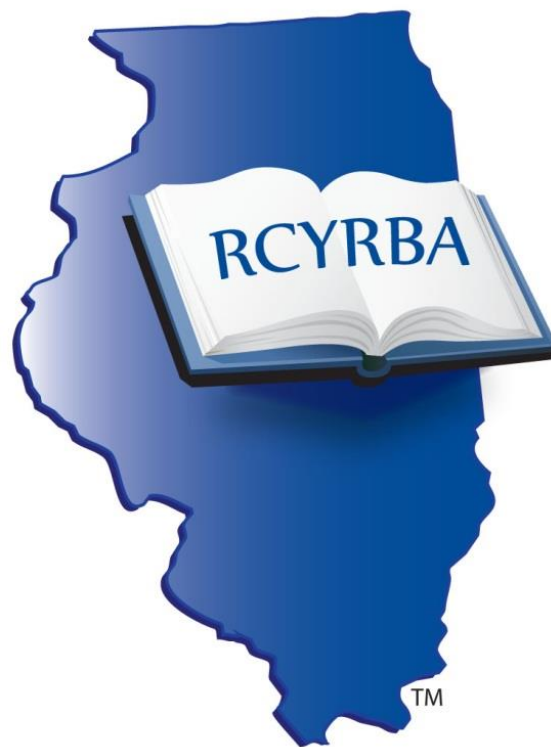


# LET'S TALK ABOUT BOOKS

Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award List 2016

Suggestions for Use



Edited by Ellen Popit

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## Introduction

The Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award (RCYRBA) is now celebrating its twenty-ninth year! Twenty titles are nominated each year, and any students in grades four through eight in participating Illinois schools and public libraries who have read or heard three books may vote for the most outstanding book in February. The winner is announced in March. Children are encouraged to read the books on this list and share their thoughts and reactions with others, thus making the reading experience more enjoyable.

This packet of materials is meant to be a guide for librarians and teachers to help children enjoy and interpret what they read. It is designed as a beginning step when looking in depth at the books on the Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award Master List for 2016. It is hoped that the packet will start creative thoughts flowing in librarians, teachers, and children, who are trying to read books enthusiastically and with joy. All the materials developed are meant to be used "with" children and not given to them in isolation.

The following suggestions for the twenty titles on the 2016 RCYRBA Master List were developed by a group of librarians and teachers. Information is provided in nine areas: a summary, questions for students, journal starters, and activities designed to extend the book into other curricular areas, reading recommendations, book trailers, promotional booktalks, related materials, web sites, and book review citations.

**Summary:** The summary provides an overview of the book for anyone who has not read a particular title.

**Questions:** The questions included are primarily open-ended with neither a right nor a wrong answer. Since readers' reactions to stories are different, they should be encouraged to express different points of view. The questions encourage students to relate reading to their everyday lives and are designed to promote more questions and discussion as a result. Questions can be given to students when they begin to read the book so they can think about their responses as they read and focus on the ideas that the author is trying to convey.

**Journal Starters:** These questions are designed to engage students in the writing process and to encourage them to put themselves in situations presented in the books.

**Activities:** There are a wide variety of activities included to suit different age and interest levels. Some are designed for groups, others for individuals.

**Interest Levels:** Interest levels are included to help librarians and teachers decide whether or not a particular title will be of interest to a group of students or to a particular individual. The recommendation is only made with consideration for grades four through eight, which are the

grades included in the award. Occasionally, a caution is listed when a sensitive topic is included that may cause concern in some communities.

**Book Trailers:** Online “commercials” for books on this list have been added when available.

**Booktalks:** Booktalks have been added for the convenience of librarians and teachers who would like a prepared piece to use for book promotion. They are short, sometimes including a passage from the book, since hearing the voice of the author is often important when students are deciding whether or not to read a specific title.

**Read-Alikes:** A listing of related books that will aid in extending literature activities. Titles were suggested by teachers and librarians who have had experience with them. This list is not exhaustive and materials have not been screened for literary merit. These related books are divided into three general categories: additional books by the same author, topics which are mentioned in the story and books which are similar. Because of their broad appeal throughout the curriculum, picture books are also included in this listing.

**Web Sites:** Sites were selected as a way to expand the activities and learning of the students. Some sites are for author information and others for organizations, locations or topics related to the book. If links to .pdf files take a long time to load, it is often easier to copy and paste them into your browser.

**Book Review Citations:** Book review citations have been included to aid teachers and librarians in case a challenge to any of the books on the list should occur.

This activities packet has been edited with care from materials developed by the contributors. The Rebecca Caudill Young Readers’ Book Award Committee would appreciate comments and suggestions concerning the packet. Please direct communications to anyone on the committee or to the editors of the packet.

Developing this packet was a challenging, invigorating experience for the participants. Enjoy!

**Cavanaugh, Nancy J. *This Journal Belongs to Ratchet*. Sourcebooks 2013.**

**SUMMARY:**

Ratchet's story unfolds in the journal she uses for her homeschool Language Arts writing assignments. At 11, it is just Ratchet and her eccentric mechanic/environmentalist dad against the world. She longs to be *normal*. As she struggles through one embarrassing situation after another, she learns to write her own definition of *normal*.

**QUESTIONS:**

Do you think Ratchet is fair to her dad?

Do you think Ratchet's dad is fair to her?

How does Ratchet's discovery of the box change everything?

Do you think Ratchet's dad should have kept the secret about her mother from her? Why or why not?

More discussion questions are included on author's website, educator's guide, and blog post listed below.

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

If I were in Ratchet's shoes, I would.....

Having a friend like Ratchet would mean....

My most embarrassing moment was....

I would define normal as.....

**ACTIVITIES:**

Have students keep a year-long journal.

Have students create covers for their individual journals.

Have a DIY day. Each student can teach a class about a topic or skill at which they are good.

Have students pick an environmental issue in their own community to assist or start up.

Spearhead a campaign and get the whole school involved.

Write a thank you note to a parent, grandparent, or other adult who contributes to a student's life in a special way.

Arrange for a go-kart demonstration.

**INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 4-5**

## BOOKTRAILERS:

Nancy Cavanaugh's Trailer: <https://youtu.be/mwNTHB6GoZA>  
Fork Shoals School: <https://youtu.be/1w0RCP0fskg>  
Black Eyed Susan Award: <https://youtu.be/Wwgu0psnYv4>

## BOOKTALK:

Ratchet wants what most 11 year old girls want to be *normal*, cool, and have lots of friends. Unfortunately, Ratchet is homeschooled and has a dad who is a little eccentric. These two factors make it difficult for her to make friends. She has a plan which she reveals to readers through journal entries. The plan changes throughout the story as Ratchet (aka Rachel) learns about the true meaning of normal. Pick up the book and follow Ratchet's journey!

## READ-ALIKES:

Amato, Mary. *The Naked Mole Rat Letters*. Holiday House, 2005.  
Balliett, Blue. *Hold Fast*. Scholastic Press, 2013.  
Bauer, Joan. *Almost Home*. Viking Press, 2012.  
Cavanaugh, Nancy J. *Always Abigail*. Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2014.  
Connor, Leslie. *Waiting for Normal*. HarperCollins Children's Books, 2008.  
Fitzmaurice, Kathryn. *The Year the Swallows Came Early*. Harper, 2009.  
Korman, Gordon. *Schooled*. Hyperion Books for Children, 2007.  
LeFleur, Suzanne. *Love, Aubrey*. Wendy Lamb Books, 2009.  
Lord, Cynthia. *Rules*. Scholastic Press, 2006.

## RELATED WEB SITES:

Nancy Cavanaugh: <http://www.nancyjcavanaugh.com>  
Educator's Guide: <http://www.nancyjcavanaugh.com/PDFs/Ratchet%20Educator's%20Guide.pdf1.pdf>  
How to Build a Go-Kart: <http://www.instructables.com/id/How-to-design-and-build-a-go-kart>

## REVIEWS:

*Booklist*: 109(May 1, 2013)  
*Kirkus*: (March 15, 2013)  
*Publishers Weekly*: 260(March 11, 2013)

**Cody, Matthew. *Will in Scarlet*. Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2013.**

### **SUMMARY:**

Author Matthew Cody recounts the amazing beginnings of the Robin Hood legend during the reign of King Richard the Lionhearted in England. Will Shackley is the thirteen year old son of a nobleman and heir to the impressive Shackley House. While Will's father is off with King Richard fighting the Crusades, power struggles over the rule of England arise at home. Will is forced to flee the safety of Shackley House and, in the process, becomes involved with a lively band of criminals.

### **QUESTIONS:**

Give examples of why Will was considered mischievous.  
How is the nickname Wolfslayer earned?  
What events led Will to injure Sir Guy's manservant? Was he justified in his actions?  
Why must Will conceal his identity?  
Describe how the Merry Men treat Will at first. Why do you think they act this way?  
How does Will earn the trust of the Merry Men?  
Explain which of the Merry Men is most important to the group's survival.  
Explain how Much's character changes throughout the novel?  
What was the most interesting conversation between characters in the book?  
What do you think was the most difficult challenge for Will in the story?  
Describe what happens at the end of the book. Do you think this is a set up for a sequel?  
Each chapter begins with a quote. Which is the most telling of the character?

