, Ellwood City

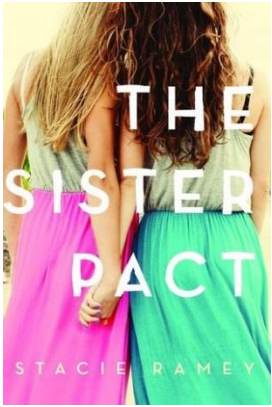
Book talk

Read the beginning of Chapter 59, page 393 – top of 394.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Jensen, Karen. “They Still Break Girls, Don’t They: A Reflection of *The Sacred Lies of Minnow Bly* for #FSYALit.” *School Library Journal*. Wordpress, 18 Jun. 2015. Web. <http://www.teenlibrariantoolbox.com/2015/06/they-still-break-girls-dont-they-a-reflection-on-the-sacred-lies-of-minnow-bly-for-fsyalit/>
- Interview with Stephanie Oakes - <https://thesweetsixteens.wordpress.com/2015/07/01/the-debut-club-an-interview-with-stephanie-oakes-author-of-the-sacred-lies-of-minnow-bly/>
- Stephanie Oakes Twitter - @StephanieEOakes
- Mason, Claire. *New Religious Movements*. Chicago: Raintree, 2004. Print.
- Linedecker, Clifford L. *Massacre at Waco, Texas*. New York: St. Martin’s Paperbacks, 1993. Print.
- O’Neal, Michael and J. Sydney Jones. *World Religions*. Ed. Marcia Merryman Means. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007. Print.
- Kiesbye, Stefan Ed. *Polygamy*. Detroit: Greenhaven Press, 2013. Print.
- Lewis, James R. *Contemporary World Issues: Cults*. 2nd ed. Denver: ABC Clio, 2007. Print.
- Herrington, Boze. “The Seven Signs You’re in a Cult.” *The Atlantic*. The Atlantic Monthly Group, 18 Jun. 2014. Web. <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2014/06/the-seven-signs-youre-in-a-cult/361400/>

Ramey, Stacie. *The Sister Pact*. Naperville: Sourcebooks Fire, 2015. 978-1-4926-2097-6. 310 p. \$9.99. Gr. 9-12.



Review

Allie is overcome with grief when her older sister Leah commits suicide. She can't understand why she was left behind. After all, she and Leah promised one another they would be together in life *and* in death, but Leah broke the pact. Now Allie is left to deal with their broken and dysfunctional family as well as cope with well-meaning peers. To help deal with the pain, Allie begins to self-medicate, mixing over the counter medication and pills to help get her through the days. As her life seemingly spins out of control, Allie discovers there were secrets that Leah kept from her, and that despite Leah's influence over her, she didn't really know her sister at all. Ultimately, Allie must come to terms with her loss and begin to move forward and live again. **THOUGHTS:** This is a potent story of betrayal, loss and grief, and how to forgive and move forward without the person who is no longer there. While the storyline and topics tackled are intense, readers will find themselves thinking about this thought-provoking story long after they have turned the final page.

Realistic Fiction

Elizabeth Henry, Lampeter-Strasburg HS/MS

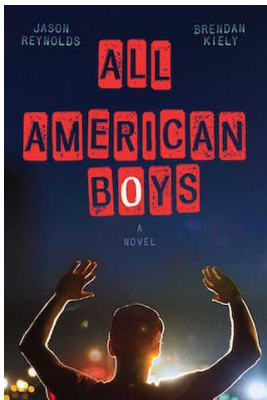
Book talk

Leah is gone. She was my older sister, my closest ally, my hero. We said we would always be together, but she broke our promise when she swallowed the bottle of pills and took her life. Now I'm left alone. Alone with an angry father and depressed mother. Alone to face the stares of our classmates. Alone to ask—why? What happened to Leah? Did I really even know her at all? My mother says I am strong, even if I might not think so. Will I be able to move forward and discover who I am without Leah? *The Sister Pact* by Stacie Ramey.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- *Stacie Ramey* - <http://www.stacieramey.com>
- *The Sister Pact: Discussion Guide* - http://www.sourcebooks.com/images/The_Sister_Pact_Discussion_Guide.pdf
- *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* - <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- *Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide* - <http://www.sptsusa.org/teens/>
- *Teens Health: Grief and Loss* - <http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/someone-died.html>

