

Looking for some good summer 2021 reads? IMS recommends...

Note: To access these books using Sora, our online book collection, please view [this document](#).

Book Suggestion



Linus Baker is a by-the-book caseworker in the Department in Charge of Magical Youth. He's tasked with determining whether six dangerous magical children are likely to bring about the end of the world.

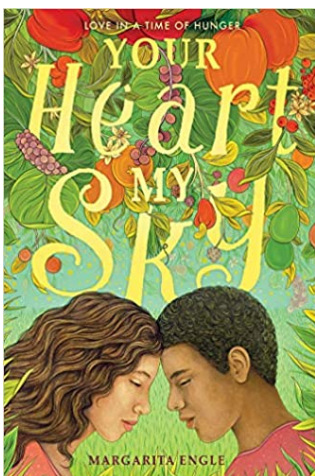
Arthur Parnassus is the master of the orphanage. He would do anything to keep the children safe, even if it means the world will burn. And his secrets will come to light.

The House in the Cerulean Sea is an enchanting love story, masterfully told, about the profound experience of discovering an unlikely family in an unexpected place—and realizing that family is yours.

Recommended by Ms. Evanko (8th grade ELA): "Such a heartwarming venture into the world of magic. A must read if you enjoy fantasy."

[The House in the Cerulean Sea by TJ Klune](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook)



The people of Cuba are living in *el período especial en tiempos de paz*—the special period in times of peace. That's what the government insists that this era must be called, but the reality behind these words is starvation.

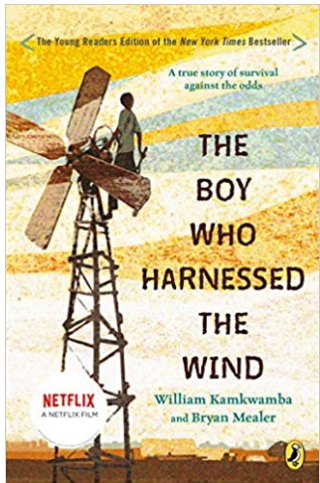
Liana is struggling to find enough to eat. Yet hunger has also made her brave: she finds the courage to skip a summer of so-called volunteer farm labor, even though she risks government retribution. Nearby, a quiet, handsome boy named Amado also refuses to comply, so he wanders alone, trying to discover rare sources of food.

A chance encounter with an enigmatic dog brings Liana and Amado together. United in hope and hunger, they soon discover that their feelings for each other run deep. Love can feed their souls and hearts—but is it enough to withstand *el período especial*?

Recommended by Ms. Richardson (Librarian): "Set in Cuba during Castro's harsh regime, this story is told through a series of poems by a girl, a boy, and the singing dog that brings them together. A fast read, beautifully written, that taught me more about history, and how desperation, hope, and heart can sustain your dreams."

[Your Heart, My Sky: Love in the Time of Hunger by Margarita Engle](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook)



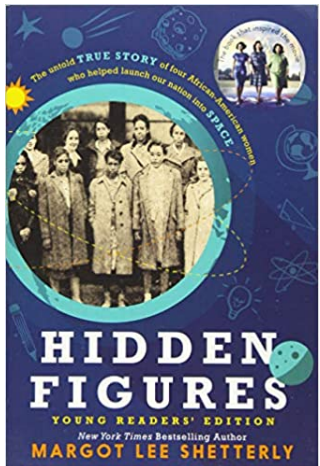
When a terrible drought struck William Kamkwamba's tiny village in Malawi, his family lost all of the season's crops, leaving them with nothing to eat and nothing to sell. William began to explore science books in his village library, looking for a solution. There, he came up with the idea that would change his family's life forever: he could build a windmill. Made out of scrap metal and old bicycle parts, William's windmill brought electricity to his home and helped his family pump the water they needed to farm the land.