### **JOURNAL STARTERS:**

If I could have lived in the Middle Ages, I would want to be a...  
The character I most identify with in this story is .....

### **ACTIVITIES:**

Create a sketch of Shackley castle based on the information in the book.  
Select a picture of Robin Hood and compare and contrast the image to the characters in *Will in Scarlet*. Cite textual evidence to support your reasoning.  
Create a Coat of Arms for Will.  
Choose a medieval name that begins with the same letter as your own at <http://www.top-100-baby-names-search.com/medieval-boy-names.html> or <http://www.top-100-baby-names-search.com/medieval-girl-names.html> .  
Play a medieval game <http://www.modaruniversity.org/Games.htm> .



**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 5-7

**BOOKTRAILER:**

**South Dakota Young Adult Reading Program:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxQXgVy2Jew>

**BOOKTALK:**

Buckle your saddles – you’re in for quite a ride! This swashbuckling novel is a convincing interpretation of how the legendary Robin Hood and his Merry Men came to be. Young Will is the son of Lord Shackley, a nobleman off fighting the Crusades with King Richard. Lord Shackley’s brother, Geoff, is trying his best to train the mischievous teen to become a Lord in his father’s absence. After King Richard and his men are captured and held for ransom, power struggles erupt over the rule of England. Will is forced to flee and take up residence in the dangerous Sherwood Forest where he meets up with a group of bandits. Hiding his true identity, Will must earn the trust of the group if he has any chance to survive. With the Sheriff of Nottingham actively looking for them, the group must cleverly avoid capture. Will the group ultimately band together and revenge the takeover of Shackley House? Read and find out.

**READ-ALIKES:**

Avi. *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*. Disney-Hyperion, 2002

Malone, Patricia. *The Legend of Lady Ilena*. Delacorte. 2002.

Morris, Gerald. *The Squire’s Tale*. Thorndike, 2000.

Pyle, Howard. *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. Scribner, 1954.

Springer, Nancy. *Rowan Hood: Outlaw Girl of Sherwood Forest*. Puffin Books, 2002.

**RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Matthew Cody:** <http://www.matthewcody.com>

**A Beginner’s Guide to Robin Hood:** <http://www.boldoutlaw.com/robbeg/index.html>

**The Real Robin Hood:** <http://www.history.com/topics/british-history/robin-hood>

**Roger Miller’s “Oo-De-Lally” song:** [http://lyrics.wikia.com/Roger\\_Miller:Oo-De-Lally](http://lyrics.wikia.com/Roger_Miller:Oo-De-Lally)

**REVIEWS:**

*Booklist:* 110(October 15, 2013): 54

*Kirkus:* (September 1, 2013)

*School Library Journal:* (October 2013)

**Engle, Margarita. *Mountain Dog*. Henry Holt and Company, 2013.**

**SUMMARY:**

Tony is eleven years old and his mother has been sent to prison for teaching pit bulls how to fight and profiting from those fights. Tony is sent to live in the Sierra Nevada Mountains with his great-uncle Tio whom he has never met. His life with Tio and his search and rescue dog, Gabe, is very different from his life with his mom in Los Angeles, California. In the mountains, he experiences the search and rescue of lost travelers, goes to school in a one room school house and learns how to love and trust once again.

**QUESTIONS:**

What are trail angels and trail magic?

Why do you think Tony's Mom refuses to see him when he visits the prison?

Why does Tony "smell like sorrow?"

How is a search and rescue mission organized?

What are the requirements to be a volunteer to help with search and rescue missions?

What is the difference between area and trailing searches?

Tony is a volunteer victim. What does that mean?

What is a GPS and what do the letters stand for?

What is the difference between a black bear and a grizzly bear?

How did living with Tio and Gabe change Tony's life and his feelings for people and animals?

When selecting a puppy for a search and rescue dog, what does one look for?

What name does Tony choose for the new puppy and why?

What happens to Tony at the end of the story?

What are some of the skills that Tony learned to survive in the wilderness and what he was told to do if he got lost?

**JOURNAL STARTER:**

I would like to be a search and rescue volunteer because . . .

.

**ACTIVITIES:**

Invite someone who works with rescue dogs to demonstrate what the animals can do.

Invite a forest ranger to visit and give a presentation.

Arrange a small hike with an experienced guide.

Learn about Pit Bulls and Chocolate Labs. Research the dogs' temperaments.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 4-5

## BOOKTRAILERS:

**Official Book Trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QSVA7SJAEs>

**Texas Bluebonnet Award:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3f2z0\\_lwMjc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3f2z0_lwMjc)

## BOOKTALK:

Have you ever felt lonely, that you did not belong, afraid and discouraged? Have you ever been lost in the wilderness? Read Margarita Engle's story about *Mountain Dog* and read about Tony, an eleven year old boy who has these feelings and how a dog named Gabe and his great-uncle, Tio helped to change his life.

## READ-ALIKES:

Barrow, Randi. *Saving Zasha*. Scholastic, 2011

Kadohata, Cynthia. *Cracker: The Best Dog in Vietnam*. Atheneum, 2007

Mikaelsen, Ben. *Touching Spirit Bear*. HarperCollins, 2001

Paulsen, Gary. *Hatchet*. Simon & Schuster, 1987.

## RELATED WEBSITES:

**Margaritaengle.com:** <http://www.margaritaengle.com>

**Texas Bluebonnet Award:** <https://texasbluebonnetaward2016.wordpress.com/mountain-dog>

**LYRC Study Guide:** <http://www.state.lib.la.us/literacy-and-reading/louisiana-young-readers-choice/2016-lyrc-3-5-study-guides-and-additional-resources>

**Pacific Crest Trail Association:** <http://www.pcta.org>

**Search and Rescue Dogs of the United States:** <http://www.sardogsus.org>

## REVIEWS:

*Booklist*: 109(August 1, 2013): 84

*Kirkus*: (June 15, 2013)

*School Library Journal*: 59(September 1, 2013)

**Evans, Richard Paul. *Michael Vey: The Prisoner of Cell 25*. Simon Pulse, 2011**

**SUMMARY:**

Michael Vey and his mother have moved to Idaho in order to hide the fact that, in addition to having Tourette's syndrome, he has the power to produce electric surges. Michael becomes friends with Taylor, a cheerleader who also has special powers. She has the power to "reboot" people. When the school principal informs Michael that he has been awarded a scholarship to the Elgen Academy, Michael's mother panics. It seems that Michael and Taylor are special people indeed. Two of the seventeen babies who survived during a time of testing an experimental medical instrument. Fifteen have already been rounded up and now Michael and Taylor make the group complete. However, now the goal is to create a group of superior beings. Michael's mother is kidnapped and his quest to find her will seal the outcome of the Prisoner of Cell 25.

**QUESTIONS:**

Why do Michael and his mother move to Idaho?  
What happened when the bullies attacked Michael for snitching?  
What does the term "reboot" mean?  
What superpowers did Zeus and Nichelle have?  
Dr. Hatch made the statement: "Blood oils social progress." What does that mean?  
What is the definition of purgatory?  
How does Ian see?  
Who does Dr. Hatch refer to as GPs?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

If I could reboot myself, I would....  
The superpower I would choose would be the ability to...

**ACTIVITIES:**

Research Tourette's syndrome  
Discuss bullying with a counselor.  
Draw the members of the Electroclan  
Experiment with static electricity.  
Watch some videos of X Games Motocross  
Create an illustration of Cell 25.  
Define mutiny.  
Predict what will happen in the sequel to this book.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 7-8

**BOOKTRAILERS:**

Richard Paul Evans: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=piiKX0Gz9DI>

International School of the Sacred Heart: <https://vimeo.com/64615330>

**BOOKTALK:**

Just trying to be normal is a struggle for anyone. Michael Vey has some extra challenges. First of all he has Tourette's syndrome but most of the time he can keep that under control. What is mysterious is the power he has to produce electrical surges. Through a series of moves and trying to fly under the grid, Michael has kept this secret until he is spotted by Taylor. Taylor has the power to "reboot" people. The two begin to discover their similarities and become friends. But on the night that Taylor and Michael's mom are both kidnapped everything changes. Michael needs to get to them and Taylor needs to uncover what is really going on at the Elgen Academy and what will be the fate of the Prisoner of Cell 25.

**READ-ALIKES:**

Cody, Matthew. *Powerless*. Knopf, 2009.

Dashner, James. *The Maze Runner*, Delacorte, 2009.

Flanagan, John. *The Ruins of Gorlan*, Philomel, 2005.

Lore, Pittacus. *I Am Number Four* Harper, 2010

Patterson, James. *The Angel Experiment*. Little, Brown and Company, 2005.

