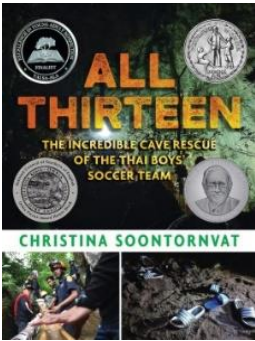


2021-2022 Battle of the Books



All Thirteen

by Christina Soontornvat

An in-depth account of a harrowing real-life mission that succeeds against all odds.

This book logs the 18 days that elapsed in the summer of 2018 as 12 boys—all members

of the Wild Boars soccer team—and their coach were trapped inside Tham Luang Nang Non, or the Cave of the Sleeping Lady, after it flooded in northern Thailand.

<https://youtu.be/7dYteQk-NO>



Anti-Hero

by Kate Quinn

Piper and Sloane both want to be superheroes, and both have superhero skills that will get them there. Together, superstrong Piper and supersmart Sloane could be

magic, but they aren't friends and don't plan on it, until a piece of technology brings them together—literally!—when they accidentally swap bodies. As they desperately try to switch back, they also try to keep Sloane's evil grandfather far away from the device.

<https://youtu.be/k66F1S-dz7c>



Black Brother, Black Brother

by Jewell Rhodes

"Framed. Bullied. Disliked. But I know I can still be the best. Sometimes, 12-year-old Donte wishes he were invisible. As one of the few black boys at Middlefield Prep, most of the

students don't look like him. They don't like him either. Dubbing him "Black Brother," Donte's teachers and classmates make it clear they wish he were more like his lighter-skinned brother, Trey. When he's bullied and framed by the captain of the fencing team, "King" Alan, he's suspended from school and arrested. Terrified, searching for a place where he belongs, Donte joins a local youth center and meets former Olympic fencer Arden Jones.

<https://youtu.be/WuSVfAXRXbQ>



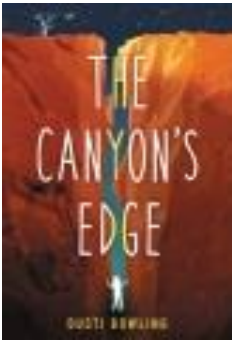
The Boy Who Grew Dragons

by Andy Shepherd

When Tomas discovers a wild-looking plant in his grandfather's garden, he takes one of its unusual fruits home. It turns out to be a pitaya, or dragon fruit, and soon a tiny dragon emerges.

Tomas is astonished but quickly resolves to raise the glittering creature, Flicker, in secret. Even as it sneezes sparks, chars the drapes, and produces highly explosive excrement, Tomas manages to keep his new pet hidden, but it becomes too difficult when he realizes that the dragon fruit tree is producing more and more mythical creatures.

<https://youtu.be/g7rGw8lPlh8>



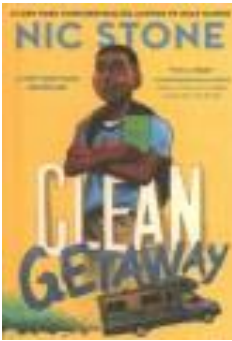
The Canyon's Edge

by Dusti Bowling

Life can change in an instant, a fact that Nora knows all too well. It's a year since the tragedy that stole her mother, and, like clockwork, another accident strikes, this time while

hiking in a remote Sonoran Desert canyon with her father. A flash storm sends a deluge of water down the canyon's dry riverbed, carrying away Nora's father in its strong current. As Nora fights waves of panic, her harrowing tale of survival unfolds through a mix of free-verse and concrete poetry.

<https://youtu.be/26xf4CEUpCY>



Clean Getaway

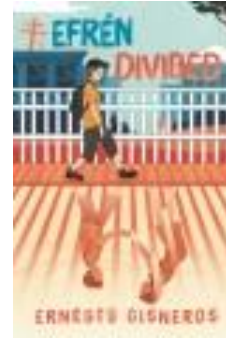
by Nic Stone

Stone's (Odd One Out, 2018) heartwarming, character-centered, and humorous middle-grade debut is a sure-fire winner in this timely story about a boy retracing the

South's segregationist past with his grandmother. Black middle-schooler and computer whiz William "Scoob" Lamar is looking forward to being grounded for the entirety of spring break when his grandmother, an octogenarian white woman, whisks him away in a brand-new Winnebago on a trip to retrace her history. The ways in which G'ma's days of old dovetail with the American civil rights movement do more than teach Scoob about the injustices of Jim Crow and the fight for equality; each stop provides clues to deciphering the mystery surrounding his grandfather's life in prison and estrangement from Scoob's father. Adding Scoob's wry conversational observations about the odyssey to maps and a Green Book, an essential travel guide for African Americans designed to help them find accommodations willing to admit them and avoid towns known for terrorizing Black people, contributes levity and realism to what could have

been a topic too emotionally heavy for middle-grade readers. Instead, it explores an integral part of America's past through the lens of one family's journey to mutual understanding and eventual generational acceptance.

