

# Year 8 Reading Recommendations



This pack contains recommendations for the following genres:

- + Fantasy
- + Realistic contemporary
- + Gothic/Horror
- + Mystery/Thriller
- + Historical

## Fantasy



Shiori, the only princess of Kiata, has a secret. Forbidden magic runs through her veins. Normally she conceals it well, but on the morning of her betrothal ceremony, Shiori loses control. At first, her mistake seems like a stroke of luck, forestalling the wedding she never wanted, but it also catches the attention of Raikama, her stepmother. Raikama has dark magic of her own, and she banishes the young princess, turning her brothers into cranes, and warning Shiori that she must speak of it to no one: for with every word that escapes her lips, one of her brothers will die.

Penniless, voiceless, and alone, Shiori searches for her brothers, and, on her journey, uncovers a conspiracy to overtake the throne—a conspiracy more twisted and deceitful, more cunning and complex, than even Raikama's betrayal. Only Shiori can set the kingdom to rights, but to do so she must place her trust in the very boy she fought so hard *not* to marry. And she must embrace the magic she's been taught all her life to contain—no matter what it costs her.

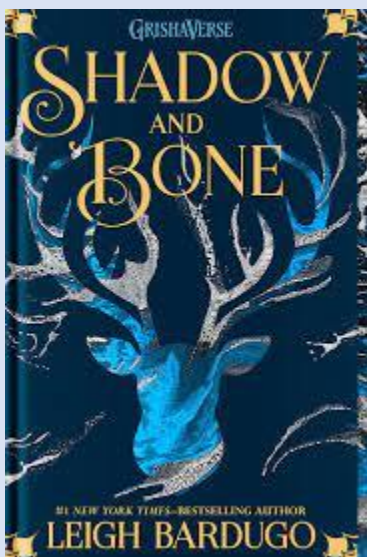


Magic doesn't exist in the broken city of Lkossa anymore, especially for girls like sixteen-year-old Koffi. Indentured to the notorious Night Zoo, she cares for its fearsome mythical creatures to pay off her family's debts. But when they are threatened by the Zoo's cruel master, Koffi unleashes a power she doesn't fully understand.

As the son of a decorated hero, Ekon destined to become an elite warrior. Until a fire at the Night Zoo upends his future and, on the brink of his final rite of passage, Ekon is cast out - his reputation left in tatters.

For Koffi and Ekon, the outlook is bleak - unless they can capture the Shetani, the vicious monster that plagues their city. As Koffi and Ekon enter the Greater Jungle, a world steeped in wild magic and danger, the tentative alliance between them is tested to the extreme.

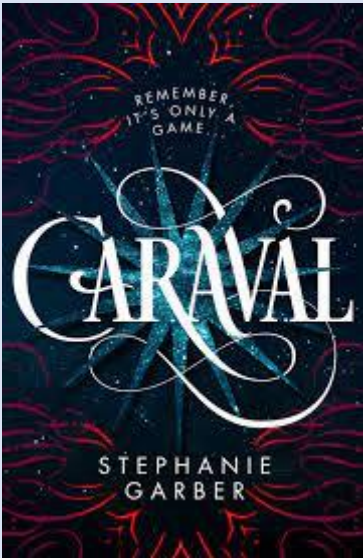
The hunt begins - but are they the hunters or the hunted?



Surrounded by enemies, the once-great nation of Ravka has been torn in two by the Shadow Fold, a swath of near impenetrable darkness crawling with monsters who feast on human flesh. Now its fate may rest on the shoulders of one lonely refugee.

Alina Starkov has never been good at anything. But when her regiment is attacked on the Fold and her best friend is brutally injured, Alina reveals a dormant power that saves his life—a power that could be the key to setting her war-ravaged country free. Wrenched from everything she knows, Alina is whisked away to the royal court to be trained as a member of the Grisha, the magical elite led by the mysterious Darkling.

Yet nothing in this lavish world is what it seems. With darkness looming and an entire kingdom depending on her untamed power, Alina will have to confront the secrets of the Grisha . . . and the secrets of her heart.



Scarlett Dragna has never left the tiny island where she and her sister, Tella, live with their powerful, and cruel, father. Now Scarlett's father has arranged a marriage for her, and Scarlett thinks her dreams of seeing Caraval—the faraway, once-a-year performance where the audience participates in the show—are over. But this year, Scarlett's long-dreamt-of invitation finally arrives. With the help of a mysterious sailor, Tella whisks Scarlett away to the show. Only, as soon as they arrive, Tella is kidnapped by Caraval's mastermind organizer, Legend. It turns out that this season's Caraval revolves around Tella, and whoever finds her first is the winner.