Reynolds, Jason and Brendan Kiely. *All-American Boys: A Novel*. New York: Athenum Books for Young Readers, 2015. 978-14814-63331. 316 p. \$17.99 Gr. 7-12.



Review

Two young men attend the same high school but don't really know each other or the depth of racism in their community until the Friday night they they're both near the same corner shop as they head to different parties. A white woman trips over African-American Rashad, who is misunderstood by an on-duty police officer as assaulting the woman, stealing a bag of chips, and then resisting arrest. White "all-American" Quinn is a reluctant witness who flees the scene, then struggles to believe that police officer Paul Galluzzo, father figure to him since his own father died in Afghanistan, could be responsible, or indeed, could be *wrong* in his assessment. Rashad is hospitalized, faces his father's distrust and his brother's anger at the event, and deals with physical pain and inner turmoil. Internal bleeding keeps him hospitalized, and someone paints a message on the school steps that goes viral: "Rashad is absent again today." Few people know the full story, but a video shot on a cellphone shows the attack's brutality. Now Paul's brother, and Quinn's friend, must defend him. The basketball team, cautioned by coach to "keep their emotions at the door, play on the floor," functions as a reflection of the community around them, increasingly ready to erupt at any time. As the days go on, the tension mounts and both Rashad and Quinn are in a no-win situation.

THOUGHTS: Well-written by two authors (Jason Reynolds voices Rashad; Brendan Kiely voices Quinn) and perfectly timed to launch much-needed discussions about racial profiling, police brutality, and racism in America, this works well with Kekla Magoon's *How It Went Down*, a similar novel told from multiple points of view, where the "truth" comes down to point of view. Highly recommended for middle and high school.

Realistic Fiction

Melissa Scott, Shenango High School

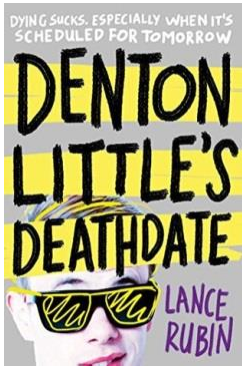
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Two young men attend the same high school but don't really know each other or the depth of racism in their community until the Friday night they they're both near the same corner shop as they head to different parties. A white woman trips over African-American Rashad, who is misunderstood by an on-duty police officer as assaulting the woman, stealing a bag of chips, and then resisting arrest. White "all-American" Quinn is a reluctant witness who flees the scene, then struggles to believe that police officer Paul Galluzzo, father figure to him since his own father died in Afghanistan, could be responsible, or indeed, could be *wrong* in his assessment. Rashad is hospitalized, faces his father's distrust and his brother's anger at the event, and deals with physical pain and inner turmoil. Internal bleeding keeps him hospitalized, and someone paints a message on the school steps that goes viral: "Rashad is absent again today." Few people know the full story, but a video shot on a cellphone shows the attack's brutality. Now Paul's brother, and Quinn's friend, must defend him. The basketball team, cautioned by coach to "keep their emotions at the door, play on the floor," functions as a reflection of the community around them, increasingly ready to erupt at any time. As the days go on, the tension mounts and both Rashad and Quinn are in a no-win situation.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Bates, Karen Grigsby. "All American Boys": A Young Adult Novel about a Police Beating and a Hard Choice." <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/11/25/457168819/all-american-boys-a-young-adult-book-about-a-police-beating-and-a-hard-choice>
- Brown, Lesley-Ann. "The Graceful Power of Novelist Jason Reynolds." *NBCnews.com*. 24 Aug. 2015. Web. <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/graceful-power-novelist-jason-reynolds-n399721>
- Magoon, Kekla. *How It Went Down*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2014. Print.
- Reading Group Guide. http://books.simonandschuster.com/All-American-Boys/Jason-Reynolds/9781481463331/reading_group_guide#rgg

Rubin, Lance. *Denton Little's Deathdate*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015. 978-0-553-49696-3. 337p. \$17.99. Gr. 9 and up.