Retold for a younger audience, this exciting memoir shows how, even in a desperate situation, one boy's brilliant idea can light up the world. Complete with photographs, illustrations, and an epilogue that will bring readers up to date on William's story, this is the perfect edition to read and share with the whole family.

Recommended by Ms. Panitz (6th grade science): "This book portrays science in the real world" and Ms. Griffin (6th grade ELA): "I recommend this book because it is a true story that shows the power of perseverance, the importance of following dreams, and the impact that the love and support of family and friends can have."

[The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind \(Young Readers' Edition\) by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook)



Before John Glenn orbited the earth, or Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, a group of dedicated female mathematicians known as "human computers" used pencils, slide rules, and adding machines to calculate the numbers that would launch rockets, and astronauts, into space.

This book brings to life the stories of Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson, Katherine Johnson, and Christine Darden, who lived through the Civil Rights era, the Space Race, the Cold War, and the movement for gender equality, and whose work forever changed the face of NASA and the country.

Recommended by Ms. Panitz (6th grade science): "The impact of a diverse group of women on science."

[Hidden Figures \(Young Readers' Edition\) by Margot Lee Shetterly](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)



Soldier. Summoner. Saint. Orphaned and expendable, Alina Starkov is a soldier who knows she may not survive her first trek across the Shadow Fold—a swath of unnatural darkness crawling with monsters. But when her regiment is attacked, Alina unleashes dormant magic not even she knew she possessed.

Now Alina will enter a lavish world of royalty and intrigue as she trains with the Grisha, her country’s magical military elite—and falls under the spell of their notorious leader, the Darkling. He believes Alina can summon a force capable of destroying the Shadow Fold and reuniting their war-ravaged country, but only if she can master her untamed gift.

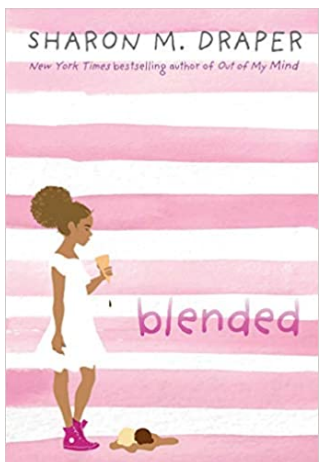
As the threat to the kingdom mounts and Alina unlocks the secrets of her past, she will make a dangerous discovery that could threaten all she loves and the very future of a nation.

Welcome to Ravka . . . a world of science and superstition where nothing is what it seems.

Recommended by Ms. Chillemi (8th grade ELA): “At the start of the pandemic, I was immediately captivated while reading this series (broken into three mini series to cover different parts and time periods of her fantasy world). Leigh Bardugo takes the idea of those who have power and those who do not, and runs with it in a way that makes you want to keep reading and reading. Also...it was just turned into a Netflix series and I always recommend reading the books first :)”

[Shadow and Bone by Leigh Bardugo](#) **Note: This book is the first in an extended series including “Shadow and Bone” (trilogy), “Six of Crows” (duology), and “King of Scars” (duology)

[Sora](#) (ebook)



Eleven-year-old Isabella’s parents are divorced, so she has to switch lives every week: One week she’s Isabella with her dad, his girlfriend Anastasia, and her son Darren living in a fancy house where they are one of the only black families in the neighborhood. The next week she’s Izzy with her mom and her boyfriend John-Mark in a small, not-so-fancy house that she loves.