Scarlett has been told that everything that happens during Caraval is only an elaborate performance. Nevertheless she becomes enmeshed in a game of love, heartbreak, and magic. And whether Caraval is real or not, Scarlett must find Tella before the five nights of the game are over or a dangerous domino effect of consequences will be set off, and her beloved sister will disappear forever.



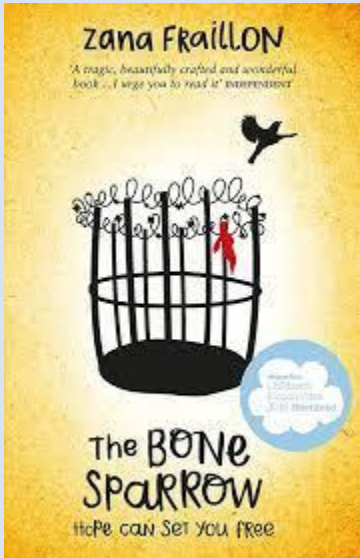
Eighteen-year-old Gu Miyoung has a secret--she's a gumiho, a nine-tailed fox who must devour the energy of men in order to survive. Because so few believe in the old tales anymore, and with so many evil men no one will miss, the modern city of Seoul is the perfect place to hide and hunt.

But after feeding one full moon, Miyoung crosses paths with Jihoon, a human boy, being attacked by a goblin deep in the forest. Against her better judgment, she violates the rules of survival to rescue the boy, losing her fox bead--her gumiho soul--in the process.

Jihoon knows Miyoung is more than just a beautiful girl--he saw her nine tails the night she saved his life. His grandmother used to tell him stories of the gumiho, of their power and the danger they pose to humans. He's drawn to her anyway.

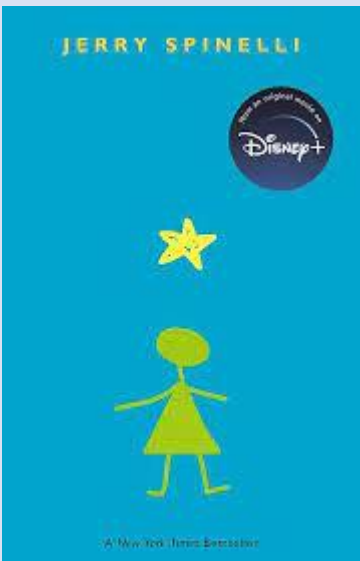
With murderous forces lurking in the background, Miyoung and Jihoon develop a tenuous friendship that blossoms into something more. But when a young shaman tries to reunite Miyoung with her bead, the consequences are disastrous . . . forcing Miyoung to choose between her immortal life and Jihoon's.

## Realistic Fiction



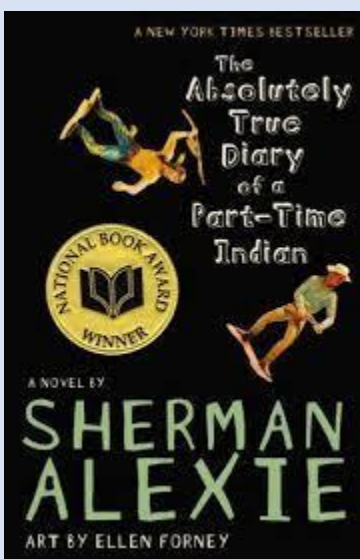
Subhi is a refugee. Born in an Australian permanent detention center after his mother and sister fled the violence of a distant homeland, Subhi has only ever known life behind the fences. But his world is far bigger than that—every night, the magical Night Sea from his mother's stories brings him gifts, the faraway whales sing to him, and the birds tell their stories. And as he grows, his imagination threatens to burst beyond the limits of his containment.

The most vivid story of all, however, is the one that arrives one night in the form of Jimmie—a scruffy, impatient girl who appears on the other side of the wire fence and brings with her a notebook written by the mother she lost. Unable to read it herself, she relies on Subhi to unravel her family's love songs and tragedies. Subhi and Jimmie might both find comfort—and maybe even freedom—as their tales unfold. But not until each has been braver than ever before.