Review

Denton Little has had his whole life to prepare for his death at age 17. Thanks to advanced DNA technology, almost everyone knows the date on which they will die, but not the time or how. Denton's always vowed to live a normal life in spite of his early deathdate, but as it approaches, he finds that isn't going to happen. There's a complicated love triangle between his girlfriend and his best friend's sister. There's a purple splotch on his leg that is spreading at an alarming rate. There's a mysterious stranger who shows up at his funeral (held the day before his death) to warn him to "be careful." And, he suspects there are secrets about his mother, whose deathdate was his birthdate, that his family hasn't been telling him. **THOUGHTS:** Denton's hilarious outlook and the rapid pacing will hook students. A cliffhanger ending promises a sequel. Recommend to fans of John Green, as Rubin's characters possess a similar brand of humor and friendships. John Corey Whaley's comic science fiction novel *Noggin* and Neal Shusterman's page-turning *Unwind* series

would make great pairings.

Science Fiction; Humor

Kristen Rowe, Plum Senior High School

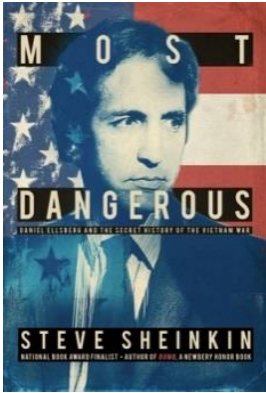
Book talk

What if you knew the exact day you were going to die? Denton Little has had his whole life to prepare for his death at age 17. But as the date approaches, he realizes he has a lot of unresolved issues. There's a complicated love triangle between his girlfriend and his best friend's sister. There's a purple splotch on his leg that is spreading at an alarming rate. There's a mysterious stranger who shows up at his funeral (held the day before his death) to warn him to "be careful." And he suspects there are secrets about his mother, whose deathdate was his birthdate, that his family hasn't been telling him. Will he have the chance to solve these mysteries?

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Lance Rubin's website - lancerubin.com
- Lance Rubin talks about his novel - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuNXCMDpL9w>
- Lance Rubin sings about his book - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5w8zUw-YERs>

Sheinkin, Steve. *Most Dangerous: Daniel Ellsberg and the Secret History of the Vietnam War*. Roaring Brook Press, 2015. 978-159643-9528. \$19.99. 370 p. Gr. 7 and up.



Review

How does an attitude shift? In the early 1960s, Daniel Ellsberg was a “cold warrior” dutifully working for the U.S. government as a data analyst and committed to defeating communism. Sheinkin shows how Ellsberg changed his point of view to become the leak of the Pentagon Papers, spearheaded by Henry Kissinger, “seven thousand pages of documentary evidence of lying, by four presidents and their administrations, over twenty years.” Ellsberg spent nearly two years in Vietnam, collecting data to build the government’s case for war, but the hopelessness of the American position there, combined with the misrepresentation of the war’s “success,” gradually led Ellsberg to realize that the war was absolutely wrong on every level. The history is perfectly told; readers can understand the differing viewpoints and feel the explosion that is to come. **THOUGHTS:** Eye-opening on many levels, this book is expertly researched and expertly told from start to finish; it includes Works Cited, Sources Notes, Credits, Index. *Most Dangerous* earned seven starred reviews, was a National Book Award finalist, a New York

Times Notable Children’s Book, and a Publisher’s Weekly Best Book of the Year.

