

**Annotated Bibliography**  
**for**  
**ESL Novels**

**Chabot College**  
**Sabbatical Project Spring 2011**  
**Linnea Wahamaki**



## ESL 110A

### THE CAT WHO WENT TO HEAVEN

Elizabeth Coatsworth  
Aladdin Paperbacks, 1990  
74 pages – illustrated  
ISBN-13: 978-0-689-71433-7

*The Cat Who Went to Heaven is a captivating and timeless tale that weaves the fates of a poor, young struggling Japanese artist, his housekeeper, a Buddhist priest, and an inspirational cat that the artist adopts and names Good Fortune. One day a local priest visits the young artist and commissions him to paint a masterpiece of the dying Buddha for the village temple. This honor is great and could bring the artist fortune and fame. As the artist deeply ponders and contemplates what should appear in the painting, he imagines himself as Buddha and thereby has visions of what to include in his masterpiece. Ultimately, his love and devotion to his cat Good Fortune leads him to make a sacrifice worthy of Buddha himself and results in his painting being rejected. In the end, however, he is rewarded with a miracle.*

Pros: a good introduction to Buddhism; very imaginative; allows for discussion of the meaning of life, compassion, and love; nicely illustrated.

Cons: A little slow and repetitive; check availability from publisher.

Level: 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade +

About the Author: <http://www.oldchildrensbooks.com/collectors-corner/authors/elizabeth-coatsworth>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://ethemes.missouri.edu/themes/1721?locale=en>  
<http://www.enotes.com/cat-who-qn/overview>

### CHOCOLATE FEVER

Robert Kimmel Smith  
Yearling, 1978  
93 pages – illustrated  
ISBN-13: 978-0440413691  
ISBN-10: 0440413699

*Henry Green is a typical American boy who leads a happy life with his family. He has one problem, though: he's addicted to chocolate. He lives on it and loves it more than anything in the world. One day he mysteriously starts developing chocolate-smelling brown spots all over his head and body. He's teased by his peers and begins to feel more and more strange. It turns out that he's come down with "chocolate fever." He decides that his only option is to run away from his home, school, and doctor, but while he's trying to disappear, he finds himself involved in a hilarious kidnapping plot.*

Pros: A lighthearted, fun, imaginative story; easy to follow; fast paced; easy dialog and sentence structure; allows for discussion of friendship, differences, health issues, teasing, food.

Cons: None

Level: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

About the Author: <http://www.robertkimmelsmith.com/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://www.webenglishteacher.com/rksmith.html>

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/collateral.jsp?id=10824>

[http://www.mce.k12tn.net/chocolate/fever/chocolate\\_fever.htm](http://www.mce.k12tn.net/chocolate/fever/chocolate_fever.htm)

### **THE COURAGE OF SARAH NOBLE**

Alice Dalgliesh

Aladdin Paperbacks 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2000

55 pages – illustrated

ISBN-13: 978-0689715402

ISBN-10: 0689715404

*Eight-year old Sarah Noble leaves the comfort of her home to make a trek with her father to their new home site in a settlement far away. Once there, Sarah befriends some local Indians while her father builds the house where her family will soon live. Sarah must muster up all her courage when her father decides to leave her in the care of Tall John, a local Indian, while he returns to fetch his family and bring them back to their new home.*

Pros: Historical fiction; nice, easy pace; minimal characters to keep track of; provides insight into what life was like as settlers ventured westward in search of new land.

Cons: References to God/Bible; some disparaging remarks about Native American Indians.

