

2026 SUMMER READING

BMS GRADES 6-8



Book summaries are from *Goodreads*

DEAR BMS FAMILIES,

BMS READERS REPRESENT A WIDE RANGE OF READING ABILITIES, INTERESTS, MATURITY LEVELS, AND BACKGROUNDS. AS READERS, WE KNOW THAT NOT EVERY BOOK IS A GOOD FIT FOR EVERY READER. WHEN YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOL READERS CHOOSE BOOKS TO READ THIS SUMMER, TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CONTENT, READABILITY, FORMAT AND AUTHOR. OUR STUDENTS INDEPENDENTLY CHOOSE BOOKS TO READ ALL YEAR. SUMMER IS A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE IN THEIR BOOK CHOICE EXPERIENCES.

HAPPY READING!

GRADE 6

POCKET BEAR

BY KATHERINE APPLIGATE

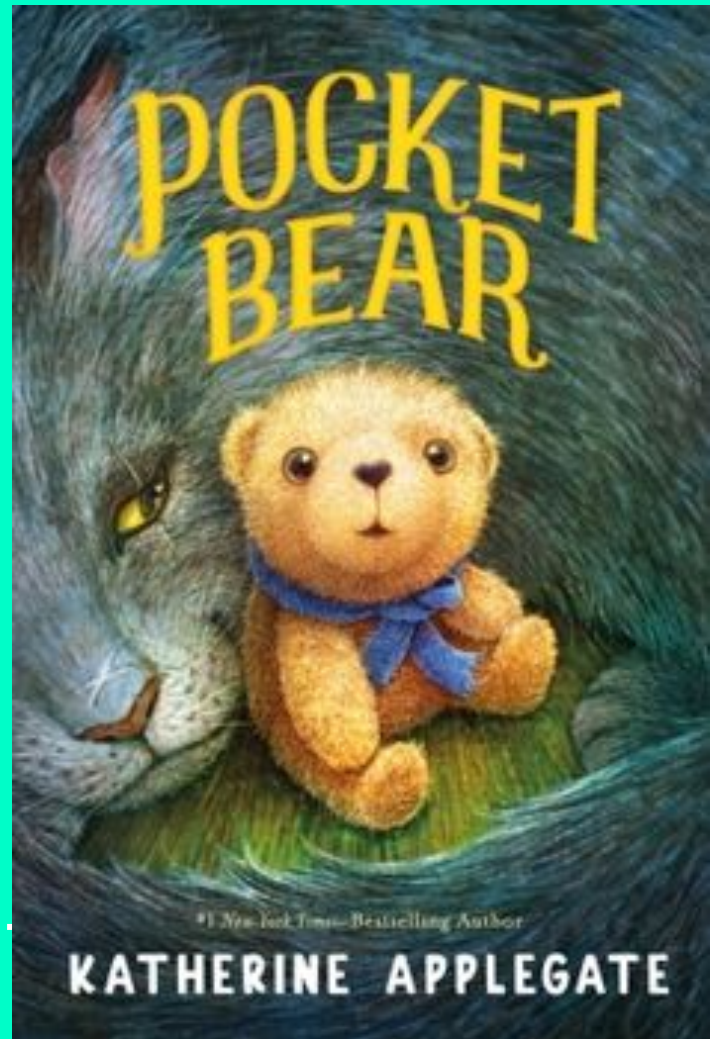
Pocket Bear remembers everything about his creation: the glimmering needle, the silky thread, the tender hands that made him stitch by careful stitch. Born during World War I, he was made to fit right into a soldier's pocket. His eyes were sewn a little higher than normal so he always gazed up. The idea was that when a soldier glanced at his pocket, he would see an adorable reminder of love from home—and hopefully, a little good luck.

Now, over a century later, Pocket is the unofficial mayor of the Second Chances Home for the Tossed and Treasured.

This is a place where stuffed animals are fixed up and given a new shot at being loved. Pocket and his best feline friend, Zephyrina, known everywhere as “The Cat Burglar,” have seen it all.

This is an unforgettable story about bravery, loyalty, and kindness. Pocket reminds us that love comes in many forms (sometimes fuzzy and stuffed with fluff!) and that everyone deserves a second chance.

Fantasy/Animals- [Book Talk](#)