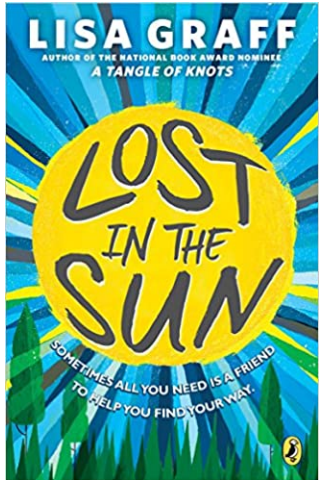
Because of this, Isabella has always felt pulled between two worlds. And now that her parents are divorced, it seems their fights are even worse, and they’re always about HER. Isabella feels even more stuck in the middle, split and divided between them than ever. And she’s beginning to realize that being split between Mom and Dad is more than switching houses, switching nicknames, switching backpacks: it’s also about switching identities. Her dad is black, her mom is white, and strangers are always commenting: “You’re so exotic!” “You look so unusual.” “But what are you really?” She knows what they’re really saying: “You don’t look like your parents.” “You’re different.” “What race are you really?” And when her parents, who both get engaged at the same time, get in their biggest fight ever, Isabella doesn’t just feel divided, she feels ripped in two. What does it mean to be half white or half black? To belong to half mom and half dad? And if you’re only seen as half of this and half of that, how can you ever feel whole?

It seems like nothing can bring Isabella’s family together again—until the worst happens. Isabella and Darren are stopped by the police. A cell phone is mistaken for a gun. And shots are fired.

Recommended by Ms. Rust (Instructional Coach): “Izzy’s voice really shines through in this story about a girl who feels divided. Her strong, resilient personality is inspirational.”

[Blended by Sharon M. Draper](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)



Everyone says that middle school is awful, but Trent knows nothing could be worse than the year he had in fifth grade, when a freak accident on Cedar Lake left one kid dead, and Trent with a brain full of terrible thoughts he can't get rid of. Trent's pretty positive the entire disaster was his fault, so for him middle school feels like a fresh start, a chance to prove to everyone that he's not the horrible screw-up they seem to think he is.

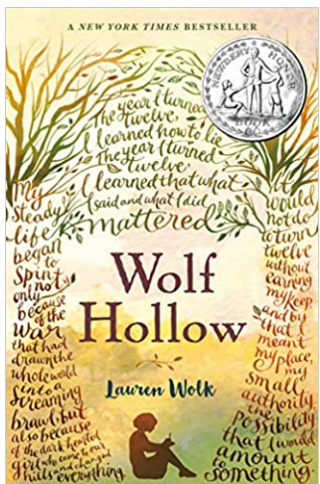
If only Trent could make that fresh start *happen*.

It isn't until Trent gets caught up in the whirlwind that is Fallon Little—the girl with the mysterious scar across her face—that things begin to change. Because fresh starts aren't always easy. Even in baseball, when a fly ball gets lost in the sun, you have to remember to shift your position to find it.

Recommended by Ms. Rust (Instructional Coach): "A powerful story about a boy who is going through an unimaginably difficult time, and how he finds strength in himself and others that allows him to move on."

[Lost in the Sun by Lisa Graff](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)



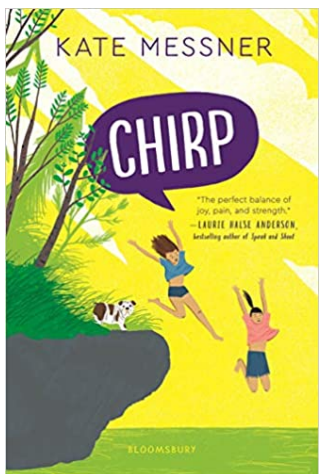
Despite growing up in the shadows cast by two world wars, Annabelle has lived a mostly quiet, steady life in her small Pennsylvania town. Until the day new student Betty Glengarry walks into her class. Betty quickly reveals herself to be cruel and manipulative, and though her bullying seems isolated at first, it quickly escalates. Toby, a reclusive World War I veteran, soon becomes the target of Betty's attacks. While others see Toby's strangeness, Annabelle knows only kindness. And as tensions mount in their small community, Annabelle must find the courage to stand as a lone voice for justice.

The brilliantly crafted debut of Newbery Honor– and Scott O'Dell Award–winning author Lauren Wolk (*Beyond the Bright Sea, Echo Mountain*), *Wolf Hollow* is a haunting tale of America at a crossroads and a time when one girl's resilience, strength, and compassion help to illuminate the darkest corners of history.