Leo Borlock follows the unspoken rule at Mica Area High School: don't stand out--under any circumstances! Then Stargirl arrives at Mica High and everything changes--for Leo and for the entire school. After 15 years of home schooling, Stargirl bursts into tenth grade in an explosion of color and a clatter of ukulele music, enchanting the Mica student body.

But the delicate scales of popularity suddenly shift, and Stargirl is shunned for everything that makes her different. Somewhere in the midst of Stargirl's arrival and rise and fall, normal Leo Borlock has tumbled into love with her. In a celebration of nonconformity, Jerry Spinelli weaves a tense, emotional tale about the fleeting, cruel nature of popularity--and the thrill and inspiration of first love.



Bestselling author Sherman Alexie tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot. Heartbreaking, funny, and beautifully written, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, which is based on the author's own experiences, coupled with poignant drawings by Ellen Forney that reflect the character's art, chronicles the contemporary adolescence of one Native American boy as he attempts to break away from the life he was destined to live.

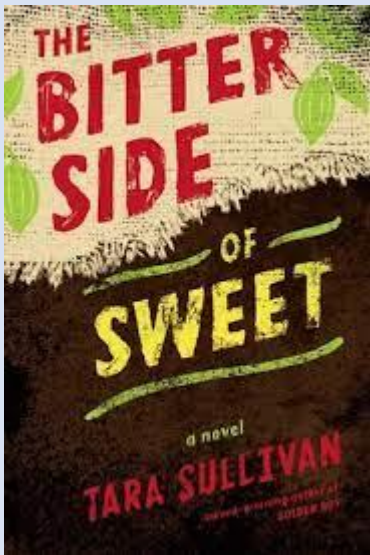


Candace Park knows a lot about playing a role. For most of her life, she's been playing the role of the quiet Korean girl who takes all AP classes and plays a classical instrument, keeping her dreams of stardom—and her obsession with SLK, K-pop's top boyband—to herself. She doesn't see how a regular girl like her could possibly become one of those K-pop goddesses she sees on YouTube. Even though she can sing. Like, really sing.

So when Candace secretly enters a global audition held by SLK's music label, the last thing she expects is to actually get a coveted spot in their trainee program. And convincing her strict parents to let her to go is all but impossible ... although it's nothing compared to what comes next.

Under the strict supervision of her instructors at the label's headquarters in Seoul, Candace must perfect her performance skills to within an inch of her life, learn to speak Korean fluently, and navigate the complex hierarchies of her fellow trainees, all while following the strict rules of the industry. Rule number one? NO DATING, which becomes impossible to follow when she meets a dreamy boy trainee. And in the all-out battle to debut, Candace is in danger of planting herself in the middle of a scandal lighting up the K-pop fandom around the world.

If she doesn't have what it takes to become a perfect, hair-flipping K-pop idol, what will that mean for her family, who have sacrificed everything to give her the chance? And is a spot in the most hyped K-pop girl group of all time really worth risking her friendships, her future, and everything she believes in?



Two young boys must escape a life of slavery in modern-day Ivory Coast. Fifteen-year-old Amadou counts the things that matter. For two years what has mattered are the number of cacao pods he and his younger brother, Seydou, can chop down in a day. This number is very important. The higher the number the safer they are because the bosses won't beat them. The higher the number the closer they are to paying off their debt and returning home to Baba and Auntie. Maybe. The problem is Amadou doesn't know how much he and Seydou owe, and the bosses won't tell him. The boys only wanted to make some money during the dry season to help their impoverished family. Instead they were tricked into forced labor on a plantation in the Ivory Coast; they spend day after day living on little food and harvesting beans in the hot sun—dangerous, backbreaking work. With no hope of escape, all they can do is try their best to stay alive—until Khadija comes into their lives.

She's the first girl who's ever come to camp, and she's a wild thing. She fights bravely every day, attempting escape again and again, reminding Amadou what it means to be free. But finally, the bosses break her, and what happens next to the brother he has always tried to protect almost breaks Amadou. The old impulse to run is suddenly awakened. The three band together as family and try just once more to escape.