**RELATED WEB SITES:**

Curriculum Guide: <http://www.michaelvey.com/pdfs/MichaelVey-TeachersGuide.pdf>

LYRC Curriculum Guide: <http://www.state.lib.la.us/literacy-and-reading/louisiana-young-readers-choice/2014-lyrc-6-8th-grade-study-guides->

Reading Group Guide: [http://books.simonandschuster.com/Michael-Vey/Richard-Paul-Evans/Michael-Vey/9781442468122/reading\\_group\\_guide](http://books.simonandschuster.com/Michael-Vey/Richard-Paul-Evans/Michael-Vey/9781442468122/reading_group_guide)

What Is Electricity: <https://learn.sparkfun.com/tutorials/what-is-electricity>

Tourette Syndrome: [http://kidshealth.org/teen/diseases\\_conditions/brain\\_nervous/tourette.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/diseases_conditions/brain_nervous/tourette.html)

**REVIEW:**

*Publishers Weekly*: (August 15, 2011)

**Frost, Helen. Hidden. Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2011.**

**SUMMARY:**

When both girls were eight years old, Dara's father was involved in a robbery and stole a car. He didn't know that Wren was in the back seat. For two nights and a day, Wren hid in the garage in which Dara's dad stored the car. Dara's parents couldn't find Wren, but Dara did and provided her with food, water and an escape route. When Wren escaped, it was her testimony that put Dara's dad in prison.

This might have been all behind them, but six years later, the girls find themselves bunkmates at Camp Oakwood and all the old feelings and memories come rushing back to both of them. Emotions that can break either girl or make each of them stronger.

**QUESTIONS:**

What led Dara to feed Wren and help her escape from the garage?

How did Wren Abbott steal Dara's father?

How did Dara treat her Mom after her Dad went to prison? Why?

What is the significance of the different styles in which the voices of Dara and Wren are written?

Do you think that Wren has really moved past what happened to her when she was eight?

Why do you think that Dara is interested in getting to know Wren better at camp?

What was the significance of the mutual apologies between the girls after their game of "Drown Last?"

Was the information that Jeremy shared about his Dad important to Dara?

Why did Dara keep the picture album from Wren's Mom's purse?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

If I had been in Wren's shoes.....

To me, forgiveness means....

**BOOK TRAILERS:**

Lone Star Book Award: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkTKNXv94Ag>

Trailer by Jessica Haseltine: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0YWpX3mZ3s>

**BOOKTALK:**

Some things are too horrible to be discussed. Some things should never be experienced. But Wren can't escape those things--her mother has been shot and Wren is hidden in the getaway car. Unknown to the criminal, Wren hides in the car until she finds a way to escape. Also unknown to the criminal is the fact that his daughter is providing Wren with food, water AND an

escape route. It might all be behind them until Wren and Dara find themselves cabin mates at camp years later. How do you think the rest of the story unfolds? Read *Hidden* and discover what people these young women have turned out to be.

### **ACTIVITIES:**

Arrange for a Lifesaving Demonstration.

Participate in a safety drill dealing with protection from strangers.

Create a “Wanted” poster for Wren Abbot.

Draw a picture of each girl.

Ask a professional to discuss the issue of domestic violence.

Research what type of support services are available for the children and families of those in prison.

Have a bonfire and write on stones in the way the campers did.

### **RELATED TITLES:**

Avi. *Nothing But the Truth*. Orchard, 1991.

Frost, Helen. *Diamond Willow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008.

### **RELATED WEBSITES:**

**Helen Frost:** <http://www.helenfrost.net>

**LYRC Study Guide:** <http://www.state.lib.la.us/literacy-and-reading/louisiana-young-readers-choice/2014-lyrc-6-8th-grade-study-guides->

### **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist*: 107(April 1, 2011): 64

*Kirkus*: (April 1, 2011)

*School Library Journal*: 57(June 1, 2011): 116

**Hiaasen, Carl. *Chomp*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2012**

**SUMMARY:**

Wally Cray's needs a job to keep his family afloat. So, he takes one that makes sense for an animal wrangler. Mickey Cray takes a job with the reality TV series, *Expedition, Survival!* What Mickey and Wally learn is that reality TV isn't so real. Least real is the show's star, Derek Badger. Wally and Mickey find a way to survive, but it isn't easy!

**QUESTIONS:**

- How is Wahoo forced to take an adult role?
- What is the impact of Mickey Cray's temper?
- What is the meaning of the term "Chip off the old block?"
- What do Wahoo and Mickey Cray learn from each other?
- Does it take courage to be an animal wrangler?
- Is Derek Badger courageous or cowardly?
- In what ways is the Expedition Survival show a lie?
- What are the "real" elements of the production?
- Is reality TV real? Did your opinions change after you read the book?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

The reality show dealing with my life would be called.....because.....

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Ask students to use books in the library or sites on the Internet to identify at least 10 different career paths involving wildlife—for example, herpetology, ornithology, zoology, etc. Have them write a brief description of each course of study.
- Have students create an advertisement for a national magazine for Mickey Cray's Animal Wrangler business. Design an appropriate logo.
- Instruct students to stage an on-the-spot news coverage of the scene at Sickler's Souvenir Shop at the end of the novel when Tuna's dad shoots Mickey Cray. Interview all of the players: Mickey, Wahoo, Tuna, Link, Derek, Raven Stark, Sickler, and Jared Gordon.
- Talk with students about how rap music tells a story. Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to write and perform a rap music video call "Chomp," which relates the scene when Derek is chomped by the bat.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 5-7



## **BOOKTRAILER:**

**Random House Kids:** [http://www.randomhousekids.com/videos/ua12cs0us\\_4-chomp-by-carl-hiaasen-book-trailer#.VT1fANJVhHw](http://www.randomhousekids.com/videos/ua12cs0us_4-chomp-by-carl-hiaasen-book-trailer#.VT1fANJVhHw)

## **BOOKTALK:**

Reality TV star Derek Badger is about to get a reality check-Florida-style. Lost in the Everglades, this pseudo-survivalist takes on gators and snakes and bats that bite. Guess who wins?

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Anderson, M.T. *Whales on Stilts*. Harcourt, 2005.  
Castle, M.E. *Game of Clones*. EdgemontUSA, 2014.  
Gibbs, Stuart. *Belly Up*. Simon & Schuster, 2010.  
London, Matt. *8<sup>th</sup> Continent*. Razorbill, 2014.  
Lubner, Susan. *The Upside of Ordinary*. Holiday House, 2012.

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

Carl Hiaasen: <http://www.carlhiaasen.com/young-readers.shtml>  
Educator's Guide: [http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/teachers\\_guides/9780375868429.pdf](http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/teachers_guides/9780375868429.pdf)  
Teacher Resource Page:  
<http://artsience.nku.edu/content/dam/English/docs/BookFest/BookFest%202014%20Teacher%20Resource%20Page.pdf>  
National Wildlife Federation: <https://www.nwf.org/Wildlife/Wildlife-Conservation.aspx>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist*: 108(November 11, 2011): 57  
*School Library Journal*: 58(March 1, 2012): 158  
*Publishers Weekly*: 259(January 9, 2012)

**Hopkinson, Deborah. *Titanic – Voices from the Disaster*. Scholastic Press, 2012.**

**SUMMARY:**

The RMS Titanic, which was said to be unsinkable, sank in the early morning of April 15, 1912. She was on her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York when she hit an iceberg in the North Atlantic Ocean. Deborah Hopkinson's book is not just a story of facts but one of human tragedy told through the voices of the survivors. This non-fiction book offers much information about the passengers and crew on board the Titanic, those who survived and those who did not. Her story is more about the people and their personal lives and thoughts as they coped with surviving this devastating tragedy.

**QUESTIONS**

What were some of the reasons that the Titanic sank which could have been avoided?  
How were the photographs taken of the sinking of the Titanic preserved?  
How cold was the water and how long could one stay in the ocean before getting hypothermia and dying?  
Who was Emily Goldsmith and what did she do to help the survivors?  
What were the findings of the investigations from the United States and Britain? Do you agree or disagree with their findings?  
What good, if any, came out of the tragedy?  
Why do you think that the partially filled boats did not go back to help save those in the water who were still alive?  
Did the radio operators on the Carpathia respond to inquiries and messages from reporters and newspapers?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

If I had been Captain E.J. Smith, I would have . . .  
If I had been a passenger on the Titanic, in order to survive, I would have . . .

**ACTIVITIES:**

Pretend that you were selected to join a team to go on a salvage trip to the wreck of the Titanic. Research the history of the Titanic and some of the important staff and passengers. Develop a debate on the question of who was at fault in the sinking of the Titanic. Create a replica of the Titanic as a class project. You are one of the survivors and are on the Carpathia. Write a letter to your family to tell them about your experience on the Titanic and how you survived. Research Dr. Robert Ballard. How is he relevant concerning the Titanic?