Level: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

About the Author: <http://www.childrensliteraturenetwork.org/birthbios/brthpage/10oct/10-7dalglish.html>

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

<http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Lessons/crossroads/sec3/gr3/unit3/u3g3l3.html>

### **THE EARTH DRAGON AWAKES: The San Francisco Earthquake of 1906**

Laurence Yep

Harper Trophy, 2006

113 pages – includes some original photos from the earthquake

ISBN-13: 978-0060008468

*Laurence Yep narrates the parallel tales of two young boys, one Chinese and the other American, as they fight for survival in the devastating aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. The story begins on April 17<sup>th</sup> shortly before the ground starts to shake violently and ends on April 29<sup>th</sup> when the boys and their families are reunited. The reader is taken on an exciting adventure that describes how the citizens of San Francisco coped immediately after the*

*quake and how they valiantly tried to save their beloved city from the firestorm that ultimately destroyed most of the homes and businesses. Yep weaves an historical account of this disaster with the poignant friendship of the two young boys and their fathers.*

Pros: Historical fiction; nice, easy pace with simple sentence structure; local setting; allows for discussion of earthquakes.

Cons: Might be a little slow moving and repetitive for some readers.

Level: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade +

About the Author: [http://www.papertigers.org/interviews/archived\\_interviews/lyep.html](http://www.papertigers.org/interviews/archived_interviews/lyep.html)

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://suzyred.com/2007earthdragon.html>

[http://www-wce.stjohns.k12.fl.us/media/08ABF85F-](http://www-wce.stjohns.k12.fl.us/media/08ABF85F-0118C716.21/SSYRA%20lesson%20ideas%2010-11.pdf)

[0118C716.21/SSYRA%20lesson%20ideas%2010-11.pdf](http://www-wce.stjohns.k12.fl.us/media/08ABF85F-0118C716.21/SSYRA%20lesson%20ideas%2010-11.pdf) (scroll down to novel title)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YXN-T0bNBE> (book trailer on youtube)

### **THE FRIENDSHIP**

Mildred D. Taylor

Puffin Books, 1998

53 pages - illustrated

ISBN-13: 978-0140389647

*A poignant short story told through the eyes of a young black girl, Cassie Logan. The location is Mississippi and the year is 1933. One day, Cassie and her brothers observe the unjust treatment between Mr. Wallace, a white store owner, and Mr. Tom Bee, an old black man who has been frequenting the store for years. The friendship between these two men is tested as Mr. Bee becomes the victim of a violent outburst as he innocently attempts to purchase some tobacco from Mr. Wallace.*

Pros: Provides for discussion about racial relations in the Deep South before the Civil Rights Movement; easy plot to follow; nice illustrations.

Cons: The dialog may be difficult for ESL students to follow due to the extensive use of the southern dialect; violent, sad ending.

Level: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

About the Author: [http://www.olemiss.edu/mwp/dir/taylor\\_mildred/](http://www.olemiss.edu/mwp/dir/taylor_mildred/)

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

[http://www.ltl.appstate.edu/litcirunits\\_fall00/depression/G1/Section1.html](http://www.ltl.appstate.edu/litcirunits_fall00/depression/G1/Section1.html)

### **THE GHOST FOX**

Laurence Yep

Little Apple, 1997

70 pages – illustrated

ISBN-13: 978-0590472050

ISBN-10: 0590472054

*Little Lee has a special bond with his mother because the two of them have to spend a lot of time together while Big Lee, his father, spends months at a time away from home. One day Little Lee notices that his mother's behavior is changing, and she is no longer her sweet, gentle self. Little Lee sets about trying to figure out what the cause of her strange behavior is. In the end, Little Lee saves the day and brings back his mother's good spirit. The Ghost Fox is a timeless, magical folktale of good vs. evil.*

Pros: Easy to follow with fairly simple language; not too many characters to keep track of. Nice illustrations; allows for lots of predicting and discussion of Chinese culture and good vs. evil.

Cons: None.

Level: 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade

About the Author: [http://www.papertigers.org/interviews/archived\\_interviews/lyep.html](http://www.papertigers.org/interviews/archived_interviews/lyep.html)  
<http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/professional-development/childlit/yep.html>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: Log onto the Developmental Blackboard Site for ESL 110A – The Ghost Fox.