## Gothic/Horror Stories

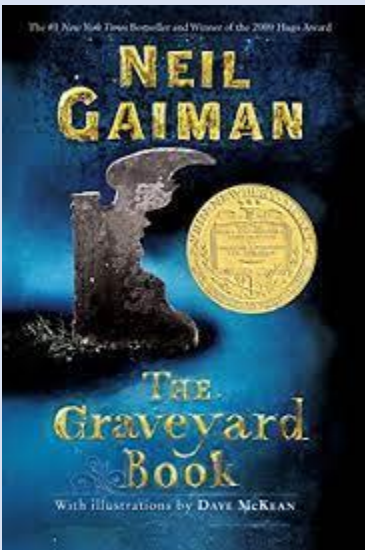


On a cold winter night, Iris and her best friend, Daniel, sneak into a clearing in the woods to play in the freshly fallen snow. There, Iris carefully makes a perfect snow angel - only to find the crumbling gravestone of a young girl, Avery Moore, right beneath her.

Immediately, strange things start to happen to Iris: She begins having vivid nightmares. She wakes up to find her bedroom window wide open, letting in the snow. She thinks she sees the shadow of a girl lurking in the woods. And she feels the pull of the abandoned grave, calling her back to the clearing...

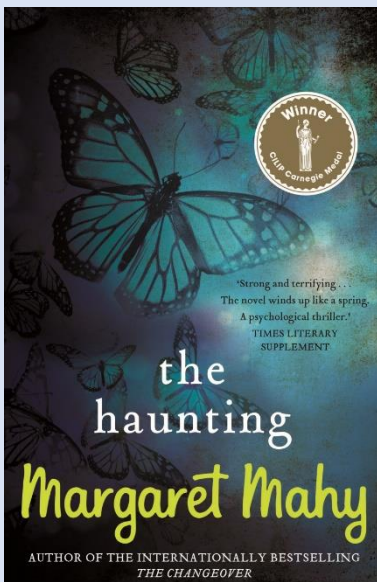
Obsessed with figuring out what's going on, Iris and Daniel start to research the area for a school project. They discover that Avery's grave is actually part of a neglected and forgotten Black cemetery, dating back to a time when White and Black people were kept separate in life - and in death. As Iris and Daniel learn more about their town's past, they become determined to restore Avery's grave and finally have proper respect paid to Avery and the others buried there.

But they have awakened a jealous and demanding ghost, one that's not satisfied with their plans for getting recognition. One that is searching for a best friend forever - no matter what the cost.



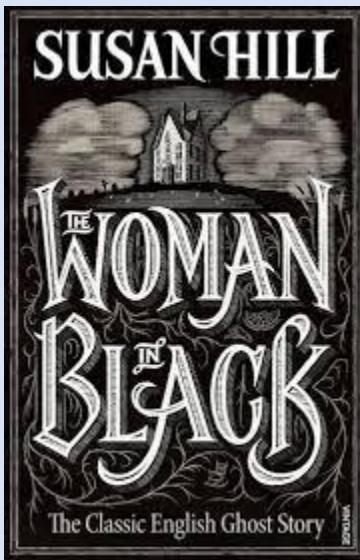
Nobody Owens, known to his friends as Bod, is a perfectly normal boy. Well, he would be perfectly normal if he didn't live in a graveyard, being raised and educated by ghosts, with a solitary guardian who belongs to neither the world of the living nor the world of the dead.

There are dangers and adventures for Bod in the graveyard: the strange and terrible menace of the Sleer; a gravestone entrance to a desert that leads to the city of ghouls; friendship with a witch, and so much more. But it is in the land of the living that real danger lurks, for it is there that the man Jack lives and he has already killed Bod's family.



Eight-year-old Barney has been haunted before. He thought it was something he'd just grow out of, like the imaginary friends his step-mother believes he has. But this time it's different. Footsteps follow him, there's a demanding voice barking orders and Barney begins to feel that sometimes his body is not his own at all . . .

With the help of his sisters, Tabitha and Troy, Barney sets out to uncover the truth about their family secrets and to find out once and for all who it is who's haunting him.



Arthur Kipps, a junior solicitor, is summoned to attend the funeral of Mrs Alice Drablow, the sole inhabitant of Eel Marsh House. The house stands at the end of a causeway, wreathed in fog and mystery, but it is not until he glimpses a wasted young woman, dressed all in black, at the funeral, that a creeping sense of unease begins to take hold, a feeling deepened by the reluctance of the locals to talk of the woman in black - and her terrible purpose.