Recommended by Ms. Kozak (7th grade ELA): "A beautifully written book, this story pulls you right into Annabelle's small town world as she deals with bullying while finding the strength to stand up for a friend. It is a story about kindness, courage, and a bit of mystery!"

[Wolf Hollow by Lauren Wolk](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)



When Mia moves to Vermont the summer after seventh grade, she's recovering from the broken arm she got falling off a balance beam. And packed away in the moving boxes under her clothes and gymnastics trophies is a secret she'd rather forget.

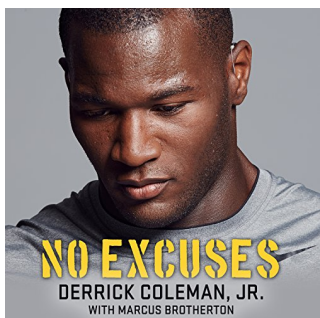
Mia's change in scenery brings day camp, new friends, and time with her beloved grandmother. But Gram is convinced someone is trying to destroy her cricket farm. Is it sabotage or is Gram's thinking impaired from the stroke she suffered months ago? Mia and her friends set out to investigate, but can they uncover the truth in time to save Gram's farm? And will that discovery empower Mia to confront the secret she's been hiding--and find the courage she never knew she had?

In a compelling story rich with friendship, science, and summer fun, a girl finds her voice while navigating the joys and challenges of growing up.

Recommended by Dr. James (Librarian): "This book addresses sexual harassment, a topic that is not discussed much, in a very thoughtful way."

[Chirp by Kate Messner](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)

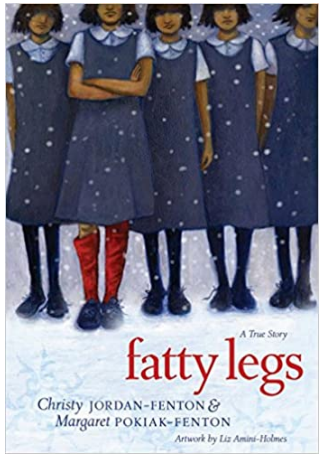


In this inspirational memoir, Derrick Coleman, Jr., the Seattle Seahawks fullback who won the 2014 Super Bowl with the Seahawks in his second year in the NFL, relates his inspirational story of hard work and determination in his own words. Showcasing his unlikely and challenging journey to become the first deaf athlete to play offense in the NFL, he talks about overcoming internal and external obstacles in the course of reaching your true potential.

Recommended by Ms. Nadler (6th grade ELA): "This is a wonderful story about beating the odds and demonstrating how perseverance and the human spirit can win."

[No Excuses: Growing Up Deaf and Achieving My Super Bowl Dreams by Derrick Coleman, Jr.](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)

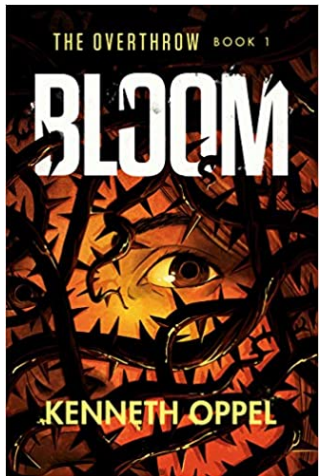


Eight-year-old Margaret Pokiak has set her sights on learning to read, even though it means leaving her village in the high Arctic. Faced with unceasing pressure, her father finally agrees to let her make the five-day journey to attend school, but he warns Margaret of the terrors of residential schools. At school Margaret soon encounters the Raven, a black-cloaked nun with a hooked nose and bony fingers that resemble claws. She immediately dislikes the strong-willed young Margaret. Intending to humiliate her, the heartless Raven gives gray stockings to all the girls — all except Margaret, who gets red ones. In an instant Margaret is the laughingstock of the entire school. In the face of such cruelty, Margaret refuses to be intimidated and bravely gets rid of the stockings. Although a sympathetic nun stands up for Margaret, in the end it is this brave young girl who gives the Raven a lesson in the power of human dignity. Complemented by archival photos from Margaret Pokiak-Fenton's collection and striking artworks from Liz Amini-Holmes, this inspiring first-person account of a plucky girl's determination to confront her tormentor will linger with young readers.