Fantastic, enthralling nonfiction that once again proves Sheinkin one of the best writers of YA nonfiction today, this story will help students to understand the background behind decades of complicated governmental actions. It will also push them to consider the current role of whistleblowers (Edward Snowden) and the support and backlash they receive. Students aren’t likely to know the name Daniel Ellsberg, but a solid push from librarians and teachers will get this into the right hands. This could be used in American History, AP Government, or Civics courses to explain the inner workings of government agencies and the “fall” of U.S. government’s trustworthiness in the eyes of the general public. An added bonus is that students can interview an older generation about their remembrances of the Vietnam era, Daniel Ellsberg, and/or the Pentagon Papers.

959.7 Vietnam War

Melissa Scott, Shenango High School

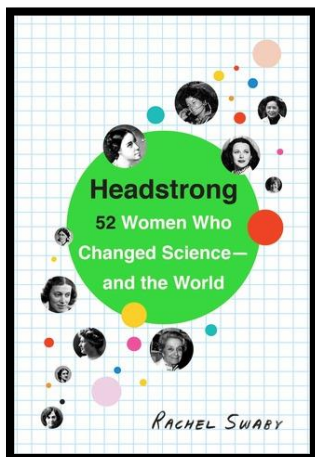
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Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Book Trailer: <https://www.bookish.com/articles/lies-and-legos-exclusive-book-trailer-reveal-for-most-dangerous/>
- Sheinkin’s website: <http://stevesheinkin.com/>

Swaby, Rachel. *Headstrong: 52 Women Who Changed Science - and the World*. New York: Broadway Books, 2015. 978-0-06-222410-1. 273 p. \$16.00. Gr. 9 and up.



Review

The story behind *Headstrong: 52 Women Who Changed Science — And the World* by Rachel Swaby almost sounds like fiction. In 2013, an obituary for award-winning rocket scientist Yvonne Brill opened with this now-infamous line: “She made a mean beef stroganoff.” While that may be true, is it really the most fitting way to memorialize a woman who was honored with the 2011 National Medal of Technology and Innovation? Now, thanks to Swaby’s wonderful new book, we will all know a little more about the many women (52, to be exact) who have impacted the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math. Swaby has included women whose stories combine the “twin pillars” of achievement and narrative – there’s a great story embedded within each profile. She also opted to cover only scientists whose life’s work has been completed (in other words, these women are no longer with us). There’s a 3-5 page profile of each woman, contextualizing her work in her field with world events of the time; for example, many Jewish scientists fled Germany during the 1930s to pursue research positions elsewhere. Some of the names are familiar, such as Rachel Carson, Sally Ride, Florence Nightingale,

and Hedy Lamarr. Though the names of others may be lesser known, the scientific ripples of their discoveries are fascinating to read about. **THOUGHTS:** I immediately had *Headstrong* pegged as a worthwhile read, but Swaby’s spirited writing style was a pleasant surprise. I found myself reaching for this book again and again instead of picking up one of the *many* novels on my to-be-read list!

Science (509.2)