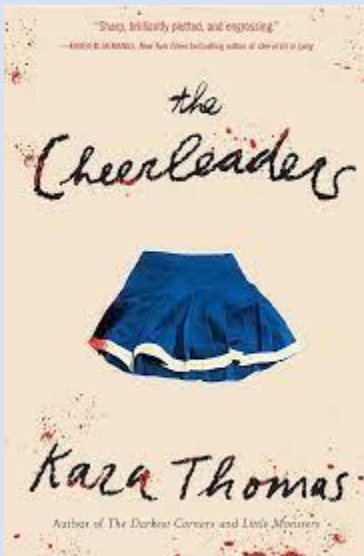


In 1918, the world seems on the verge of apocalypse. Americans roam the streets in gauze masks to ward off the deadly Spanish influenza, and the government ships young men to the front lines of a brutal war, creating an atmosphere of fear and confusion. Sixteen-year-old Mary Shelley Black watches as desperate mourners flock to séances and spirit photographers for comfort, but she herself has never believed in ghosts. During her bleakest moment, however, she's forced to rethink her entire way of looking at life and death, for her first love—a boy who died in battle—returns in spirit form. But what does he want from her?

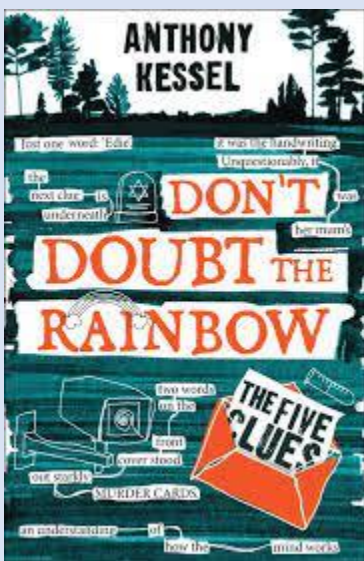
## Mystery/Thriller



Born at midnight in London, on the stroke of the new millennium, Adam is the target of a cult that believes boys born on this date must die before the end of their thirteenth year. Twelve boys have been killed so far. Coron, the crazy cult leader, will stop at nothing to bring in his new kingdom. And now he is planning a bombing spectacular across London to celebrate the sacrifice of his final victim: Adam.

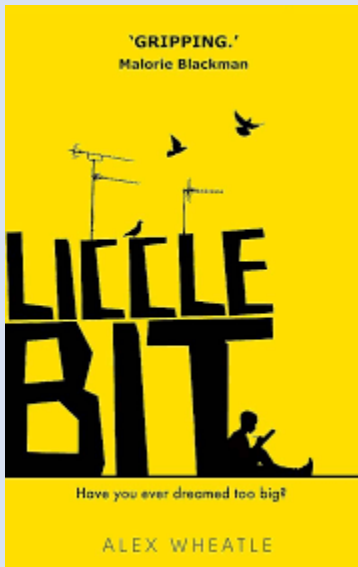


There are no more cheerleaders in the town of Sunnybrook. First there was the car accident—two girls gone after hitting a tree on a rainy night. Not long after, the murders happened. Those two girls were killed by the man next door. The police shot him, so no one will ever know why he did it. Monica's sister was the last cheerleader to die. After her suicide, Sunnybrook High disbanded the cheer squad. No one wanted to be reminded of the girls they lost. That was five years ago. Now the faculty and students at Sunnybrook High want to remember the lost cheerleaders. But for Monica, it's not that easy. She just wants to forget. Only, Monica's world is starting to unravel. There are the letters in her stepdad's desk, an unearthed, years-old cell phone, a strange new friend at school. . . . Whatever happened five years ago isn't over. Some people in town know more than they're saying. And somehow Monica is at the center of it all. There are no more cheerleaders in Sunnybrook, but that doesn't mean anyone else is safe.