Recommended by Ms. Nadler (6th grade ELA): "This book opens readers' eyes to what the governments of both Canada and the United States did to try to take away the identities of indigenous children."

[Fatty Legs by Christy Jordan-Fenton](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)



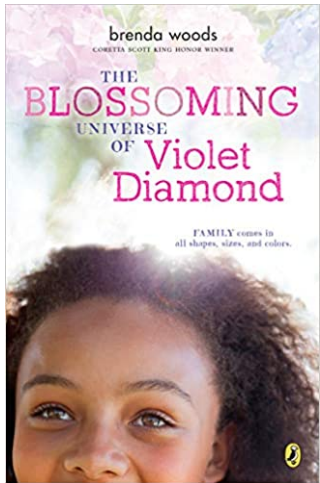
The invasion begins--but not as you'd expect. It begins with rain. Rain that carries seeds. Seeds that sprout--overnight, everywhere. These new plants take over crop fields, twine up houses, and burrow below streets. They bloom--and release toxic pollen. They bloom--and form Venus flytrap-like pods that swallow animals and people. They bloom--everywhere, unstoppable.

Or are they? Three kids on a remote island seem immune to the toxic plants. Anaya, Petra, Seth. They each have strange allergies--and yet *not* to these plants. What's their secret? Can they somehow be the key to beating back this invasion? They'd better figure it out fast, because it's starting to rain again....

Recommended by Ms. Richardson (Librarian): "The first book in a terrific sci-fi/horror trilogy."

[Bloom \(Book 1 in "The Overthrow" series\) by Kenneth Oppel](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)



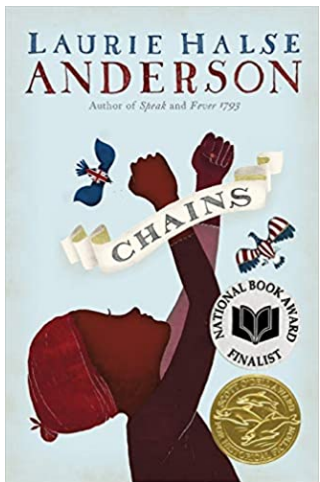
Coretta Scott King Honor winner Brenda Woods' moving, uplifting story of a girl finally meeting the African American side of her family explores racism and how it feels to be biracial, and celebrates families of all kinds.

Violet is biracial, but she lives with her white mother and sister, attends a mostly white school in a white town, and sometimes feels like a brown leaf on a pile of snow. Now that she's eleven, she feels it's time to learn about her African American heritage, so she seeks out her paternal grandmother. When Violet is invited to spend two weeks with her new *Bibi* (Swahili for "grandmother") and learns about her lost heritage, her confidence in herself grows and she discovers she's not a shrinking Violet after all. From a Coretta Scott King Honor-winning author, this is a powerful story about a young girl finding her place in the world.

Recommended by Ms. Meiseles (6th grade ELA): "This is a timely, moving, uplifting story of a girl finally meeting the African American side of her family. The book explores racism and how it feels to be biracial, and celebrates families of all kinds."