### **GRACE'S LETTER TO LINCOLN**

Peter and Connie Roop

Hyperion Books for Children, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1998

68 pages – illustrated

ISBN-13: 978-0786812967

*Eleven-year-old Grace lives with her family in New York. Her father is actively involved in campaigning for Abe Lincoln to become President and finally put an end to slavery. Grace decides that what Abe Lincoln needs to help him get elected is a beard. Believing that this would improve his appearance and thus his chances of winning the election, Grace pens a letter to Abe in which she explains her reasons for this suggestion. One day she finds that old Abe did in fact receive her letter and read it. He even wrote back to her, much to Grace's delight.*

Pros: Historical fiction; easy to follow; some idioms; historical documents in book's appendix; allows for discussion of slavery, North vs. South; political campaigns and elections.

Cons: None

Level: 3<sup>rd</sup>- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

About the Authors: <http://www.authorsillustrators.com/roop/bio.htm>

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

[http://myhero.com/myhero/go/theteachersroom/lessons\\_view.asp?id=3686](http://myhero.com/myhero/go/theteachersroom/lessons_view.asp?id=3686)

Online Learning Resources about A. Lincoln: [http://www.uen.org/general\\_learner/lincoln/](http://www.uen.org/general_learner/lincoln/)  
<http://www.easyfunschool.com/article2224.html>

## **HIROSHIMA – A NOVELLA**

Laurence Yep

Scholastic Paperbacks, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1996

64 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0590208338

*Hiroshima* is a historical novella that weaves a story of two young Japanese sisters and how they take part in the events of WWII as helpers of a labor service group during the school hours. As they go about their daily routines, little do they know that the first atomic bomb is about to be dropped on their beautiful hometown, Hiroshima. Yep tells the story of how the atomic bomb was used to stop the war with Japan and how the people suffered in the aftermath.

Pros: Easy to follow language; quick read; personal interest in the two sisters coupled with historical details and facts.

Cons: Very short; not a lot of character development; traumatic subject matter.

Level: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

About the author: [http://www.papertigers.org/interviews/archived\\_interviews/lyep.html](http://www.papertigers.org/interviews/archived_interviews/lyep.html)

<http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/professional-development/childlit/yep.html>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/33509427/LESSON-PLAN>

## **MISSISSIPPI BRIDGE**

Mildred D. Taylor

Puffin Books, 2000

62 pages - illustrated

ISBN-13: 9780553159929

*Told through the eyes of a young white boy, Jeremy Simms, this story recounts a day of tragedy. Jeremy observes firsthand at his father's store how the colored folk are treated differently from the white folk. He doesn't understand why this is so and is merely told by his father that it's because "they're different from us white folk." Jeremy feels bad when he sees how the blacks are treated and is beaten by his father for befriending some of them. The story climaxes when a bus slides off a bridge into an overflowing river and Jeremy and a black man run to the aid of the white passengers on the bus.*

Pros: A moving story depicting the unfair treatment of blacks in rural Mississippi in the 1930s.

Cons: The dialog may be difficult for ESL students to follow due to the extensive use of the southern dialect.

Level: 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade

About the author: [http://www.olemiss.edu/mwp/dir/taylor\\_mildred/](http://www.olemiss.edu/mwp/dir/taylor_mildred/)

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

<http://teacherlink.ed.usu.edu/tlresources/units/byrnes-literature/delange.html>

## **MORNING GIRL**

Michael Dorris

Hyperion Books for Children, 1992

74 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1562822842

*A lyrical story told through the eyes of Morning Girl and her brother Star Boy. It's 1492 and they're living on a beautiful Bahamian island with their family. Each chapter alternates between the two characters, and thus the reader is given a glimpse into what their lives are like. Their days and nights are filled with frolicking around the scenically beautiful island they call home. Life passes peacefully until a big storm disrupts their home and causes mayhem. After the storm, the family reunites and Morning Girl is surprised as she witnesses a boat full of strange, white people rowing toward the shore.*

Pros: Poetic language; insight into sibling relationships; allows for discussion of cultural differences; historical fiction - transports reader to another time and place.

Cons: Poetic language may be difficult for some ESL students to follow.