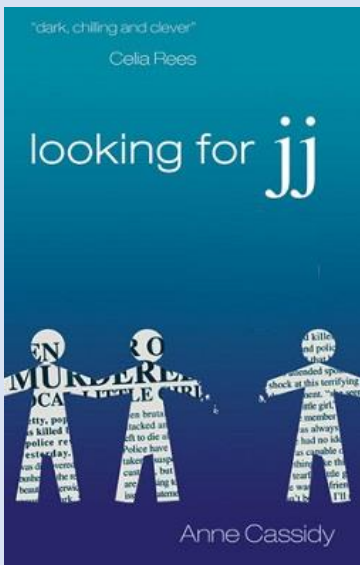


The Five Clues, is a real-time murder-mystery thriller and family drama, combining an exciting race against time with a heart-rending story about a teenager learning to live with the loss of a beloved parent. Walking back from her mother's grave, 13-year-old schoolgirl Edie Marble finds a note in a pocket of the sheepskin coat that she hasn't worn since the day, a year earlier, when she received the awful news of her mother's death. The note is from her mother, who had been looking into a corporate human rights violation and had become fearful for her life after receiving death threats. She trusts only Edie – because of their special bond and Edie's intelligence – and has laid a trail of clues for Edie to find that will help her to shed light on the violation and uncover the mystery around her death. Through her wit and determination, Edie steadily gathers evidence and negotiates the dramatic twists and turns of the story by collaborating with her friends and family to gradually unearth a sinister attempt by a pharmaceutical company to conceal their illegal development of a lethal virus. As Edie's investigations progress she is introduced, in parallel, to the Three Principles, which help her conquer various psychological stresses and support her in coming to terms with her grief.



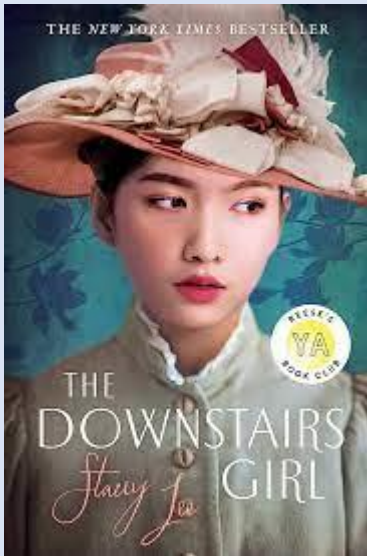


What's worse than hiding a secret? Lickle Bit's about to find out... Venetia King is the hottest girl at school. Too bad Lemar is the second shortest guy in his year. Everyone calls him Lickle Bit, and his two best friends, McKay and Jonah, never tire of telling him he has no chance with girls. Things aren't much better at home. His mum is permanently hassled, his sister a frustrated single mum and his dad moved out years ago. Lickle Bit wishes he could do something - anything! - to make life better. A new phone would be a start... As a new gang war breaks out on his estate, Lemar discovers that South Crongton's notorious gang leader has taken an interest in him. Before he knows what's happening, he's running errands. When he puts his own family in danger, Lickle Bit will be forced to question his choices. How can he possibly put things right?

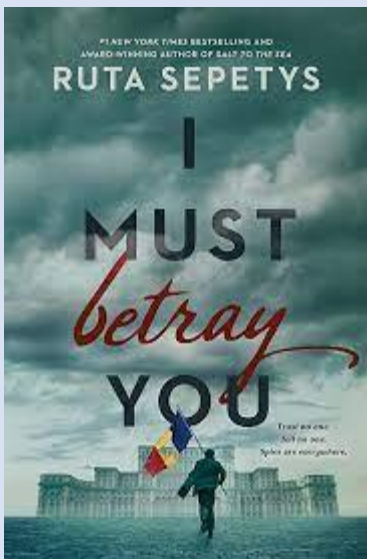


Three children walked away from the cottages on the edge of town toward Berwick Waters. Later that day, only two of them came back. . . . Alice Tully knows exactly what happened that spring day six years ago, though it's still hard for her to believe it. She'll never be able to forget, even though she's trying to lead a normal life--she has a job, friends, and a boyfriend whom she adores. But Alice's past is dangerous, and violent, and sad . . . and it's about to rip her new life apart.