Amy V. Pickett, Ridley High School

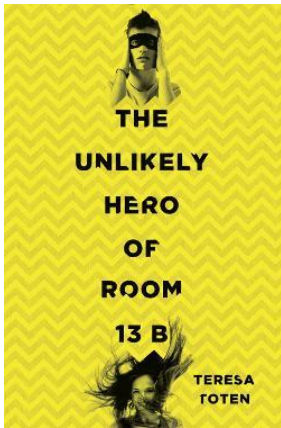
Book talk

In 2013, an obituary for Yvonne Brill opened with this now-infamous line: “She made a mean beef stroganoff.” While that may be true, is it really the most fitting way to memorialize an award-winning rocket scientist? Rachel Swaby didn’t think so. Now, thanks to *Headstrong: 52 Women Who Changed Science — And the World*, we will all know a little more about the many women who pioneered the fields of medicine, biology, genetics, physics, astronomy, math, technology, and invention. Included here are women whose stories combine the “twin pillars” of achievement and narrative; there’s a great story embedded in each 3-5 page profile. Some of the names are familiar, such as Rachel Carson, Sally Ride, Florence Nightingale, and Hedy Lamarr. Though the names of others may be lesser known, the scientific ripples of their discoveries are fascinating to read about. Challenge yourself to read one profile each week (if you can manage to put the book down after just one chapter) and see if this entertaining, eye-opening book doesn’t inspire you to be a little more headstrong in all the right ways! *Headstrong* by Rachel Swaby.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Rachel Swaby on Twitter - @rachelswaby
- Rachel Swaby’s website - <https://rachelswaby.wordpress.com/>
- *Headstrong*'s Bibliography has extensive lists of resources on each woman featured in its pages
- *Huffington Post* article about the obituary of Yvonne Brill - http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/31/ny-times-yvonne-brill-obituary-criticism_n_2988690.html
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math: Education for Global Leadership page from the U.S. Department of Education - <http://www.ed.gov/stem>
- STEM integration in K-12 Education video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1PJ48simeE>
- "What Is STEM Education?" article from *LiveScience* - <http://www.livescience.com/43296-what-is-stem-education.html>

Toten, Teresa. *The Unlikely Hero of Room 13B*. New York: Delacorte Press, 2015. 978-0-553-50786-7. \$17.99. 289p. Gr. 8 and up.



Review

Adam Spencer Ross. Meds: Anafranil 25 mg 1 x per day; Ativan as needed 4-6. Primary presenting compulsions: ordering, counting, magical thinking (re: clearing rituals).

Adam struggles with the same issues other 15-year-olds encounter: divorced parents, a challenging step-brother, and making friends. He also has more critical issues including obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and a mother who hoards mass quantities of accoutrements. With the help of his small group therapy sessions and individual counseling with Chuck, Adam believes he's adequately coping with life. Then enter Robyn Plummer, and Adam's overwhelming desire to save her compels him to follow her home, through the cemetery, where he learns her mother committed suicide. While Robyn is older and incredibly beautiful, she is drawn to Adam, someone she can finally confide in with honesty. Masked in the superhero identities chosen during group

session, Batman (Adam), Robin (Robyn), and the rest of the lovable group of mavericks venture to town, exploring the realm of the Catholic Church, friendships, and first love. Adam truly believes he can save Robyn, but suddenly he's getting worse. In order to be a hero, he will have to sacrifice his beloved and be candid with the people who care about him. Adam is an incredibly charming and endearing character. Readers will cheer for him as he helps his friends overcome problems and comforts his step-brother "Sweetie" during recurring meltdowns. His indelible strength and compassion for others make him simply irresistible. Readers will learn more about the complexities and hindrances of OCD, the poignant intervals of debilitating agony relieved with surprising moments of clarity and humorous witticism. **THOUGHTS:** Fans of John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* will enjoy Toten's latest book.

Realistic Fiction

Christine Massey, JWP Middle School

Book talk

"The boy inhaled as the door opened. It was as if he knew. The girl stepped into the room, and within the space of a heartbeat, he was lost." Adam never thought he'd fall in love. With divorced parents, a lovable yet zany step-brother, and OCD, he has enough to deal with on a daily basis. But when Robyn enters his support group, he vows to protect her, to play batman to her Robyn, and devote himself to her forever. He thought he was in control, protected from his other compulsions, but a happily-ever-ending may not work out like he dreamed.

Resources for Further Reading and Exploration

- Teacher Resource:
 - https://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/UnlikelyHeroRm13B_DiscussGd_FIN.pdf
 - http://www.teresatoten.com/downloads/UnlikelyHero_ReadingGuide.pdf
- Living with OCD - <https://iocdf.org/>