FINDING LOST

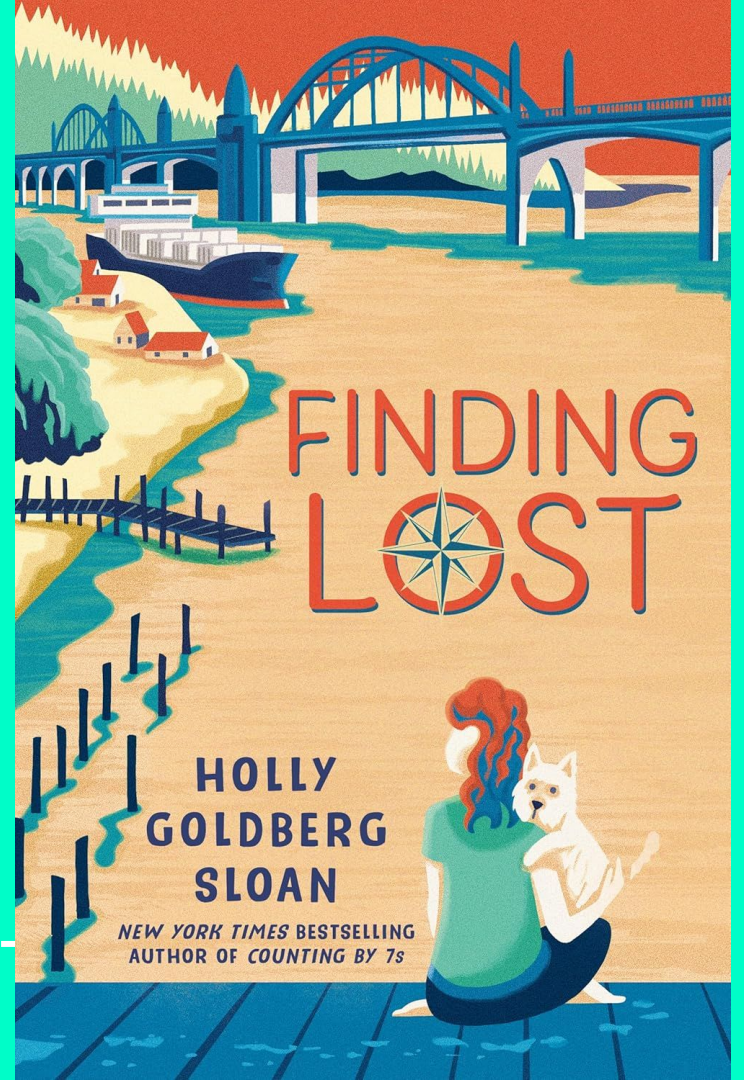
BY HOLLY GOLDBERG SLOAN

A stray dog leads to major change for Cordy and her grieving family in this heartwarming new novel.

Cordy is looking for good luck, looking for the feeling of safety she lost when her father died in a fishing boat accident, maybe even looking for a hint of magic—anything that will stop her mom from wanting to leave the coastal town she and her brother have always called home. What Cordy *finds* is a muddy, hungry little dog who ends up bringing all the luck she could want, and more.

You will fall in love with Cordy and her family as quickly as *they* fall in love with the stray pup named Lost. Full of unexpected, unforgettable moments, this is a tender and endearing tale of coping with loss and making peace with the inevitable truth that change is a constant.

Realistic Fiction - [Book Trailer](#)



THE ACADEMY

BY T.Z. LAYTON

Meet Leo K. Doyle, a small-town 12-year-old who's never even seen the ocean, but he's a fantastic soccer player with huge dreams. Leo desperately wants to go pro one day, but how? Everything changes when a professional scout shows up at one of his games and invites him to try out for the London Dragons youth team—known as "The Academy."

Leo can't believe it! The London Dragons is a world-famous English Premier League team! Suddenly, Leo is flying to a new country for the biggest adventure of his life. The catch? Only 11 players out of 200 of the best 12-year-old players on the planet will make the team.

Besides the crazy competition, Leo has to deal with a bully trying to ruin his summer, a super serious roommate, a scary camp director, and his own fear that he's not good enough because he lacks formal training.

By the end of the summer, Leo will be a much better player and totally changed by the experience. But the big question is: Will he be one of the 11 chosen for The Academy?

Realistic Fiction/Sports- [Book Trailer](#)



DREAM ON

BY SHANNON HALE

Something is missing from Cassie's life. Her parents don't have much money, she has to share her bedroom (and bed!) with her sisters, and her family never seem to have time for her. To make matters worse, her best friend Vali is always busy with a new friend.

When Cassie gets a letter from a magazine sweepstakes with the words "YOU'RE THE WINNER" stamped on the front, she thinks it's the answer to all her problems.

She could buy new furniture to replace their shabby old sofa. Or maybe a car so her family doesn't have to take two trips to go places. Or maybe she can make Vali her best friend forever by taking her on a fabulous vacation.

The possibilities are endless, like an all-you-can-eat buffet!

But will prizes really solve Cassie's problems? And what will she lose if she doesn't win anything at all? *Dream On* is a joyful story filled with imagination, big dreams, and wonder.

Graphic Novel - [Book Trailer](#)