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 6-8

**BOOKTRAILER:**

**Classroom Trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWMfgWutno0>

**BOOKTALK:**

The sinking of the Titanic was one of the most famous tragedies in history. In reading Deborah Hopkinson's book you will learn about the crew and the passengers from third class to first class who were on board and how they coped with this terrible disaster. What would you have done to survive if you had been on the Titanic's maiden voyage – on a great ship that was built to be unsinkable?

**READ-ALIKES:**

Brewster, Hugh. *Inside the Titanic*. Little, Brown and Company, 1997.  
Chrisp, Peter. *Explore Titanic: Breathtaking New Pictures, Recreated with Digital Technology*. Barron's Educational Series, 2011.  
Crisp, Marty. *White Star – A Dog on the Titanic*. Scholastic Inc., 2004.  
Lawson, Julie. *Ghosts of the Titanic*. Scholastic Canada, 2011.  
Osborne, Mary Pope. *Titanic*. Scholastic, 2002.  
Osborne, Mary Pope. *Tonight on the Titanic*. Scholastic, 1999.  
Tanaka, Shelley. *On Board the Titanic: What it was like When the Great Liner Sank*. Hyperion/Madison Press, 1996.  
Tarshis, Lauren. *I Survived the Sinking of the Titanic, 1912*. Scholastic, 2010.

**RELATED WEB SITES**

**Deborah Hopkinson:** [www.deborahhopkinson.com](http://www.deborahhopkinson.com)

**The History Channel:** [www.history.com/topics/titanic](http://www.history.com/topics/titanic)

**San Diego Natural History Museum:** <http://www.sdnhm.org/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/titanic-the-artifact-exhibition/education-and-group-sales>

**Titanic Facts:** [www.titanicfacts.net/titanic-online.html](http://www.titanicfacts.net/titanic-online.html)

**REVIEWS:**

*Booklist:* 108(December 1, 2011): 142

*School Library Journal:* 58(December, 2012): 77

*Publishers Weekly:* 259(February 20, 2012): 169

**Knowles, Jo. *See You at Harry's*. Candlewick Press, 2012.**

**SUMMARY:**

Twelve-year-old Fern feels invisible in her family, where grumpy eighteen-year-old Sarah is working at the family restaurant, fourteen-year-old Holden is struggling with school bullies and his sexuality, and adorable, three-year-old Charlie is always the center of attention. When tragedy strikes, the fragile bond holding the family together is stretched almost to the breaking point.

**QUESTIONS:**

Each member of Fern's family responds differently to the tragedy they face. Which character do you think you would have been most like if this had happened to you?

Why do you think Holden doesn't want Fern to know about the bullying he faces?

How does guilt affect various characters' grieving?

What is the significance of the children's names?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

If I had a "gap year," I would.....

The center of attention for my family is.....

**ACTIVITIES**

Pick any two of the family members and talk about what changes from before to after in terms of how they behave.

Visit a diner or sample "diner" food.

Create and use a "sandwich board" that promotes something important to you.

Pick one character and write about what their life will be like in one year. Try five.

Invite someone to talk with your group about dealing with bullies.

Spend some time with a three-year old and write about the experience.

**INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 7-8**

**BOOKTRAILER:**

Heapalmer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-NX38Ay3iA>

## **BOOKTALK:**

No one pays attention to me. My Mom meditates, my Dad worries about the business, Sara is taking a gap year and Holden is distant. So, I'm left watching Charlie---everyone's favorite three year old. He's everyone's favorite except for the times when he's annoying me! My friend Ran keeps telling me that "All will be well," but my family is facing some tough times and I need to be convinced!

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Bauer, Marion Dane. *On My Honor*. Clarion, 1986.  
LaFleur, Suzanne. *Love, Aubrey*. Wendy Lamb, 2009.  
MacLachlan, Patricia. *Edward's Eyes*. Atheneum, 2007.  
Nicholls, Sally. *Ways to Live Forever*. Arthur A. Levine, 2008.  
Park, Barbara. *Mick Harte Was Here*. Knopf, 1995.  
Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Drums, Girls and Dangerous Pie*. Scholastic, 2005.

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Jo Knowles:** <http://www.joknowles.com/Home.html>

**Walker Books Classroom Ideas:**

<http://www.walkerbooks.com.au/statics/dyn/1351560733324/See-You-at-Harrys.pdf>

**Goodreads Quiz:** <http://www.goodreads.com/quizzes/29326-see-you-at-harry-s>

**Grand Rapids Public Library Discussion Guide:** <http://www.grpl.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/See-you-at-Harrys1.pdf>

**Nancy Keane Booktalk:** [http://nancykeane.com/booktalks/knowles\\_see.htm](http://nancykeane.com/booktalks/knowles_see.htm)

**History of Diners:** <http://www.americandinermuseum.org/history.php>

**Helping Children Cope With Loss:**

[http://www.nasonline.org/resources/crisis\\_safety/griefwar.pdf](http://www.nasonline.org/resources/crisis_safety/griefwar.pdf)

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist*: 108(July 2, 1012): 63

*Publishers Weekly*: 259(June 11, 2012)

*School Library Journal*: 58(May 1, 2012): 109

## **Magoon, Kekla. Camo Girl. Aladdin, 2011**

### **SUMMARY:**

Ella and Z have been friends forever. Sticking with each other when everyone else discarded them because they are different. As well as being rejected, they are bullied and made fun of, Ella because of her skin and Z because of his behavior. They've been through a lot. Both have lost their dads and Z has lost his home. Their security is found in their relationship. Until Bailey James moves to the neighborhood. Ella relates right away, because finally there is another African-American student in her class. Bailey makes that connection with Ella and brings her into the circle of "cool" kids. But that leaves Z out of the loop and creates a terrible tension for Ella. The choices she makes will have a significant impact on their lives and their friendships.

### **QUESTIONS:**

Why do Ella and Z need shadow names?  
Why does Ella cover the bathroom mirror with paper?  
What are good strategies for dealing with bullies?  
Why does Ella's world "tilt" when Bailey joins the class?  
How did the imaginary game between Z and Ella begin?  
What was Z's saddest day?  
Why do you think that Z has a hard time having a real conversation with Ella?  
What action causes Baily to start a physical fight with Jonathon?  
How are Baily, Z and Ella camouflaged?

### **JOURNAL STARTERS:**

Some strategies for dealing with bullies include.....  
The person who is always there for me is....

### **ACTIVITIES:**

Play a game of chess.  
Collect some recipes from grandparents.  
Draw Ella and Z.  
Play a game of basketball.  
Discuss Ella's statement: "The days when things change are the hardest."  
Read the author's thoughts about what might make Ella and Z different and do some research on some of those condition  
Ella was named for "great and beautiful women" ----find out more about them.  
Discuss Grammie's statement: "Anyone who can see will see you beautiful."

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 5-8

**BOOKTRAILER:**

Marybeth Raines: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAehji6SJ9o>

**BOOKTALK:**

Nothing feels worse than being considered different from your peers. That's just how Ella and Z feel as they are bullied by classmates who consider them different. They keep to themselves and inhabit an imaginary world in which they are in charge of all they survey. Life has been hard for them both and they need that security and stability. But, when Baily James joins the class, things begin to change for Ella. Bailey will bring her into the world of the cool kids and Z really needs her. How will she determine who her real friends are?

**READ-ALIKES:**

Magoon, Kekla. *The Rock and the River*. Aladdin, 2009  
Spinelli, Jerry. *Maniac Magee*. Little, Brown Young Readers, 1999  
Williams-Garcia. *One Crazy Summer*. Amistad, 2010

**RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Kekla Magoon:** <http://keklamagoon.com>  
**Vitiligo:** <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/vitiligo/basics/definition/con-20032007>  
**What Is Autism?** <https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism>  
**Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder:** <http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/ptsd.html>

**REVIEWS:**

*Kirkus:* (December 1, 2010)  
*Publishers Weekly:* 257(December, 6, 2010)  
*School Library Journal:* 57(January 1, 2011)

## **Meyer, Marissa. *Cinder*. Feiwel and Friends, 2012**

### **SUMMARY:**

*Cinder* is a twist on the fairy tale Cinderella. Fast forward to New Beijing, a world hundreds of years in the future. Cinder is a cyborg living among humans that do not value her ability. She is a gifted mechanic with an unknown past. A deadly plague is destroying the population, and androids are being killed as test subjects to develop an antidote. Cinder is next.

While the plague is ravaging the humans, the world is also being targeted by the Lunars, a kingdom on the moon. Prince Kai is the main focus for Levena, the Lunar Queen. Through a chance meeting with Prince Kai, can Cinder help to save herself and possibly the world? After all, she is just a cyborg.

### **QUESTIONS:**

Are cyborgs less than human?

What makes Cinder human? What makes her a machine?

Is one life worth the lives of many? Evaluate the idea of sacrificing for the greater good.

What is the one "gift" or ability you admire most in Cinder and why?

Why does Levena not use mirrors? Why would the author include this fact?