## Historical

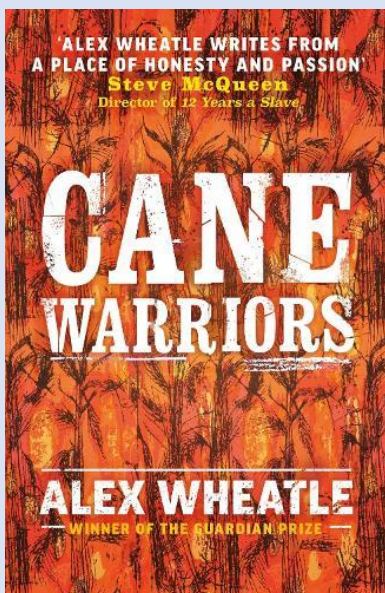


By day, seventeen-year-old Jo Kuan works as a lady's maid for the cruel daughter of one of the wealthiest men in Atlanta. But by night, Jo moonlights as the pseudonymous author of a newspaper advice column for the genteel Southern lady, "Dear Miss Sweetie." When her column becomes wildly popular, she uses the power of the pen to address some of society's ills, but she's not prepared for the backlash that follows when her column challenges fixed ideas about race and gender. While her opponents clamor to uncover the secret identity of Miss Sweetie, a mysterious letter sets Jo off on a search for her own past and the parents who abandoned her as a baby. But when her efforts put her in the crosshairs of Atlanta's most notorious criminal, Jo must decide whether she, a girl used to living in the shadows, is ready to step into the light.

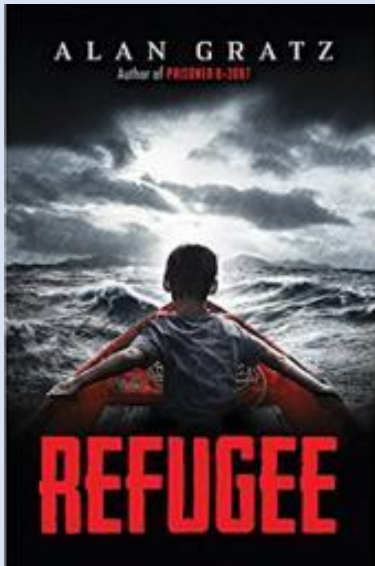


**Romania, 1989.** Communist regimes are crumbling across Europe. Seventeen-year-old Cristian Florescu dreams of becoming a writer, but Romanians aren't free to dream; they are bound by rules and force. Amidst the tyrannical dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu in a country governed by isolation and fear, Cristian is blackmailed by the secret police to become an informer. He's left with only two choices: betray everyone and everything he loves—or use his position to creatively undermine the most notoriously evil dictator in Eastern Europe.

Cristian risks everything to unmask the truth behind the regime, give voice to fellow Romanians, and expose to the world what is happening in his country. He eagerly joins the revolution to fight for change when the time arrives. But what is the cost of freedom?



Nobody free till everybody free. Moa is fourteen. The only life he has ever known is toiling on the Frontier sugar cane plantation for endless hot days, fearing the vicious whips of the overseers. Then one night he learns of an uprising, led by the charismatic Tacky. Moa is to be a cane warrior, and fight for the freedom of all the enslaved people in the nearby plantations. But before they can escape, Moa and his friend Keverton must face their first great task: to kill their overseer, Misser Donaldson. Time is ticking, and the day of the uprising approaches . . . Irresistible, gripping and unforgettable, *Cane Warriors* follows the true story of Tacky's War in Jamaica, 1760.



Three different kids.

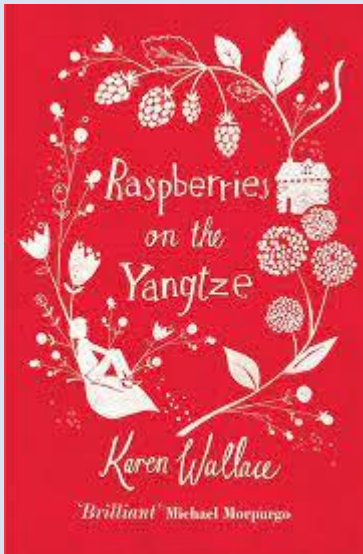
One mission in common: ESCAPE.

Josef is a Jewish boy in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he and his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world...

Isabel is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots and unrest plaguing her country, she and her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety and freedom in America...

Mahmoud is a Syrian boy in 2015. With his homeland torn apart by violence and destruction, he and his family begin a long trek toward Europe...

All three young people will go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge. All will face unimaginable dangers—from drownings to bombings to betrayals. But for each of them, there is always the hope of tomorrow. And although Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are separated by continents and decades, surprising connections will tie their stories together in the end.



The Yangtze in our story is not China's river, but rather a magical place in the Canadian countryside on the outskirts of a small town. There, in the 1950s, a group of children look forward to what promises to be a glorious summer. There are six of them—all different in age and character. Nancy is a down-to-earth girl, and her only challenge in life is Andrew, her elder brother. Then there are Clare, Amy, Sandra, and Tracy. The children have known each other and their families for most of their lives, but this is the year when everything they ever thought they knew will change.

\*Plot summaries from Goodreads and Amazon