DREAM ON



NEW YORK TIMES
BESTSELLING AUTHOR

SHANNON
HALE

MARCELA
CESPEDES

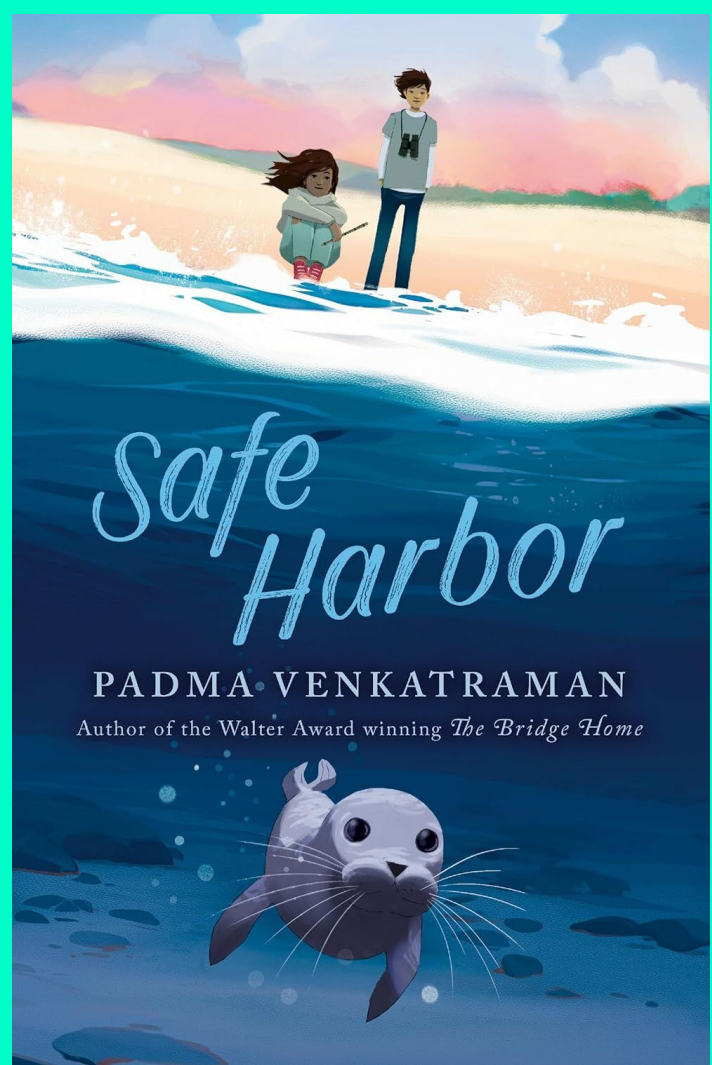
SAFE HARBOR

BY PADMA VENKATRAMAN

When Geetha and her mom move from India to Rhode Island after her parents' divorce, they leave everything Geetha loves behind—her family, her friends, her dog, and all that's familiar. As if that's not hard enough, Geetha is bullied at her new school for her clothes, her food, and her English (who knew so many English words could be spelled or pronounced differently in the US—or just be altogether different!). She finds some solace in playing her flute and writing poetry, and even more when she meets Miguel, a kid with whom she has a lot in common, and the two of them help rescue an injured harp seal stranded on the beach.

She's never been so sad and angry. And when she and Miguel start a beach-clean-up venture, she's surprised to find how many kind kids are out there. Geetha is torn as the time comes to let the seal go, knowing she'll miss him, but wanting the best for him. She's learning to live with mixed feelings and accept that while there will always be rough waters, there are plenty of safe harbors too.

Novel in Verse- [Book Trailer](#)



BUSTED

BY DAN GEMEINHART

When 12-year-old Oscar Aberdeen decided he would do anything to save the only home he's ever known, he didn't realize that anything would include theft, trespassing, gambling, a broken nose, grand theft auto, a federal prison, and a police car chase. He had no idea it would be so dangerous...or so fun.

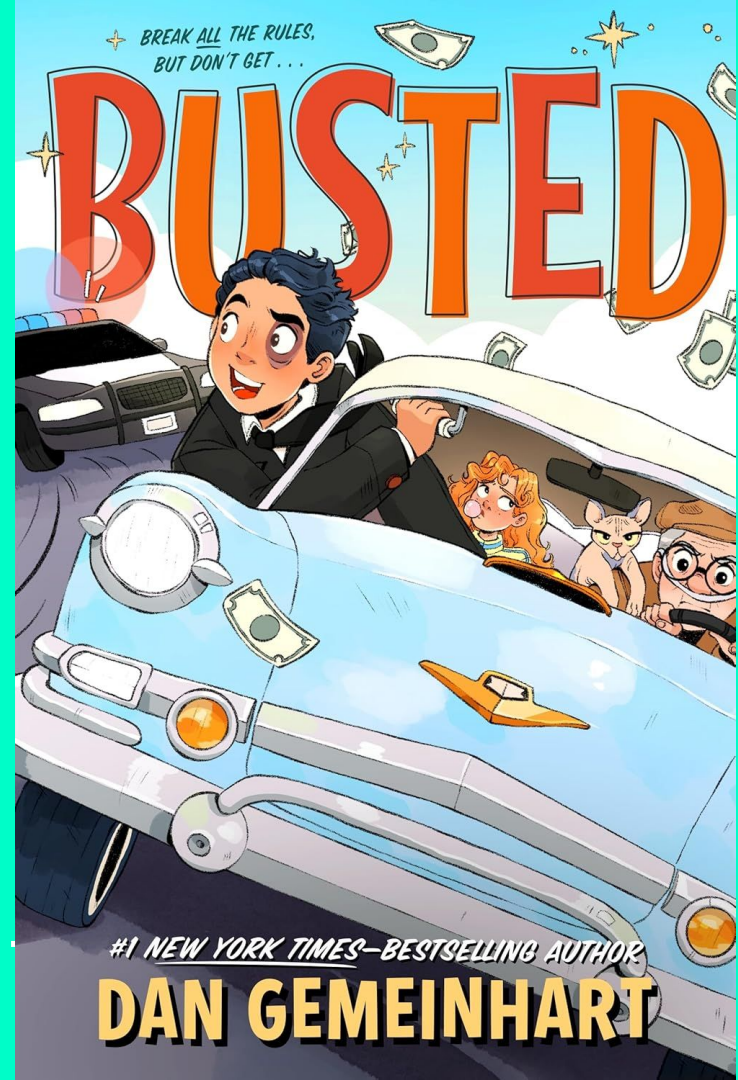
Oscar Aberdeen is a bit of an oddball. He's an ace at playing bridge, loves Frank Sinatra, and attends a whole lot of funerals.

He's also the youngest resident of Sunny Days retirement home by more than a half-century—and he wouldn't have it any other way. So when his grandpa's suddenly served an eviction notice that threatens their place at Sunny Days, he needs to find some cash. Fast.

Enter Jimmy Deluca, a shady elderly man with a reputation for being bad news, who makes Oscar an offer he can't refuse. He's got the drop on riches hidden away on the "outside" and he'll share the loot with Oscar on one condition: he busts him out of Sunny Days.

Will Oscar succeed or will he have to return a failure?