Level: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

About the author: <http://www.ipl.org/div/natam/bin/browse.pl/A32>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://www.cedu.niu.edu/~carger/ciee539/morngirl.html>

[http://www.lessonindex.com/Morning\\_Girl\\_by\\_Michael\\_Dorris.htm](http://www.lessonindex.com/Morning_Girl_by_Michael_Dorris.htm)

<http://www.wmich.edu/dialogues/texts/morninggirl.html>

## **STUART LITTLE**

E. B. White

Harper and Row, 1974

131 pages - illustrated

ISBN-13: 978-0064400565

*This classic tale of a mouse being born into a family in New York and the subsequent adventures that he experiences has been a delight to both children and adults worldwide.*

Pros: Imaginative and fun tale of fantasy mixed with reality.

Cons: None

Level: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade +

About the Author: <http://www.eduplace.com/kids/tnc/mtai/white.html>

Online Learning Materials/Recourses: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0164912/> (about the movie)

<http://ethemes.missouri.edu/themes/1676>

## **ESL 110B**

### **BECOMING NAOMI LEON**

Pam Munoz Ryan  
Scholastic Press, 2004  
246 pages  
ISBN-13: 978-0439803779  
ISBN-10: 0439803772

*Naomi and her younger brother Owen have been living in their great grandmother's trailer ever since their alcoholic, flighty mother abandoned them there. Their beloved "gram" takes good care of them and their lives at the Avocado Acres Trailer Park are peaceful, happy, and consistent. One day, their mother suddenly reappears and starts causing trouble as she and her boyfriend threaten to tear Naomi away from the only place she's ever really been able to call home. In order to fend off their mother's cruel wishes, Naomi, Gram, and Owen find themselves journeying to southern Mexico in search of their only hope of keeping the family together: Santiago, their long lost father.*

Pros: Delightful story; engagingly written; colorful characters; American and Mexican culture.

Cons: None

Level: 5<sup>th</sup> grade +

About the author: <http://www.pammunozryan.com/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

<http://www.emporia.edu/libsv/wawbookaward/masterlists/becomingnaomileon.htm>

<http://www.neiu.edu/~yal/bnlu.html>

### **DEAR MR. HENSHAW**

Beverly Cleary  
Harper Collins, 2000  
160 pages – illustrated  
ISBN-13: 978-0380709588

*Leigh Butts is a quiet, bright eleven-year-old boy who lives alone with his divorced mother in Pacific Grove, a seaside town south of the San Francisco Bay Area. One day Leigh's teacher assigns a project requiring each student to write letters to one of their favorite authors. Leigh chooses Mr. Henshaw as his correspondence partner. Surprisingly the two keep up their letter writing. Through his letters to the author and then subsequent diary entries, we learn about how Leigh is coping with stolen lunches, an absentee father, a desire to become a writer, and loneliness. A charming story that both children and adults can relate to.*

Pros: Written in a unique format through letters and diary entries; some humor and development between parental-child relationships.

Cons: Mostly “young boy” content; no ethnic/culture diversity.

Level: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

About the Author: <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/contributor.jsp?id=2079>

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

<http://www.easyfunschool.com/article1977.html>

<http://www.sdcoe.net/score/dear/deartg.html>

### **FEATHERS**

Jacqueline Woodson

Scholastic, 2008

118 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0545107679

*Eleven-year-old Frannie is trying to make sense of Emily Dickinson’s poem “Hope is a Thing with Feathers” that her teacher read to the class. Because Frannie has experienced so much sadness in her short life, she hasn’t thought much about hope, but this poem has her pondering it. Frannie goes about her daily routine in her modest, lower-class, predominantly African-American neighborhood and school. However, one day her life becomes more interesting when a new boy enrolls in her school and enters her classroom. He’s a white boy and his name is Jesus. Suddenly all the talk is about this mysterious new white kid. The coming months bring many changes and surprises to Frannie’s life and environment. She grapples with these challenges yet maintains a hopeful outlook as she struggles with daily issues of race, faith, and prejudice. Feathers sends a heartwarming, hopeful message about many of the struggles adolescents deal with.*

Pros: explores bullying at school; interesting characters, including Frannie’s hearing-impaired brother.

Cons: Set in 1971.