Do you trust Dr. Erland? Should he be trusted? Why or why not?

Cinder takes the antidote to give it to Peony. Do you agree with that choice?

What are the similarities and differences in the ways that Cinder and Levena are beautiful?

Imagine you are Prince Kai at the ball. When you see Cinder is a cyborg, what is your reaction?

How should Kai react? How will his reaction affect the outcome of the novel?

How does Cinder handle the truth of her real identity?

### **JOURNAL STARTER:**

To be fully human means.....

.

### **ACTIVITIES:**

Read different versions of Cinderella and compare it to the main story line in *Cinder*.

Compare the novels *Cinder* (Science Fiction) and *Chinese Cinderella* (Memoir)

Continue the story. Does Cinder go to Africa? Does Kai marry Levena?

Compare Prince Kai's and Cinder's actions when faced with the decision to give up their lives to save others. What would you do if you were Kai or Cinder?

### **INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 7-8



## **BOOK TRAILER:**

**Marissa Meyer Trailer:** <http://www.marissameyer.com/book/book-one/>

## **BOOKTALK:**

You know the story of Cinderella. A kind, pretty girl who is treated poorly by her evil stepmother and stepsisters. All she does is wait for her prince to come and rescue her from this life of slavery. If that is the story you want, then don't read this book.

Fast forward hundreds of years in the future. The world is overcome with a plague, the people of the moon want to take over control of earth, and the fate of everyone lies in the hands of one girl. Cinder isn't your ordinary girl. She is a cyborg. She is the key to everything. Will she understand this before it is too late? Will she be able to save her prince, herself, and then entire population of earth? Read Cinder to find out the real story of Cinderella.

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *Just Ella*. Scholastic, 1999  
Levine, Gail Carson. *Ella Enchanted*. HarperCollins, 1997  
Napoli, Donna Jo. *Bound*. Atheneum, 2004  
Perrault, Charles. *Cinderella*. North South Books, 2002  
Stanley, Diane. *Bella at Midnight*. HarperCollins, 2006

## **RELATED WEBSITES:**

**Marissa Meyers:** <http://www.marissameyer.com/>

**The Lunar Chronicles:** <http://thelunarchronicles.com/>

**Behind the scenes with Cinderella:**

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/behind-scenes-with-cinderella-261.html?tab=1#tabs>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist*: 26(October 15, 2011): 56

*Publishers Weekly*: 258(November 7, 2011)

*School Library Journal*: 57(January 1, 2012): 122

**Ness, Patrick. *A Monster Calls*. Candlewick, 2011**

**SUMMARY:**

Conor O'Malley's mother is dying and everyone seems to know it but Conor. He and his mom have lived together during her battle with cancer, but when his grandmother arrives to step in as a caregiver, Conor's anxiety is heightened. When his Dad arrives from America, Connor become angry---not wanting to hear anything that his father or his grandmother try to tell him. Nightmares understandably plague Conor. However, when a monster does truly call, it is in the form of the yew tree in their back yard. A yew tree that takes on monstrous proportions and brings Conor to wisdom and acceptance through the telling of four very meaningful tales.

**QUESTIONS:**

- Why did Conor's mother wish that he "didn't have to be so good?"
- What do you think the monster meant when he said: "Stories are the wildest things of all?"
- Why do you think Conor and his grandmother are at odds with each other?
- Why was Conor upset that Lilly had told a few friends about his Mum's condition?
- What does the word "keening" mean?
- When and why did Conor and his grandmother find destruction satisfying? Why?
- Why did Conor believe that his mother had been lying to him?
- Who or what was the real monster?
- What did the monster identify as the most human wish of all?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

The monster says: "You do not write your life with words. You write it with actions." That means.....

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Do some research on how this book came to be written.
- Ask someone with an art background to discuss the illustrations with your group.
- Research hospice and the services they provide to the terminally ill and their families.
- Make drawings of Yew trees.
- Choose some personal topics and practice Life Writing.
- Prepare a presentation for the group on Herne the Hunter, Cernunnos, and the Green Man.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 7-8

## **BOOKTRAILER:**

**Candlewick Press:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEX5g6c7ueE>

## **BOOKTALK:**

Sometimes awful and tragic things happen in a person's life. Conor's mother is dying and he is struggling to accept it. His grandmother and father attempt to have the "talk" with him, but that only makes things worse for Conor. However, when a yew-tree Monster begins to call at 12:07 every night, the visits begin to bring Conor through a horrible, emotional and necessary journey to truth and acceptance.

## **READ-ALIKES:**

LaFleur, Suzanne. *Eight Keys*. Wendy Lamb Books. 2011  
Mass, Wendy. *Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life*. Little, Brown, 2006  
Sloan, Holly Goldberg. *Counting by 7's*. Dial, 2011

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Patrick Ness:** <http://patrickness.com>

**Shiobhan Dowd Trust:** <http://www.siohandowdtrust.com>

**Candlewick Discussion Guide:** [http://www.candlewick.com/book\\_files/0763655597.bdg.1.pdf](http://www.candlewick.com/book_files/0763655597.bdg.1.pdf)

**Walker Books Discussion Guide:** <http://www.newbooksmag.com/left-menu/reading-group-guides/a-monster-calls.php>

**Cancer.Net:** <http://www.cancer.net/coping-with-cancer/caring-loved-one/young-adults-caring-parent-with-cancer>

**Yew Tress Image:** [http://www.walesdirectory.co.uk/images-attractions/St\\_Michaels\\_Church\\_Yew\\_Tree.jpg](http://www.walesdirectory.co.uk/images-attractions/St_Michaels_Church_Yew_Tree.jpg)

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist*: 107: (July 1, 2011): 52

*Publishers Weekly*: 258(June 20, 2010)

*School Library Journal*: 57(September 1, 2011): 164

**Preus, Margi. *Shadow on the Mountain*. Abrams, 2012**

**SUMMARY:**

It is 1940 and the Germans are invading Norway. From the beginning, the Norwegians are strong in their resistance. As the war carries on, the resistance becomes more serious. Espen is a student who is recruited to deliver “newspapers” on his bicycle. Espen’s quick wit and bravery making him a valuable cog in the resistance movement and his activity becomes more and more important. More than once, he’s forced to escape from the Gestapo, but his contributions are valuable and he grows into manhood through the War.

Sacrifices are made by many, but in the end, those people who are important to Espen have lived lives of integrity.

This novel is based on a true story and has significant back-matter to accompany the novel.

**QUESTIONS:**

Why do you think Ingrid and Espen collected dumb Nazi jokes?

Why did Espen need to save Kjell?

What is your opinion of the Gudbrandshal Method?

What did Ingrid experience that made her want to do more?

Why did people avoid Askel’s mother?

What is the Ice Front?

What is the meaning of the book’s title?

In the myth, why is Odin more worried about thought than memory?

Why do you think Askel behaved the way he did?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

One small act of kindness can....

**ACTIVITIES:**

Read some Norse mythology.

Watch some videos on Nordic Skiing.

Write a journal entry as Ingrid or Espen.

Identify methods by which the characters in this novel resisted the Nazis.

Do some research on how Norway and Denmark survived the war.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 5-7

## **BOOKTRAILERS:**

Vimeo Book Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/77878061>

Young Hoosier Nominee: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxOnwQ2p5mU>

## **BOOKTALK:**

Begin with Franklin Roosevelt's quote found at the end of the prologue  
Espen was just a young Norwegian student, whose primary interest was playing soccer. When the war started and he could deliver "newspapers" for the resistance, that seemed like fun. But as the war goes on, the deliveries become more significant and Espen functions as a full-fledged member of the resistance. The newspaper is replaced with radios and coded documents. Espen doesn't exist in a vacuum; there's his sister Ingrid, his comrades in the resistance and Kjell, who used to be his best friend. In a unique way, they become part of Norway's history as they battle to survive with their integrity in the dark days of World War II.

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Calkhoven, Laurie. *Michael and the Invasion of France, 1943*. Dial, 2012

Frank, Anne. *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Pocket Books, 1952

Hahn, Mary Downing. *Stepping on the Cracks*. Clarion, 1991.

Lowry, Lois. *Number the Stars*. Houghton Mifflin, 1989.