Adventure/Humor - [Book Talk](#)



GRADE 7

THE TROUBLE WITH HEROES

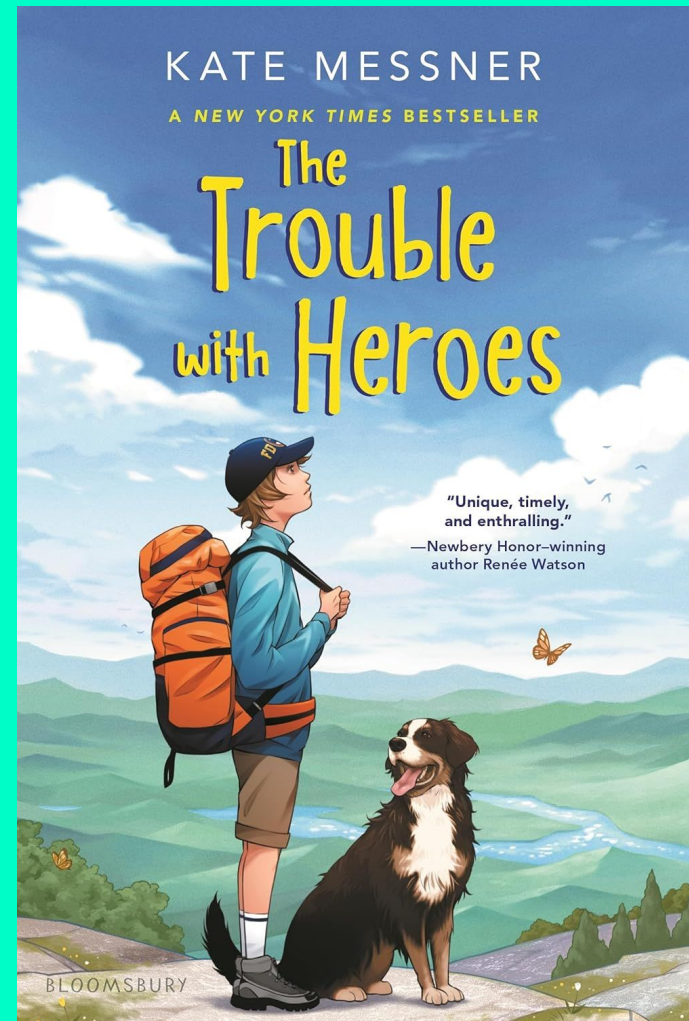
BY KATE MESSNER

Finn Connelly is nothing like his dad, a star athlete and firefighter hero who always ran toward danger until he died two years ago. Finn's about to fail 7th grade and has never made headlines . . . until now.

Caught on camera vandalizing a cemetery, he's in big trouble for kicking down some dead old lady's headstone. But it turns out that grave belongs to a legendary local mountain climber, and her daughter makes Finn an unusual offer...climb all forty-six Adirondack High Peaks with her dead mother's dog, and they can call it even.

In a wild three months of misadventures, mountain mud, and unexpected mentors, Finn begins to find his way on the trails. At the top of each peak, he can see for miles and slowly begins to understand more about himself and his dad. But the mountains don't care about any of that, and as the clock ticks down to September, they have more surprises in store. Finn's final summit challenge may be more than even a hero can face.

Adventure/Novel in Verse - [Book Talk](#)



THE MOON WITHOUT STARS

BY CHANEL MILLER

At the beginning of seventh grade, Luna knows who she is: an observant, quiet girl who loves writing and making zines with her best friend, Scott. But when one of their zines takes off, Luna is somehow swept up into the popular group and learns just how much of herself she's going to have to compromise to stay there. Will she give up her writing? Her best friend? What about her own beliefs about who she is and what she stands for?

Featuring author-illustrator Chanel Miller's signature line drawings, *The Moon Without Stars* is a deeply personal and often funny novel about what it means to lose and then find yourself again during the vulnerable, life-changing years of middle school.

Realistic Fiction - [Book Talk](#)



THE LION'S RUN

BY SARA PENNYPACKER

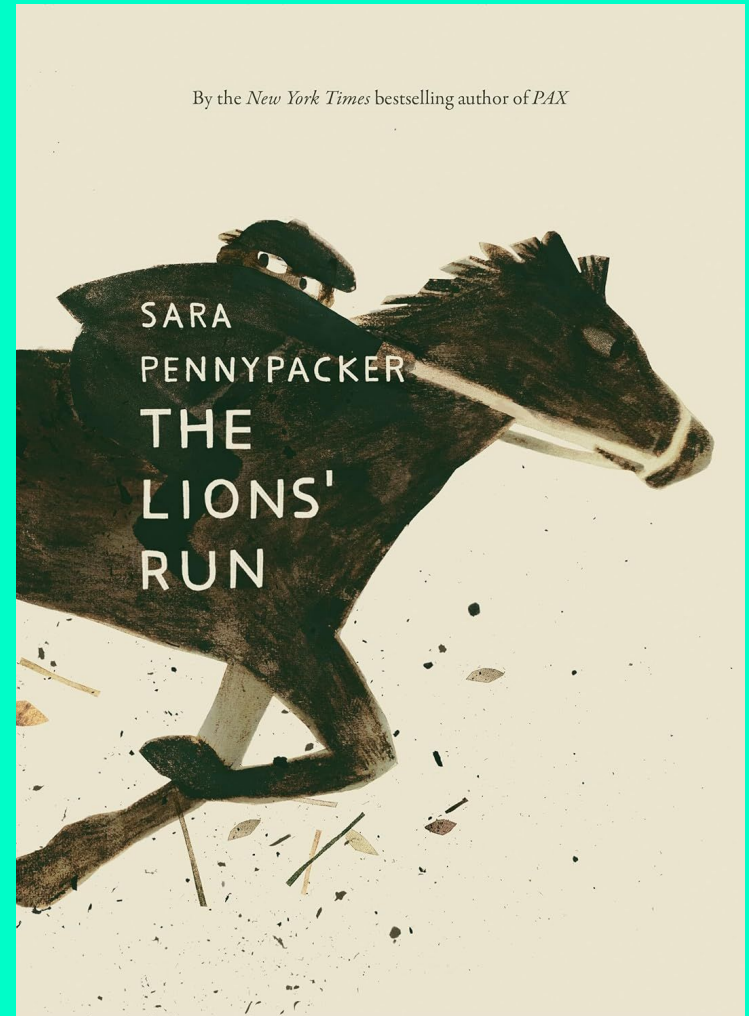
Orphanage boy Lucas DuBois, nicknamed "Petit éclair" for his cowardice, is tired of the Nazi occupation of his French village and longs to prove his bravery.