Level: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade +

About the Author: <http://www.jacquelinewoodson.com/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=9032665> (interview with the author on NPR about Feathers)

<http://www.the-best-childrens-books.org/Feathers-by-Jacqueline-Woodson.html>

### **GOODBYE VIETNAM**

Gloria Whelan

Yearling, 1993

144 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0679823766

*Forced to flee her beloved homeland in Vietnam with her family, young Mai endures a dangerous journey on a rickety old boat along with other refugees fleeing for their lives. Along the way, Mai and her family endure many hardships but also forge lasting friendships with their fellow countrymen. Finally, when they reach Hong Kong, they must put their dreams of starting a new life on hold as they are housed with thousands of other desperate refugees in warehouses where living conditions are unpleasant, unhealthy, and at times even dangerous.*

Pros: Insights into Vietnamese culture and history; appeals to both male and female readership; provides lots of opportunity for predicting.

Cons: Primary focus on Vietnamese culture; may evoke emotional feelings among certain Vietnamese students.

Level: 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

About the Author: <http://www.gloriawhelan.com/about.htm>

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

<http://saxonhomeschool.hmhco.com/ha/Resources/saxonhomeschool/> (scroll down to novel)

### **HUSH**

Jacqueline Woodson

Speak, 2010

180 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0142415511

*Twelve-year-old Toswiah Green's life suddenly is turned upside down when her father, an African-American police officer, decides to testify against two fellow white officers in a murder case. In order to shield the family from possible repercussions, the government puts them into protective custody. In the middle of the night, without telling anyone, they are forced to leave their comfortable home and surroundings in Denver and relocate to another state. Toswiah, her mother, father, and older sister must reinvent themselves and adjust to a new apartment, neighborhood, work, and school. The family finds itself being torn apart as they each struggle to forget their past and embrace their new reality.*

Pros: Realistic fiction; unusual plot.

Cons: Focus is primarily on the two female teenaged characters; not a lot of action.

Level: 6<sup>th</sup> Grade +

About the Author: <http://www.jacquelinewoodson.com/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://www.usmarshals.gov/witsec/index.html>

Log onto the Developmental Blackboard Site for ESL 110B – Hush.

## **IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD**

Judy Blume

Yearling, 1986

176 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0440441588

ISBN-10: 0440441587

*Karen Newman, a lively fifth grader living in New Jersey, is at a loss. Her parents have decided that they simply can no longer live together and are getting divorced. Karen tries her best to understand this new reality but has big hopes of being able to get her parents back together again and stop the divorce from happening. A touching look inside the lives of children and how they cope with divorce.*

Pros: Easy language and dialog; allows for further discussion of divorce, single-parent families.

Cons: A little outdated; somewhat lacking in character development; many unanswered questions.

Level: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade +

About the Author: <http://www.judyblume.com/about.php>

Online Learning Activities/Resources: n/a

## **A JAR OF DREAMS**

Yoshiko Uchida

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1993

131 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0153003592

ISBN-10: 0153003596

*Eleven-year-old Rinko Tsujimura experiences prejudice while living with her Japanese-American family in Berkeley, California, during the Great Depression. One day her aunt decides to visit from Japan, so the family excitedly prepares the house for her arrival. Once there, her Aunt Waka teaches Rinko that there is nothing to be ashamed of about her Japanese heritage. Rinko and her family gain strength through Aunt Waka's wise words and they gain a better understanding of dealing with the difficulties life brings them. Rinko establishes a very close bond with her beloved aunt, who unfortunately must soon return to her native Japan.*

Pros: Touching story; focused on San Francisco Bay Area; clear language and dialogs; cultural diversity.

Cons: Interest level may be more for female readership.