Salisbury, Graham. *Under the Blood Red Sun*. Delacorte, 1994

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

Margi Preus: [http://www.margipreus.com/margipreus.com/Margi\\_Preus\\_-\\_Books.html](http://www.margipreus.com/margipreus.com/Margi_Preus_-_Books.html)

Abrams Publisher Discussion Guide:

[https://www.abramsbooks.com/pdfs/academic/ShadowOnTheMountain\\_ReadersGuide.pdf](https://www.abramsbooks.com/pdfs/academic/ShadowOnTheMountain_ReadersGuide.pdf)

Norway in World War II: <http://www.norway.org.uk/studywork/Norway-For-Young-People/History/Norway-and-the-World-Wars/#.Vf2mbGeFOM8>

Traditional Nordic Skiing: <http://www.norway.org.uk/studywork/Norway-For-Young-People/History/Norway-and-the-World-Wars/#.Vf2mbGeFOM8>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist*: 109(September 1, 2012): 118

*School Library Journal*: 58(October 1, 2012): 148

*Publishers Weekly*: 259(October 22, 2012)

**Rose, Caroline Starr. *May B.* Schwartz and Wade Books, 2012**

**SUMMARY:**

Mavis Elizabeth Betterly---May B., is hired out by her father to help on a Kansas farm. Only until Christmas. May's family needs the money and they can't spare her "necessary" brother. When May arrives at the Oblingers, she determines that things are not right for the newly married couple. Mrs. Oblinger is unhappy and unkind, making no effort to adjust to life in the soddy. It is no surprise when she runs away, but it is a surprise when Mr. Oblinger leaves to find her and May is totally abandoned. May only has the resources in the cabin and her book. For a girl who has been told at school that she is stupid, survival is her greatest challenge.

**QUESTIONS:**

- Why does May B. think boys are "necessary?"
- Why does May say that her best isn't always good enough?
- What does Mrs. Oblinger think is the worst part of living in Kansas?
- Would the communication tools available to us today have made a difference to May?
- When May realizes that the Oblingers will not return, what does she think of her freedom?
- What practical lessons does May learn as she fends for herself at the Oblingers?
- Why do you think the author does not refer to Teacher by her given name?
- What "unladylike" activities does May try?
- How does May prepare for winter?
- At the end of the novel, what does May know about herself?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

May B. is not stupid because.....

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Recount your day in free verse.
- Create a model sod house
- Cook and share some prairie food---try to use historically correct utensils.
- Invite a reading instructor to discuss dyslexia and how it is treated.
- Research the plants and animals of Kansas.
- Draw Mrs. Oblinger.
- Describe May's rescue.

**INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 4 – 5**

## **BOOK TRAILER:**

**M<sup>2</sup> Productions:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOdvfZeL\\_10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOdvfZeL_10)

## **BOOKTALK:**

Imagine that you needed to survive on your own in a Kansas sod house until your father retrieved you at Christmas. No online services, no cell phones, no communication of any kind. That's what May experiences when abandoned by the couple for whom she was hired help. Winter is approaching and May must find a way to survive. Can she do it?

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Brink, Carol Ryrie. *Caddie Woodlawn*. Simon & Schuster, 1936.  
Cushman, Karen. *The Ballad of Lucy Whipple*. Clarion, 1996.  
Dallas, Sandra. *The Quilt Walk*. Sleeping Bear Press, 2012.  
Frost, Helen. *Diamond Willow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008  
Hesse, Karen. *Out of the Dust*. Scholastic, 1997  
Holm, Jennifer. *Boston Jane: Wilderness Days*. HarperCollins, 2002  
LaFaye, A. *Worth*. Simon & Schuster, 2004  
Larson, Kirby. *Hattie Big Sky*. Delacorte, 2006.  
Moss, Marissa. *Rachel's Journal*. Harcourt Brace, 1998.

## **RELATED WEBSITES:**

**Caroline Starr Rose:** <http://carolinestarrrose.com>

**May B: Educator's Guide:** <http://carolinestarrrose.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/May-B-study-guide.pdf>

**Frontier House:** [http://www.pbs.org/wnet/frontierhouse/frontierlife/essay4\\_2.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/frontierhouse/frontierlife/essay4_2.html)

**Our Story: Life in a Sod House from the Smithsonian**

<http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/sodhouse/index.html>

**Pioneer Women Voices from the Kansas Frontier**

[http://www.bookrags.com/Pioneer Women%3A Voices from the Kansas Frontier/#gsc.tab=0](http://www.bookrags.com/Pioneer_Women%3A_Voices_from_the_Kansas_Frontier/#gsc.tab=0)

**History of Dyslexia**

<http://www.dyslexia-aware.com/dawn/history-of-dyslexia>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Kirkus:* (October 15, 2011)

*Publisher's Weekly:* (December 5, 2011)

**Sanderson, Brandon. *The Rithmatist*. Tor, 2013**

**SUMMARY:**

Joel would like more than anything else to be a rithmatic, but he is not one of the elite who was chosen at the time of inception. Rithmatists serve as humankind's protection against wild chalkings---two dimensional drawings that come to live and destroy all those with whom they come in contact. They've already taken the territory of Nebraska and threaten the North American Isles. Joel attends Armedius Academy, where Rithmatists are trained, but only in honor of his late father, a chalkmaker Joel watches and listens. His abilities are recognized and he is permitted to work as an assistant to Professor Fitch on a special project. The project involves looking for clues into the disappearance of Rithmatists students. When the number of missing young people continue to increase, Fitch and Joel take matters into their own hands and strike out to solve the mystery with the aid of Melody---the reluctant rithmatist. It all comes to a dramatic conclusion when the principal of the academy calls for a Melee. Who the winner is makes all the difference.

**QUESTIONS:**

What are the four rithmatic lines?  
How did Professor Fitch lose his position?  
In what ways were Professor Fitch and Nalizar different teachers?  
What are the epic features of this novel?  
Who is your favorite character in the book? Why?  
What role do the illustrations play in this book?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

My predictions for the sequel to this book would include.....  
A good teacher is.....

**ACTIVITIES:**

Draw a chalking.  
Invite a geometry teacher to discuss some of the theories of rithmatics with your group.  
Research the U.S. Army and Naval War Colleges.  
Compare a map of North America with the map in the front of the book.  
Compile a list of games involving strategy (like Chess) and play a few.  
Try to create a sketch based on what you know about rithmatics.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 5-7



## **BOOKTRAILER:**

TorForge: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCI85V1LO5A>

## **BOOKTALK:**

Joel is a nobody. The son of a chalkmaker and a cleaning woman at the prestigious Armedius Academy who is allowed to attend school only as a gesture of honor to his deceased father. Joel observes the Rithmatists, the elite group chosen at the time of inception to study rithmatics---an area of study that when mastered, allows them to protect their society. Joel was never chosen as a rithmatist, but his skills are much stronger than many who were chosen. It is his passion and he arranges a summer of study with Professor Fitch. But when Rithmatists start to go missing and trails of blood are found, a summer of study turns into mystery that must be solved.

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. Scholastic, 2008  
Flanagan, John. *The Ruins of Gorlan* (Rangers Apprentice). Philomel, 2005  
Riordan, Rick. *The Lightning Thief*. Hyperion, 2005  
Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Secret*. Scholastic, 1997.

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Brandon Sanderson:** <http://brandonsanderson.com>  
**MacMillan Study Guide:** <http://images.macmillan.com/folio-assets/teachers-guides/9780765320322TG.pdf>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Kirkus*: (June 1, 2013)  
*Publishers Weekly*: 260(March 25, 2013)  
*School Library Journal*: 59(July 1, 2013): 83

**Sheinkin, Steve. *Lincoln's Grave Robbers*. Scholastic Press, 2012**

**SUMMARY:**

After master counterfeiter Benjamin Boyd is tried and jailed, the counterfeiting community in the Midwest can't function. So, master mind James Kennally hatches a plot to steal President Lincoln's body and hide it. Then, when the body is mysteriously recovered, it can be exchanged for Boyd's freedom. Nothing seems to go as planned for any of the players in this tale that deals as much with the history of counterfeiting during that time period in America as it does with the attempt to rob Lincoln's grave.

**QUESTIONS:**

What is a coney man? What is a "shover?" What is a "boodle game?"  
What were some of the reasons that the Secret Service was founded?  
What was Benjamin Boyd's trade?  
What is your opinion of the sentence given to Allie Boyd?  
What was the impact of Benjamin Boyd's arrest on the rest of the counterfeiting community?  
What is a roper?

**JOURNAL STARTER:**

The plots to rob President Lincoln's grave failed for the following reasons:

**ACTIVITIES:**

Research the following characters in the book: Pete McCartney, Benjamin Boyd, and James Kennally.  
Invite a banker or an historian to talk with your group about counterfeiting.  
Find a craftsperson who can do an engraving demonstration for your group.  
On a map of Illinois, identify locations that are mentioned in this book.  
Make a model of an obelisk.

**INTEREST LEVEL:** Grades 5-7

**BOOK TRAILER:**

**Lincoln's Grave Robbers:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdKPCfPAsTc>

## **BOOK TALK:**

It's all about the bad guys! The bad guys who like to produce, pass and profit from counterfeit money. But when one of their own is tried and convicted, the operation is flawed. If the bills can't pass for real, everyone gets into trouble! So, the goal is to get the engraver out of jail. How? If Lincoln's body was stolen from the Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield, hidden and the ransomed when "mysteriously" found bring them the ransom they needed? The freedom of the engraver? Read *Lincoln's Grave Robbers* to find out! And, don't forget to check the bills in your wallet!