He gets his chance when he saves kittens and meets Alice, who is hiding her filly from German soldiers in an abandoned stable.

Lucas soon discovers the village is full of secrets: a housekeeper and priest pass coded messages, a young mother plots to save her baby from forced adoption, and a neighbor may be sheltering a Jewish family.

Inspired by these hidden heroes, Lucas must decide how much he is willing to risk for the ultimate rescue.

Historical Fiction - [Book Talk](#)



THE UNDEAD FOX OF DEADWOOD FOREST

BY AUBREY HARTMAN

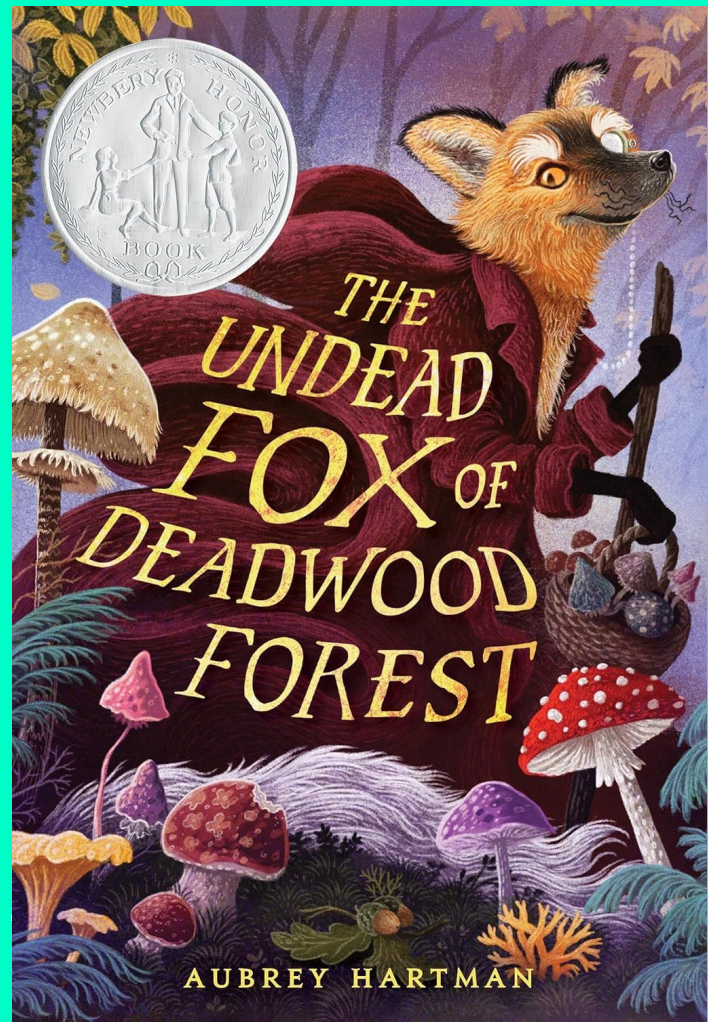
Clare is the undead fox of Deadwood Forest. Here, leaves grow in a perpetual state of fall: not quite dead, but not quite alive—just like Clare. Long ago, he was struck by a car, and, hovering between life and death, he was given the choice to either cross into the Afterlife or become an Usher of wandering souls. Clare chose the latter: a solitary life of guiding souls to their final resting place.

Clare's quiet and predictable days are met with upheaval when a badger soul named Gingersnipes knocks on his door.

Despite Clare's efforts to usher her into the Afterlife, the badger is unable to leave Deadwood. This is unprecedented. Baffling. A disturbing mystery which threatens the delicate balance between the living and the dead.

Desperate for help, Clare and Gingersnipes set out on a treacherous journey to find Hesterfowl—the visionary grouse who recently foretold of turmoil in Deadwood. But upon their arrival, Hesterfowl divulges a shocking revelation that leaves Clare devastated, outraged, and determined to do anything to change his fate.

Fantasy/Animals- [Book Talk](#)



SPEAK UP, SANTIAGO!