<https://youtu.be/P4bh1JuR Rc>



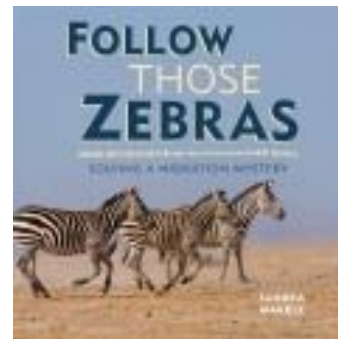
Efrén Divided

by Ernesto Cisneros

Efrén Nava has a tight-knit family—Max and Mia, his younger twin siblings; his hard-working father, Apá; and his mom, Queen of the Best Sopas, Amá (otherwise known as

"Soperwoman" in Efrén's mind), who is the glue that keeps the family together. Efrén is happy with the way his life is going—he's working hard at school, spending time with his best friend David, and visiting his school library. But one day, Efrén's world comes crashing down when his beloved Amá gets deported. Now he must do his part in supporting his family, which means helping take care of his siblings, managing money, and being strong for his father, all while keeping up at school and helping David become class president.

https://youtu.be/JM0_wzeYabl



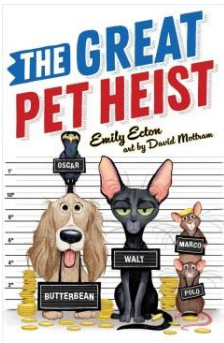
Follow Those Zebras

by Sandra Markle

How can you lose 2,000 plains zebras? In the Chobe River region of Namibia, this is exactly what was happening each dry season. The

local zebra herd would leave and return like clockwork, but no one knew where—or why—they were going. The strangeness of this phenomenon struck research scientist Robin Naidoo, who decided to get to the bottom of the mystery.

<https://youtu.be/8xqSQ20DWDA>



The Great Pet Heist

by Emily Ecton

When elderly Mrs. Food takes a spill and winds up in the hospital, her five pets spiral into a panicked frenzy. A temporary guardian is assigned to them, but the anxious animals—an

aloof cat, a hyper dachshund, a chatty mynah bird, and two bonded rats—decide that the only solution is to amass their own wealth to control their destiny.

<https://youtu.be/S92mAWRo2Po>



Ground Zero

by Alan Gratz

With his signature accessibility and insight, Gratz tackles events on both U.S. soil and abroad in Ground Zero. Juxtaposed narratives alternate between September 11, 2001, New York

City and September 11, 2019, Afghanistan, linked by destruction, death—and hope. Brandon, out of school due to a fight, finds himself in the North Tower when it's hit. Separated from his dad, he alternately helps and is helped by those trying to escape the terror they don't yet understand. Miles and years away, Reshmina's life has been disrupted by the terror of warring forces for as long as she can remember, but on this day she brings it closer than ever by aiding a wounded American soldier.

<https://youtu.be/Xe3SD8XLD3I>



The Lion of Mars

by Jennifer Holm

In the year 2091, 11-year-old Bell leads a mundane life in America's small, underground settlement on Mars, along with a handful of adults and other orphaned children. He knows

little of Earth and its various life-forms and cultures, a fact not helped by his home's self-imposed isolation from the nearby settlements of other nations, sparked by a mysterious incident, years before, that resulted in an American's death. Holm moves slowly in the first half, exploring Bell's quiet, day-to-day existence on the red planet as he worries over friendships, does chores, and begins to ask questions about his expanding awareness of the universe he inhabits.

<https://youtu.be/gBMa1kiXto4>



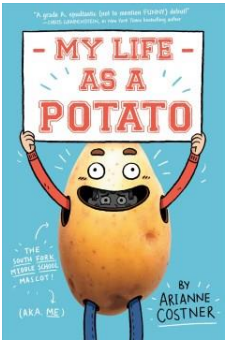
Maya and the Rising Dark

by Rena Barron

Twelve-year-old Maya is the only one in her South Side Chicago neighborhood who witnesses weird occurrences like werehyenas stalking the streets at night and a scary man made

of shadows plaguing her dreams. Her friends try to find an explanation—perhaps a ghost uprising or a lunchroom experiment gone awry. But to Maya, it sounds like something from one of Papa's stories or her favorite comics.