## **RELATED WEBSITES:**

**Steve Sheinkin:** <http://stevesheinkin.com>

**Scholastic Discussion Guide:**

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/sites/default/files/asset/file/lincolns-grave-robbers-disc-guide.pdf>

**Stealing Lincoln's Body:** [http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/08-1681\\_Stealing-Lincoln-ob.pdf](http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/08-1681_Stealing-Lincoln-ob.pdf)

**The Myths and Mysteries Haunting Lincoln's Tomb:**

<http://www.illinoishauntings.com/tomb.html>

**No Counterfeits:** <http://time.com/3774327/lincoln-history-secret-service>

**Lincoln's Grave and Fulton, IL:**

[http://www.cityoffulton.us/images/stories/pdf\\_files/historical\\_articles/Benjamin%20Boyd%20Part%20Two.pdf](http://www.cityoffulton.us/images/stories/pdf_files/historical_articles/Benjamin%20Boyd%20Part%20Two.pdf)

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Freedman, Russel. *Lincoln: A Photobiography*. Clarion, 1987

Holzer, Harold. *The President is Shot: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln*. Calkins Creek, 2004

Sullivan, George. *Picturing Lincoln: Famous Photographs that Popularized the President*. Clarion, 2000

Swanson, James. *Chasing Lincoln's Killer*. Scholastic, 2009

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist*: 109(January 1, 2013): 84

*Horn Book*: 89(January/February, 2013): 108-109

*School Library Journal*: 59(January 1, 2013): 134

**Shurtliff, Liesl. *Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2013**

**SUMMARY:**

Rump is twelve and lives with his Grandmother. His mother died when he was born and as she lay dying she began to whisper his name to his grandmother. But, she only managed the first part, Rump. The name has always given others the opportunity to bully and make fun of him, with the exception of his friend, Red. Rump believes that his name is his destiny, but he needs to find out what his name really is. In this retelling of Rumpelstiltskin, the true cost of magic is revealed.

**QUESTIONS:**

What do you think is meant by the statement: “Your name is your destiny?”  
Why didn’t Rump and his grandmother name animals?  
Why do you think that Kessler’s bit of magic made Rump hungry for more?  
Why was Red so comfortable in the woods?  
What do you think was the meaning of Gran’s last words to Rump?  
What trouble did magic cause in this book?  
Who was the Witch of the Woods?

**JOURNAL STARTER:**

The “things in the middle” that make me special are....

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 4-5

**BOOKTRAILER:**

**Random House:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpqaOP3UdQ8>

**ACTIVITIES:**

Collect and share various versions of Rumpelstiltskin.  
Arrange for a spinning demonstration.  
Make a list of other fairy tale references you find throughout the book.  
Choose a fairy tale and write a revision.  
Make up your own rhymes that accompany the story.  
Illustrate a scene from the book.

## **BOOKTALK:**

What if you didn't know your name? Rump doesn't--he's twelve and only knows the first half of his name. If his name is his destiny, what is he do? And if you found out that you had a magical power---one that allowed you to turn straw into gold, what would you do? Do you think you know how this story ends? Maybe not! This might not be the story you heard when you were six. Try RUMP and see!

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Gidwitz, Adam. *A Tale Dark and Grimm*. Dutton Books for Young Readers, 2010  
Levine, Gale Carson. *Ella Enchanted*. HarperCollins, 1997  
Shurtliff, Liesel. *Jack*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2015  
Zelinsky, Paul. *Rumpelstiltskin*. Dutton, 1986

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Liesel Shurtliff:** <http://lieslshurtliff.com>

**A Reader's Guide:** <http://lieslshurtliff.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Rump-Readers-Guide.pdf>

**Texas Bluebonnet Award:** <https://texasbluebonnetaward2015.wordpress.com/rump/>

**Fairy Dictionary:** <http://hubpages.com/hub/Fairy-Dictionary-A-Z-of-Fairies-and-the-Wee-Folk>

**Spinning Videos:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUpzo1ZKs84>

**Fractured Fairy Tales:** <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/fairytales>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Kirkus:* (March 15, 2013)

*Publishers Weekly:* 260(March 25, 2013)

*School Library Journal:* 59(May 1, 2013): 126

**Sloan, Holly Goldberg. *Counting by 7s*. Dial Press, 2013.**

**SUMMARY:**

Willow Chance is anything but an ordinary girl. She is a twelve-year-old genius who is obsessed with nature and science. She is quirky and has trouble connecting to people. When she is distressed she finds comfort in counting to 7s. She was living a rather normal life with her adoptive parents until one day everything changed.

Willow is now an orphan, again. She is thrown into the lives of an under qualified counselor and a Vietnamese family. Can Willow overcome all she has been through to survive and overcome all the obstacles life has thrown in her way?

**QUESTIONS:**

How does Willow cope with the tragedy that she experiences?

"If you are lost, you might need to swim against the tide." How does this apply to Willow?

What are your feelings toward Dell at the beginning of the book and at the end?

What is a family? Do families have to be linked by blood?

How does the garden represent Willow?

What do you admire most about Willow? Would you want to be friends with her?

What makes Quang-ha so angry? How does he change throughout the novel?

How do Patti, Mai, and Quang-ha help Willow throughout the novel?

Why do you think Willow stops counting?

Do you think that labels are an accurate way to look at someone? Was Dell right about the kids with whom he worked?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

Make a list of the people, places, things and activities that make you feel secure.

**ACTIVITIES:**

Create a class garden: Journal your thoughts and emotions it makes you feel while watching it grow and change.

Research the different plants grown in the story. If you could grow any type of plant, what would it be and why?

Research famous 7s in the world. Why is that number so common?

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 5-7

## **BOOKTRAILER:**

Marli Johnston: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yrz41FH6OMM>

## **BOOKTALK:**

He placed all the kids he saw into four groups of THE STRANGE. First, there were the misfits. Then the ODDBALLS. Next were the LONE WOLVES. And finally, THE WEIRDOS." Which category would you be in? Dell had the whole world figured out. As a school counselor, he understood these kids. His world was normal, until he met Willow Chance. All categories went out the window. Willow Chance isn't your normal girl. She isn't living a normal life. Her life has been turned upside down by tragedy. She is alone in the world. Mai, Quang-ha and Patti are living in a garage. Quang-ha is angry, Mai is always in control, and Patti works long hours. Their life is far from expected. *Counting by 7s* brings together people living outside of an ordinary world to create an extraordinary life with each other.

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Draper, Sharon. *Out of My Mind*. Atheneum, 2010  
Erskine, Kathryn. *Mockingbird*. Philomel, 2010  
Fleischman, Paul. *Seedfolks*. HarperTeen, 1997  
Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. *Fish in a Tree*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2015  
Palacio, Patricia. *Wonder*. Knopf, 2012

## **RELATED WEBSITES:**

**Holly Goldberg Sloan:** <http://hollygoldbergsloan.com>  
**Educator's Guide:** [http://www.penguin.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/CountingBy7s\\_lessonplans\\_14-lowres.pdf](http://www.penguin.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/CountingBy7s_lessonplans_14-lowres.pdf)  
**Texas Bluebonnet Award:** <https://texasbluebonnetaward2015.wordpress.com/counting-by-7s/>  
**Kids Gardening:** <http://www.kidsgardening.org/node/101766>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist*: 109(August 1, 2013): 72  
*Publishers Weekly*: 260(July 8, 2013)  
*School Library Journal*: 59(September 1, 2013): 148

**Sullivan, Tara. *Golden Boy*. G.P. Putnam and Sons, 2013**

**SUMMARY:**

Habo is an albino boy living in Tanzania, a country in which albinos can be killed based on the superstitious belief. Habo is referred to as a zeruzeru that means he counts as nothing. Only Habo's sister shows any fondness for him. His family is forced to flee because of the danger to Habo, but cannot find safety with this aunt. Habo runs away to Dar-es-Salaam and apprentices himself to the blind sculptor, Kweli. Kweli provides him with some security, but when Habo is tracked by a poacher, everything changes. This book also includes a discussion guide, a Swahi dictionary and suggestions for supporting videos.

**QUESTIONS:**

Habo has been called a “zeru-zeru” all his life. Then he hears the word “albino” for the first time. How do his feelings about himself change with the new word? Why do words and labels matter so much?

Why do you think so many albino attacks go unprosecuted in Tanzania? Do you think this, or something like it could happen in the U. S.?

Describe other characteristics that make people feel isolated from their peers and why.

What lessons does Habo learn from Kweli and his carving lessons? How do they apply to Habo's own life?

Why do you think Habo's father left?

How would Kweli describe Habo?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

Because all humans are unique....

**ACTIVITIES:**

Research albinism. What has to happen for a boy to be affected? What are some of the physical problems faced by albinos? What percentage of the American population is affected by albinism?

Research wildlife poaching in Africa. Why is ivory so valuable? What other animals are being destroyed for profit and why? What area(s) is the biggest market for the poached animal parts?