BY JULIO ANTA AND GABI MENDEZ

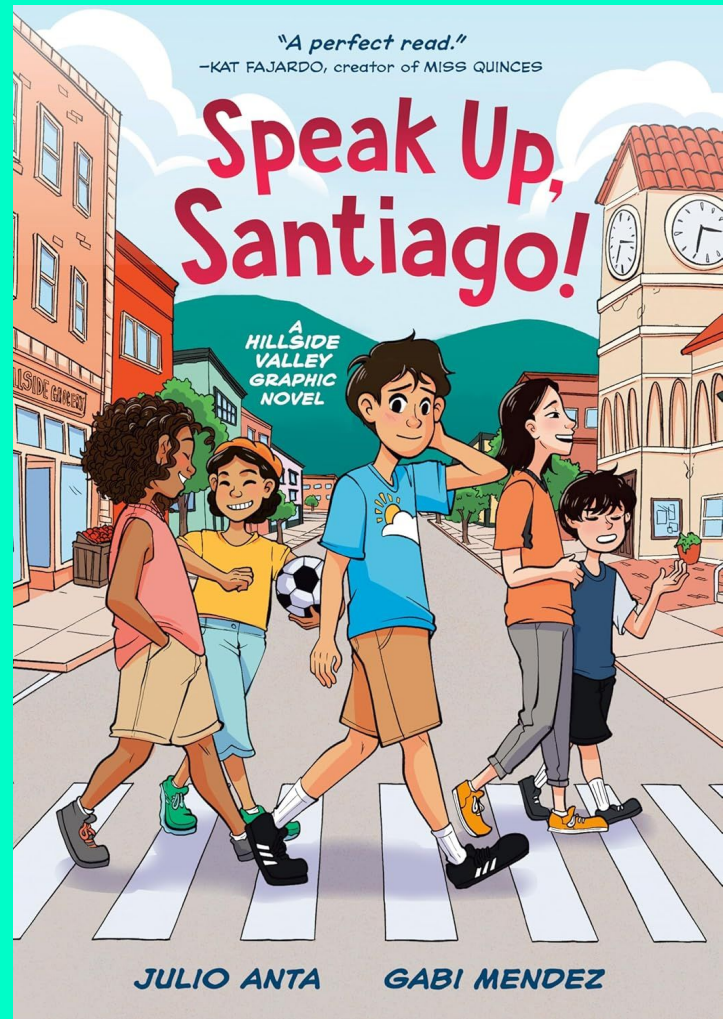
Santi is excited to spend the summer in Hillside Valley, meeting the local kids, eating his Abuela's delicious food, exploring!

There's just one problem—Santi doesn't speak Spanish that well and it feels like everyone he meets in Hillside does. There's Sol (she's a soccer player who really loves books), Willie, (the artist), Alejandro (Santi's unofficial tour guide!), and Nico (Alejandro's brother and blue belt in karate).

In between all of their adventures in Hillside, Santi can't help but worry about his Spanish—what if he can't keep up?! Does that mean he's not Colombian enough?

Will Santi find his confidence and his voice? Or will his worries cost him his new friendships...and the chance to play in Hillside's summer soccer tournament?!

Graphic Novel- [Book Talk](#)



WHAT HAPPENED THEN

BY ERIN SODERBERG DOWNING

Avery and her quiet cousin, Jax, are the only ones who don't know why their family shattered years ago. When their beloved Aunt Robbie gathers the estranged family at their rundown cabin on Crooked Lake, they learn the family island is being sold by summer's end.

Forced to stay and prepare the island for sale, Avery and Jax explore the long-abandoned house and find hidden diary pages from the summer the family split. Through alternating narratives, the cousins begin to understand the joy of their imperfect family. To glue their broken family back together, they must first discover what happened then.

Mystery - [Book Talk](#)



GRADE 8

THE TEACHER OF NOMAD LAND

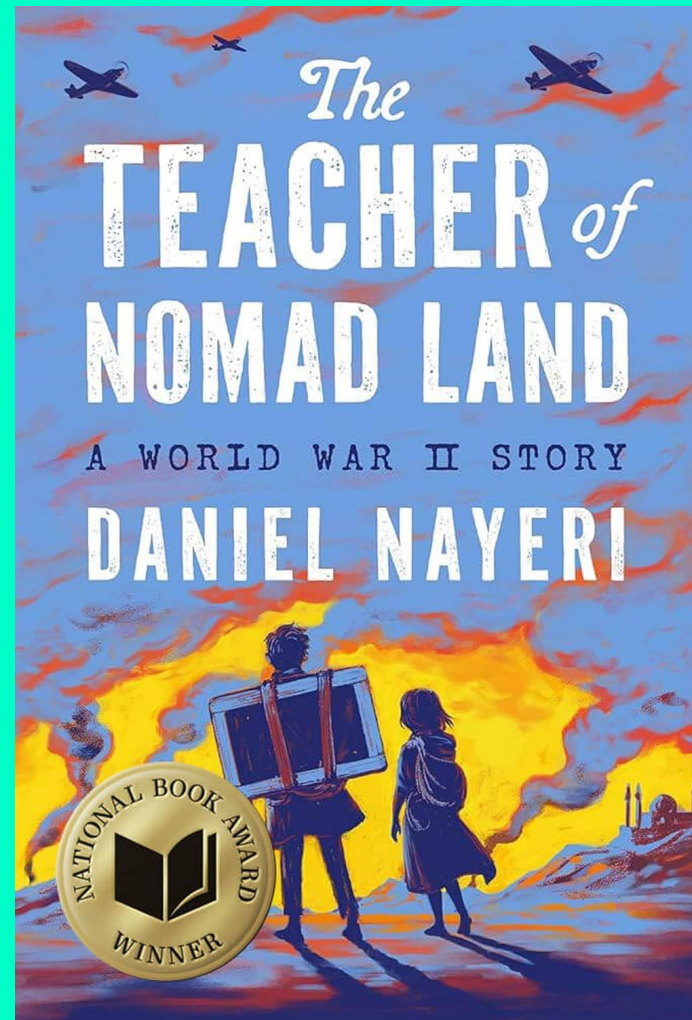
BY DANIEL NAYERI

In 1941, as German armies storm Europe, neutral Iran is occupied by British and Soviet forces. Isfahan is filled with soldiers and Nazi spies.