<https://youtu.be/3loJ6ff5FLY>



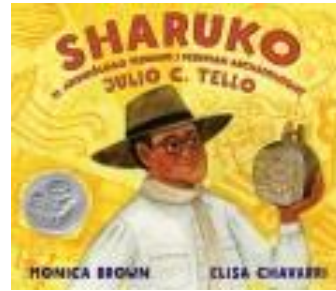
My Life as a Potato

by Arianne Costner

Twelve-year-old Ben Hardy is the new kid in school. Adjusting to life in the middle of Idaho has not been easy, but Ben manages to make new friends, and the most popular girl at school has

asked him to the school dance. However, an incident in the school cafeteria involving a thrown hot dog lands Ben in hot water. He is faced with suspension or performing at basketball games as the school mascot, a dumpy potato. Being the school mascot will mess up his chances with the popular kids, but he reluctantly dons the costume. What follows is a madcap series of incidents involving Ben trying to keep his role as the mascot secret.

<https://youtu.be/2uYj2tlvpAo>



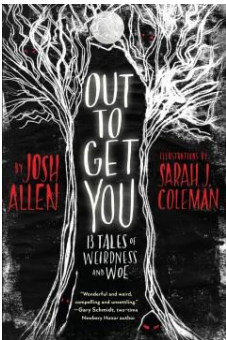
Sharuko

by M. Brown

Vibrant illustrations and a detailed bilingual text come together to tell the inspiring story of Julio C. Tello, the first

Indigenous archaeologist of the Americas and an important figure of Peruvian history. Following Julio—known as Sharuko, which means “brave” in his native Quechua language—from his roots as he explored caves near his home, through his studies in Lima, where he attended medical school, and on to Harvard and Europe, where he studied archaeology, readers will be turning pages with fascination at Tello’s many accomplishments.

<https://youtu.be/uW21SECBYfU>



Out to Get You

by J. Allen

Dive deep into a nightmarish wonderland where everything and nothing is as it seems in this collection of short stories complete with creepy illustrations. This haunting

anthology will plunge young horror enthusiasts into their darkest dreams, from evading the demands of a malicious genie to hoping not to be consumed by a hungry house to sympathizing with a shadow sick and tired of serving every whim of his human. Allen expertly weaves intricate, relatable details from the tween experience with elements of the supernatural to present readers with a baker's dozen of chilling tales, some of which impart contemporary life lessons such as being kind to animals, treating others how you'd like to be treated, and behaving well in school and at home, all with a spooky twist in time for Halloween.

https://youtu.be/l-Swd_rk6cg



Show Me a Sign

by A.C. LeZotte

Mary Lambert, 11, narrates this story, set in the early nineteenth century, about Chilmark, a community on Martha's Vineyard. One in four residents are deaf, and everyone speaks

Martha's Vineyard Sign Language (MVSL). Into this community comes Andrew Noble, a young Boston scientist who wants to study the Deaf population in order to pinpoint an external cause for the deafness. He is arrogant and condescending, and he manages to offend almost everyone. Dissatisfied with his research, Andrew kidnaps Mary and takes her to Boston as a “live specimen.” Although subjected to horrible treatment, Mary makes her way home. LeZotte’s portrayal of Mary is precise and thoughtful, as the girl absorbs and analyzes everything she experiences.

https://youtu.be/A0_jtOuwMC8



Stand Up, Yumi Chung!

by J. Kim

Yumi, 11, has plenty on her plate. She helps out at her parents' restaurant in L.A.'s Koreatown, she's taking prep classes to win a scholarship her private school offers, and almost every moment involves living up to her parents' high expectations. Yumi's passion, however, is comedy, and when she accidentally finds herself in a kids' comedy class—taught by her YouTube idol, no less—she decides to take full advantage.

<https://youtu.be/YR4cztQW1jQ>



Twins

by V. Johnson

Maureen is a straight-A student lacking in self-confidence. Her identical twin, Francine, is outgoing and popular, though she sometimes feels like “the dumb one.” They’ve always been inseparable—until sixth grade.

<https://youtu.be/4c76vafBbHk>



Ways to Make Sunshine

by R. Watson

Ryan Hart's family must relocate to another part of Portland, OR, because her dad isn't making as much money as he once did. Ryan is young girl confident in her gifts; she especially loves to cook. She is also capable of standing up for herself, particularly when she is teased for having a name more commonly given to boys. And she has a lively imagination; Ryan and her best friend, KiKi, get creative indoors when the Grand Floral Parade gets rained out, and prepare for the school talent show together.

<https://youtu.be/G04aeLIBSq4>



Wink

by R. Harrell

Seventh grader Ross Maloy wants nothing more than to be an average middle schooler, hanging out with his best friends, Abby and Isaac, avoiding the school bully, and crushing on the popular girl. There's just one thing keeping Ross from being completely ordinary: the rare form of eye cancer that's reduced him to the kid with cancer at school. Ross' eye is closed in a permanent wink, and he constantly wears a cowboy hat to protect his eyes. The doctors are hopeful that Ross will be cancer free after treatment, but his vision will be impaired, and the treatments cause him to lose his hair and require the application of a particularly goopy ointment.

<https://youtu.be/OVr7d5DAtbs>