[The Blossoming Universe of Violet Diamond by Brenda Woods](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)



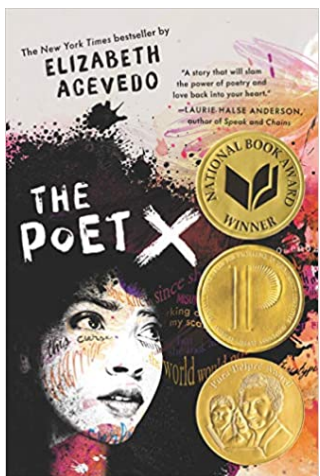
As the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel wages her own fight...for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel.

When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave with ties to the Patriots, he encourages her to spy on her owners, who know details of British plans for invasion. She is reluctant at first, but when the unthinkable happens to Ruth, Isabel realizes her loyalty is available to the bidder who can provide her with freedom.

Recommended by Ms. Mitchell (7th/8th grade U.S. History): "Historical fiction is one of my favorite genres. Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson is about the experiences of a 13 year old enslaved girl, Isabel, living in New York City during the American Revolution. It's well-written and a compelling story about freedom. A page turner!"

[Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson](#) *Note: This book is the first in the "Seeds of America" trilogy

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)



Xiomara Batista feels unheard and unable to hide in her Harlem neighborhood. Ever since her body grew into curves, she has learned to let her fists and her fierceness do the talking.

But Xiomara has plenty she wants to say, and she pours all her frustration and passion onto the pages of a leather notebook, reciting the words to herself like prayers—especially after she catches feelings for a boy in her bio class named Aman, who her family can never know about.

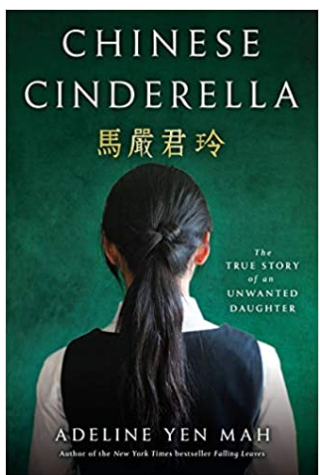
With Mami's determination to force her daughter to obey the laws of the church, Xiomara understands that her thoughts are best kept to herself. So when she is invited to join her school's slam poetry club, she doesn't know how she could ever attend without her mami finding out. But she still can't stop thinking about performing her poems.

Because in the face of a world that may not want to hear her, Xiomara refuses to be silent.

Recommended by Ms. Daley (Assistant Principal): "This book is unique in that it is written in poetic form. Reading this book is a great way to read out of your comfort zone. The author uses a novel in verse approach to tell the story of an amazing heroine!"

[The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)



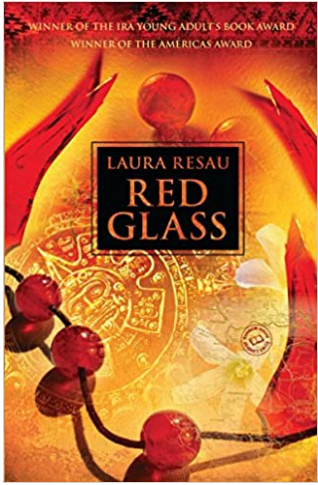
A Chinese proverb says, "Falling leaves return to their roots." In her own courageous voice, Adeline Yen Mah returns to her roots to tell the story of her painful childhood and her ultimate triumph in the face of despair.

Adeline's affluent, powerful family considers her bad luck after her mother dies giving birth to her, and life does not get any easier when her father remarries. Adeline and her siblings are subjected to the disdain of her stepmother, while her stepbrother and stepsister are spoiled with gifts and attention. Although Adeline wins prizes at school, they are not enough to compensate for what she really yearns for -- the love and understanding of her family. Like the classic Cinderella story, this powerful memoir is a moving story of resilience and hope.

Recommended by Ms. Daley (Assistant Principal): "This is my new favorite memoir and a book that captivates you from the first page. Like the classic Cinderella fairy tale, this is a story of hope and resilience!"