Orphaned siblings Babak and his little sister, fearing separation, devise a plan: Babak will become a teacher to the nomads. With a chalkboard and textbooks, they journey across the mountains to find the tribes.

On their trek, they meet a Jewish boy hiding from a Nazi spy, turning their journey into a race for survival. This historical fiction adventure is set against the backdrop of WWII, exploring if young people from different creeds and nations can find common ground amidst the chaos.

Historical Fiction - [Book Talk](#)



ALL THE BLUES IN THE SKY

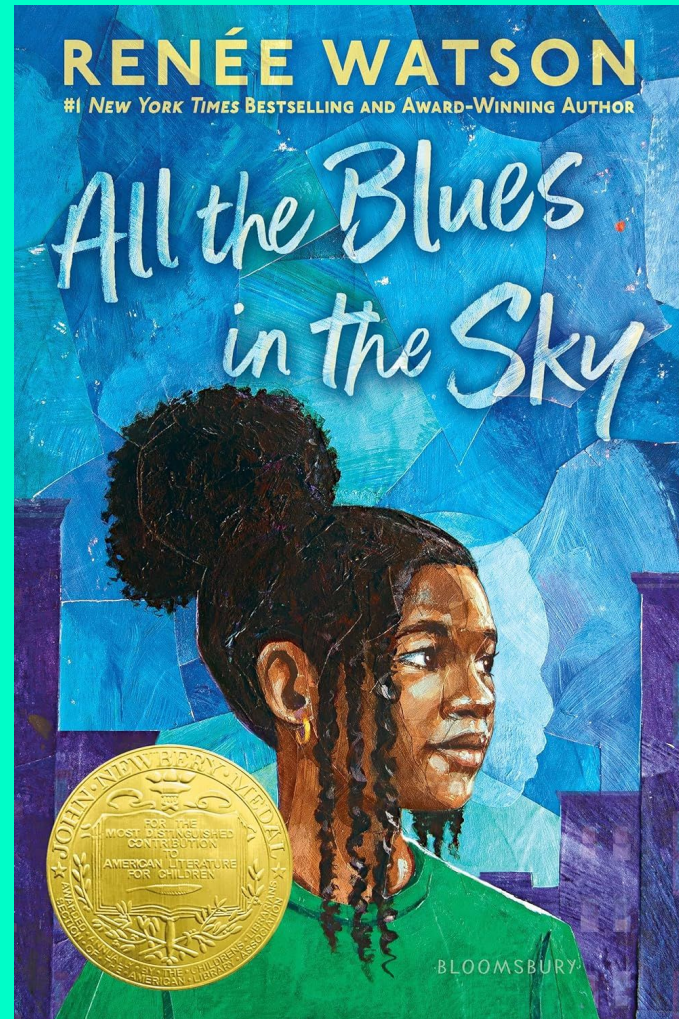
BY RENÉE WATSON

Sage's thirteenth birthday was supposed to be fun, staying up late with her best friend and watching the sunrise together. Instead, it was the day her best friend died. Without the person she had to hold her secrets and to dream with, Sage is lost.

In a counseling group, she learns that not all losses are the same, and healing isn't predictable. And even as Sage grieves, good things enter her life—steps taken toward her dream of becoming a pilot, new friends, a first kiss—and she just may find a way to know that she can feel it all.

Renée Watson shares a beautiful, important story of a girl's journey to heal, grow, and forgive herself. To read it is to see how many shades there are in grief, and to know that someone understands.

Realistic Fiction/Novel in Verse - [Book Talk](#)



HOW TO SAY GOODBYE IN CUBAN

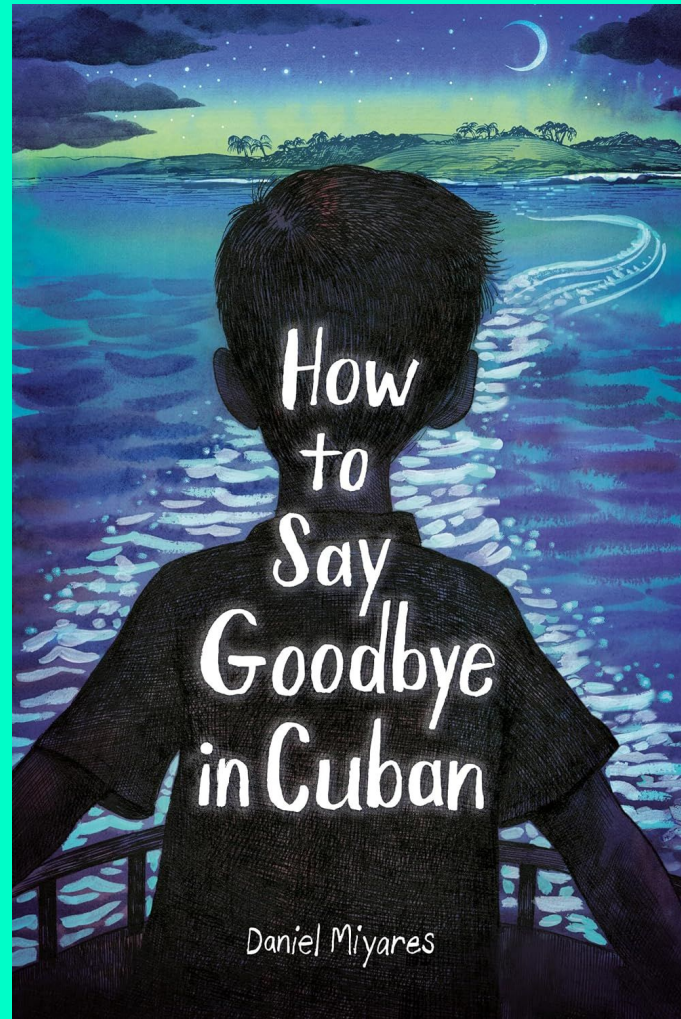
BY DANIEL MIYARES

In 1957, 12-year-old Carlos (the author's father) lives simply in the Cuban countryside with his family. When his Papi wins the lottery, the family moves to the city for Papi's new furniture business. Carlos hates leaving his Abuelo and best friend, Alvaro, and struggles to fit in at his new school.