Create a map of Habo's journey.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 5-8



## **BOOKTRAILER:**

Marybeth Raynes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBxC47HhGdw&feature=youtu.be>

## **BOOKTALK:**

Habo is thirteen years old, lives in Tanzania with his mother, two brothers and a sister. He is an albino in a superstitious country where his skin and limbs are thought of as “good luck medicine”. So when his family is forced to flee their small village and travel to the city where his aunt lives, he must be careful to stay out of the sun, and out of sight, as much as possible. As they travel through the Serengeti Park, the family meets Alasiri, a wild life poacher who drives them all the way to the city, but who also has a secret agenda of his own. Habo’s aunt realizes his family cannot stay with her once she sees that Habo is an albino; there have been murders in Mwanza and Habo decides to strike out on his own. He must also find a way to accept himself before anyone else will be able to do the same. The world is a dangerous place for Habo. How will he survive?

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Ellis, Deborah. *The Breadwinner*. Groundwood, 2010  
Okorafor-Mbachu. *Akata Witch*. Viking, 2011  
Park, Linda Sue. *A Long Walk to Water*. Clarion, 2010  
Perkins, Mitali. *Bamboo People*. Charlesbridge, 2010  
Reedy, Trent. *Words in the Dust*. Arthur A. Levin, 2011

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Tara Sullivan:** <http://www.tarasullivanbooks.com>

### **Discussion Guide:**

[http://www.penguin.com/static/images/yr/pdf/Golden%20Boy\\_DiscussionGuide.pdf](http://www.penguin.com/static/images/yr/pdf/Golden%20Boy_DiscussionGuide.pdf)

**Albinism:** [http://kidshealth.org/kid/health\\_problems/birth\\_defect/albinism.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/birth_defect/albinism.html)

### **Threats to African Elephants article:**

[http://wwf.panda.org/what we do/endangered\\_species/elephants/african\\_elephants/afelephants\\_threats](http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/endangered_species/elephants/african_elephants/afelephants_threats)

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist*: 109(June 6, 2013): 89

*Publishers Weekly*: 260(July 1, 2013)

*School Library Journal*: 59(July 1, 2013): 102

**Swanson, James L. “*The President Has Been Shot*” The Assassination of John F. Kennedy. Scholastic Press, 2013.**

**SUMMARY:**

With exciting detail and intense storytelling, Swanson gives a comprehensive view of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, which took place in Dallas, Texas on November, 22, 1963. Explanations of events leading up to the assassination, including the Cuban Missile Crisis, the “Space Race,” and the Civil Rights movement, help set the scene for the assassination. Photographs, diagrams and first-hand accounts make the story come alive.

**QUESTIONS:**

What events were happening in the United States and the world prior to the JFK assassination? Given our current technology and social media, how would news of a similar event unfold if it happened today?

Despite Swanson’s incredibly well-researched account of the assassination, there are several other theories as to who killed Kennedy and why. What are some of these other theories and which do you believe to be true?

How could Lee Harvey Oswald have expressed his dissatisfaction with the President and the government more rationally?

How do you feel about Jack Ruby taking the law into his own hands and killing Lee Harvey Oswald?

“At 2:00 a.m. (EST) on Monday, November 25, the line to get into the Capitol was three miles long” (188). Why do you think so many people wanted to pay their last respects to JFK?

**JOURNAL STARTERS:**

If I could travel back in time to any period of history...

If I were President, I would...

**ACTIVITIES:**

Interview a grandparent or older adult who remembers where they were when they heard that JFK had been shot.

Choose a photograph from the book and write from the point of view of someone in the scene. Imagine you are transported back in time and are in the crowd in Dallas as JFK is driven by. What do you see? What do you hear?

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 5-7

## BOOKTRAILERS:

**JKEducational:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZl2NGH3JVw>

**Elizabeth Redwine:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQQt8zU9\\_UQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQQt8zU9_UQ)

## BOOKTALK:

Ask any adult over the age of 60 what they were doing on November 22, 1963 and I bet they could tell you. That was the day that John F. Kennedy, one of the most popular presidents in history, was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. The events that day and in the days following shocked the country. Find out how in James L. Swanson's intense account: "The President Has Been Shot."

## READ-ALIKES:

Nardo, Don. *Assassination and Its Aftermath: How a Photograph Reassured a Shocked Nation*. Compass Point Books, 2014.

O'Reilly, Bill. *Kennedy's Last Days: the Assassination That Defined a Generation*. Henry Holt and Co., 2013.

Sheinkin, Steve. *Bomb: the Race to Build—and Steal—the World's Most Dangerous Weapon*. Henry Holt & Co., 2012.

Wiles, Deborah. *Countdown*. Scholastic, 2010.

## RELATED WEB SITES:

**Book Discussion:** <http://www.c-span.org/video/?315533-6/book-discussion-president-shot>

**Arlington National Cemetery:** (<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Explore-the-Cemetery/Monuments-and-Memorials/President-John-F-Kennedy-Gravesite>) –

**Awesome Stories** ([www.awesomestories.com](http://www.awesomestories.com))

**History.com** (<http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/john-f-kennedy>)

**John F. Kennedy Library** (<http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/November-22-1963-Death-of-the-President.aspx>)

## REVIEWS:

*Booklist*: 110(October 1, 2013): 50

*Horn Book*: 90(January/February, 2014): 119-120

*School Library Journal*: 59(September 1, 2013): 191

**Turnage, Sheila. *Three Times Lucky*. Dial Books, 2012**

**SUMMARY:**

Moses LoBeau has an unusual background. She was washed ashore during a hurricane and was rescued by The Colonel. The Colonel and Miss Lana have raised her in Tupelo Landing, but Mo is still interested in the person she refers to as her “Upstream Mother.”

Mo’s life in Tupelo Landing is relatively normal until.....Mo’s friend Dale “borrows” Mr. Jesse’s boat so that he can return the very same boat for a reward for reclaimed stolen goods. Things only get worse when Dale returns the boat and then Mr. Jesse is found dead in it. Dale’s going to be running from the law until he and Mo can find the real killers. It takes the whole town of Tupelo Landing to solve this crime, but the colorful residents pull it off and Mo realizes exactly why she is Three Time Lucky!

**QUESTIONS:**

What were the circumstances that placed Mo in the care of Lana and the Colonel?

What was Mo’s reaction to seeing Miss Retzyl at the races?

The Colonel referred to Mo as “Soldier.” Was that a good nickname for her?

Who was Mo’s Upstream Mother?

What was the Cousin Information Network?

What difference did the Colonel, Miss Lana and Miss Rose make in Mo and Dale’s lives?

How was Lavender a hero?

**JOURNAL STARTER:**

My “Three Times Lucky” have been .....

**ACTIVITIES:**

Draw one of the characters in this book.

Create a logo for Desperado Detectives

Create your own map of Tupelo Landing.

Make a list of child spies in other books you have read.

Launch some message in bottles and see what (if anything!) happens.

Research hurricanes.

Make a list of things you’d like to do if you were waiting out a storm.

Collect some pictures of vintage “Underbirds”

Design some wanted posters for the suspects.

**INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 5-7**

## **BOOKTRAILER:**

### **Book Trailers for Readers:**

<http://www.booktrailersforreaders.com/Three+Times+Lucky+Book+Trailer>

## **BOOKTALK:**

Mo didn't think that solving a murder would suddenly appear on her "To-Do" list, but when Mr. Jesse is discovered dead in a boat that her friend Dale has recently "borrowed," Mo and Dale have to find the real killer. Which lead to follow? Which clue will help them solve the case? Who are the detectives and what can they really dig up? Anything is possible in Tupelo Landing and it just might take one more hurricane to get to the bottom of the mystery. If anyone can do it, Mo can!

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Bauer, Joan. *Hope Was Here*. Putnam, 2000.

Horvath, Polly. *One Year in Coal Harbor*. Schwartz and Wade, 2012

Law, Ingrid. *Savvy*. Dial, 2008.

Lawrence, Caroline. *The Case of the Deadly Desperados*. Orion, 2011

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**Sheila Turnage:** <http://www.sheilaturnage.com>

**Penguin's Educators Guide:**

[http://www.penguin.com/static/images/yr/pdf/ThreeTimesLucky\\_lessonplans\\_14.pdf](http://www.penguin.com/static/images/yr/pdf/ThreeTimesLucky_lessonplans_14.pdf)

**Novel Study:**

[https://novelstudies.org/downloads/Three\\_Times\\_Lucky\\_Novel\\_Study\\_Preview.pdf](https://novelstudies.org/downloads/Three_Times_Lucky_Novel_Study_Preview.pdf)

**Hurricane Facts:** <http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/weather/hurricane.html>

**Message in a Bottle:** <http://www.mnn.com/lifestyle/arts-culture/stories/message-in-a-bottle-8-striking-stories-of-letters-sent-to-sea>

## **REVIEWS:**

*Booklist*: 108(May 1, 2012): 58

*Publishers Weekly*: 259(April 9, 2012)

*School Library Journal*: 58(June 1, 2012): 138