[Chinese Cinderella by Adeline Yen Mah](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)



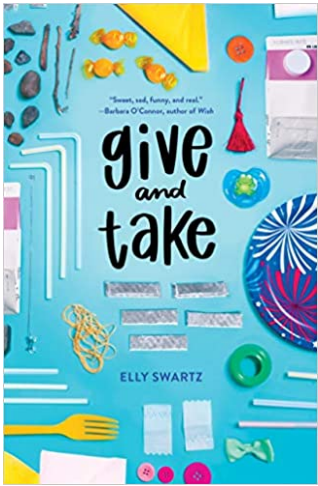
One night Sophie and her parents are called to a hospital where Pedro, a six-year-old Mexican boy, is recovering from dehydration. Crossing the border into Arizona with a group of Mexicans and a coyote, or guide, Pedro and his parents faced such harsh conditions that the boy is the only survivor. Pedro comes to live with Sophie, her parents, and Sophie's Aunt Dika, a refugee of the war in Bosnia.

Sophie loves Pedro—her *Principito*, or Little Prince. But after a year, Pedro's surviving family in Mexico makes contact, and Sophie, Dika, Dika's new boyfriend, and his son must travel with Pedro to his hometown so that he can make a heart wrenching decision.

Recommended by Ms. Daley (Assistant Principal): "This was a book recommended to me by my niece who is a voracious middle school reader. This is a wonderful story that highlights the challenges and dangers of immigration through the experiences of the main character who helps a little boy back to his family."

[Red Glass by Laura Resau](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)



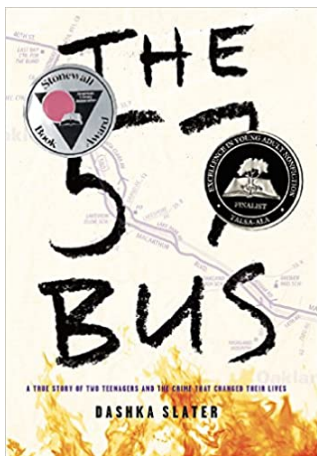
Family has always been important to twelve-year-old Maggie: a trapshooter, she is coached by her dad and cheered on by her mom. But her grandmother's recent death leaves a giant hole in Maggie's life, one which she begins to fill with an assortment of things: candy wrappers, pieces of tassel from Nana's favorite scarf, milk cartons, sticks . . . all stuffed in cardboard boxes under her bed.

Then her parents decide to take in a foster infant. But anxiety over the new baby's departure only worsens Maggie's hoarding, and soon she finds herself taking and taking until she spirals out of control. Ultimately, with some help from family, friends, and experts, Maggie learns that sometimes love means letting go.

Recommended by Ms. Daley (Assistant Principal): "I read this book as part of a book club with several of my amazing nieces. We had a terrific discussion about the anxieties we all grapple with and how we can all learn to let go a bit."

[Give and Take by Elly Swartz](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook)



One teenager in a skirt.

One teenager with a lighter.

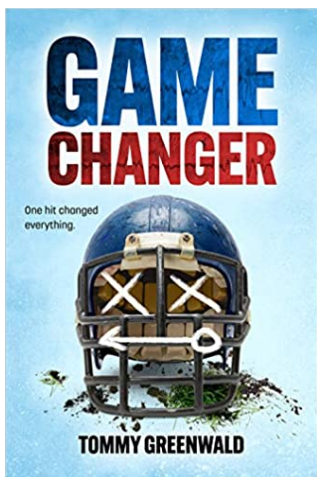
One moment that changes both of their lives forever.

If it weren't for the 57 bus, Sasha and Richard never would have met. Both were high school students from Oakland, California, one of the most diverse cities in the country, but they inhabited different worlds. Sasha, a white teen, lived in the middle-class foothills and attended a small private school. Richard, a black teen, lived in the crime-plagued flatlands and attended a large public one. Each day, their paths overlapped for a mere eight minutes. But one afternoon on the bus ride home from school, a single reckless act left Sasha severely burned, and Richard charged with two hate crimes and facing life imprisonment. The case garnered international attention, thrusting both teenagers into the spotlight.