But his problems escalate when Fidel Castro's revolution overthrows the government. Suddenly, Papi disappears; Carlos's mother says he has gone to America, and the family will follow. Carlos, however, doesn't want to leave Cuba, his only home. With Castro's soldiers policing their every move, he wonders how they will reach America and if he will ever see his father again.

This powerful book tells a timeless story of one family's quest for freedom and a new home amid massive political upheaval.

Graphic Novel/Memoir - [Book Talk](#)



A WORLD WITHOUT SUMMER

BY NICHOLAS DAY AND YAS IMAMURA

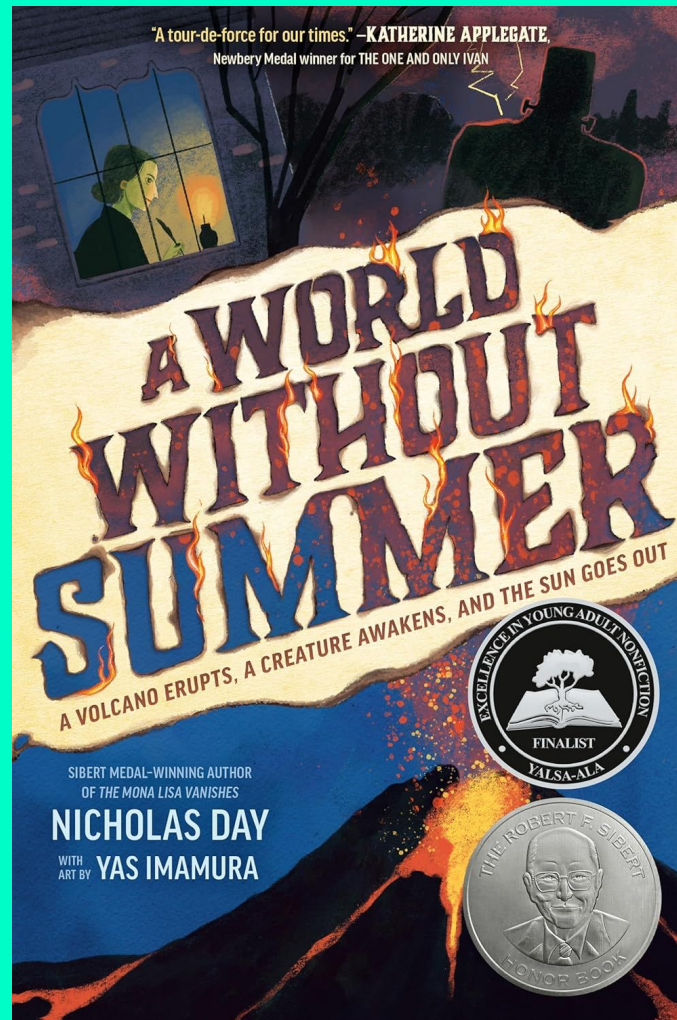
Discover how Mount Tambora's catastrophic eruption plunged the world into darkness, altering the global climate and inspiring Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

The 1815 eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia was the largest explosion in recorded history, creating a hellscape of fire and smoke. The resulting ash cloud spread globally, killing harvests and creating famine.

That same year, eighteen-year-old Mary Shelley, sheltering from the disastrous summer in Switzerland, was inspired by the weather to write *Frankenstein*.

In this middle-grade narrative nonfiction, Nicholas Day traces the far-reaching effects of this single event, showcasing the people, places, and inventions affected, while also addressing climate change.

Narrative Nonfiction - [Book Talk](#)



SCARLET MORNING

BY ND STEVENSON

Viola and Wilmur have been waiting for their parents for fifteen boring years in the colorless town of Caveat. Their lives are a drudge of salt, trash, pirate stories, and what-ifs . . . until one very stormy night, when Captain Cadence Chase breaks down their door. They cut a deal with the captain: Chase can take their most prized possession, a mysterious book, but only if she takes them, too. After all, if their parents aren't coming, Viola and Wilmur might as well have a grand adventure to find them.

Setting sail into the treacherous and beautiful world beyond Caveat, the two inseparable friends must uncover the facts behind legend—and the key to saving all of Dickerson's Sea from obliteration—before the truth tears them apart.

Wickedly funny, deeply emotional, and sharply incisive, *Scarlet Morning* is a tale of love, betrayal, and the extraordinary lengths we'd go to save a world broken beyond repair.

Fantasy - [Book Trailer](#)



BLOOD IN THE WATER

BY TIFFANY D. JACKSON

This summer, there's blood in the water...watch out for sharks!

Brooklyn native Kaylani is spending the summer on Martha's Vineyard with the Watsons, family friends. Her mother insisted, concerned about Kaylani's frequent calls with her imprisoned father.

Kaylani is fascinated by Oak Bluffs' rich Black history. Though the Watsons' daughter, London, is unfriendly, Kaylani connects with other local kids and enjoys the beach and ice cream.

However, a shocking death—murder, drowning, or shark attack?—rocks the community.

Kaylani is determined to solve the mystery, which forces her to confront sinister truths and shocking secrets that will change her life forever.

Mystery - [Book Talk](#)