Recommended by Ms. Daley (Assistant Principal): "A book with a strong male and female protagonist. The themes of the book continue to reflect our society today."

[The 57 Bus: The True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives by Dashka Slater](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)

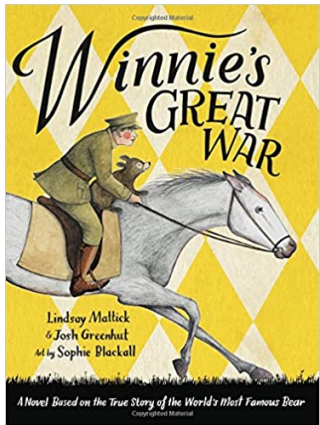


Thirteen-year-old Teddy Youngblood is in a coma, fighting for his life after an unspecified football injury at training camp. His family and friends flock to his bedside to support his recovery—and to discuss the events leading up to the tragic accident. Was this the inevitable result of playing a violent sport, or did something more sinister happen on the field that day?

Recommended by Ms. Richardson (Librarian): "This book both celebrates and questions sports and sports culture. It's a fast read told largely through text messages, conversations, newspaper articles, social media posts, and more."

[Game Changer by Tommy Greenwald](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)



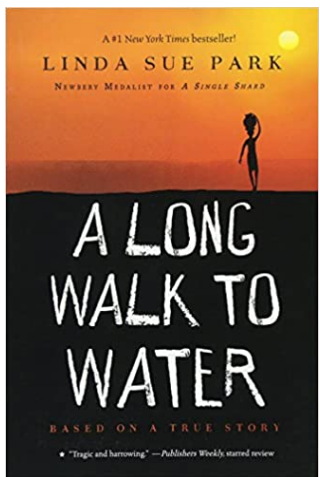
Here is a heartwarming imagining of the real journey undertaken by the extraordinary bear who inspired Winnie-the-Pooh. From her early days with her mama in the Canadian forest, to her remarkable travels with the Veterinary Corps across the country and overseas, and all the way to the London Zoo where she met Christopher Robin Milne and inspired the creation of the world's most famous bear, Winnie is on a great war adventure.

This beautifully told story is a triumphant blending of deep research and magnificent imagination. Infused with Sophie Blackall's irresistible renderings of an endearing bear, the book is also woven through with entries from Captain Harry Colebourn's real wartime diaries and contains a selection of artifacts from the Colebourn Family Archives. The result is a one-of-a-kind exploration into the realities of war, the meaning of courage, and the indelible power of friendship, all told through the historic adventures of one extraordinary bear.

Recommended by Ms. Cassidy (Technology): "This is a story that has a lot of historical accuracy about where Winnie the Pooh came from. Great story and really interesting!"

[Winnie's Great War by Lindsay Matlack and Josh Greenhut](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook)



A Long Walk to Water begins as two stories, told in alternating sections, about two eleven-year-olds in Sudan, a girl in 2008 and a boy in 1985. The girl, Nya, is fetching water from a pond that is two hours' walk from her home: she makes two trips to the pond every day. The boy, Salva, becomes one of the "lost boys" of Sudan, refugees who cover the African continent on foot as they search for their families and for a safe place to stay. Enduring every hardship from loneliness to attack by armed rebels to contact with killer lions and crocodiles, Salva is a survivor, and his story goes on to intersect with Nya's in an astonishing and moving way. Includes an afterword by author Linda Sue Park and the real-life Salva Dut, on whom the novel is based, and who went on to found Water for South Sudan.

Recommended by Ms. Griffin (6th grade ELA): "This true story, told in alternating time periods, follows the main character Salva as he journeys through his war-torn country of Sudan trying to survive."

[A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park](#)

[Sora](#) (ebook and audiobook)