Level: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

About the Author: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoshiko\\_Uchida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoshiko_Uchida)

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://ethemes.missouri.edu/themes/435?locale=en>

## **THE MUSIC OF DOLPHINS**

Karen Hesse

Oxford Childrens, 2004

192 pages

ISBN-13: 9780192719607

*When Mila is rescued by the Coast Guard from an unpopulated island, she ignites the curiosity of millions around the world. Mila is a feral child who has been cared for by a family of dolphins ever since she was lost at sea when the small airplane was traveling in with her mother and brother crashed. Now she finds herself “government property” and is being watched over by a group of doctors and researchers who try to learn from her but who also ultimately want her to rejoin the human race. This poignant story shares the highs and lows of her experiences. Excellent insight into the development of language and social development and integration.*

Pros: Clear and easy language use; short sentences and simple language structure tries to mirror Mila’s efforts at learning English; repetitive language; fun and different story; not too many characters to keep track of. Themes: man vs. nature; newcomer in a different culture.

Cons: Possibly more suited for a female readership.

Level: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

About the Author: [http://www.childrensliteraturenetwork.org/aifolder/aipages/ai\\_h/hesse.php](http://www.childrensliteraturenetwork.org/aifolder/aipages/ai_h/hesse.php)

<http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-hesse-karen.asp>

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

<http://www.multcolib.org/talk/guides-music.html>

<http://www.angelfire.com/ny4/dolphinsong/>

## **THE RIVER BETWEEN US**

Richard Peck

Scholastic, 2004

164 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0142403105

ISBN-10: 0142403105

*Tilly Pruitt and her family live alongside the Mississippi River in Illinois. The battles of the Civil War have been nearing their town and Tilly’s twin brother Noah is anxious to become a soldier and help preserve the Union. One day two striking young women arrive in town by steamboat from New Orleans. Tilly’s mother offers to take them in as boarders. And so a whole new world begins to open up for Tilly as she befriends the two mysterious strangers. Peck provides a vivid and an engaging account of the Civil War through the eyes of the various female characters in this riveting historical novel.*

Pros: Colorful female characters.

Cons: Some use of dialectal and French language; may be too focused on historical war context for some readers' interest.

Level: 6<sup>th</sup> Grade +

About the Author: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard\\_Peck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Peck) (click on "writer")

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/collateral.jsp?id=10911>

## **RULES**

Cynthia Lord

Scholastic Paperback, 2008

224 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0439443838

*Twelve-year-old Catherine lives with her parents and her brother David in a seaside resort in Maine. She leads a typical life of a teenager except that her brother David is autistic. Catherine helps care for him and has made it her mission to teach him a set of rules which will hopefully make life easier for him. As summer vacation begins, Catherine feels a bit at a loss. Her best friend has gone to California for the summer and she must help her mother watch David.*

*Unexpectedly, she meets two people: Kristie, who moves in next door, and Jason, a patient at the same clinic her brother goes to for therapy. Told through the eyes of Catherine, Rules offers the reader a candid look at what it is like to live with someone who has special needs.*

Pros: Gives insight into living with a special needs family member; themes: compassion and friendship.

Cons: None

Level: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade +

About the Author: <http://www.cynthialord.com/index.htm>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://www.cynthialord.com/materials.html>

## **A SUMMER TO DIE**

Lois Lowry

Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2007

160 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0385734202

*When Meg moves out of the city to the country with her family so that her father can finally finish the book he has been working on, she must share a small bedroom with her older sister, Molly. Meg and Molly couldn't be more different, and now they have to work harder and learn to get along as they both integrate into their new community and small, shared quarters. One day Molly becomes very ill and Meg's life changes as the primary focus of her parents shifts to*

*caring for their ailing daughter. As Molly's illness progresses, Meg begins to realize what her sister truly means to her.*

Pros: Nicely written and easy pace to follow. Overall a touching, emotional story.

Cons: Content includes description of a live birth; some readers may find the plot a bit depressing as the story deals with cancer and dying.

Level: Young Adult

About the Author: <http://www.loislowry.com/bio.html>

<http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/professional-development/childlit/lowry.html>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: n/a

### **1001 CRANES**

Naomi Hirahara

Yearling, 2009

225 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0440422341

*When summer vacation begins, twelve-year-old Angela is shocked to find out that she must leave behind her friends and comfortable home in Mill Valley to spend the entire summer with her grandparents and auntie in Los Angeles. Angela isn't too happy about this and lets her relatives clearly sense her unhappiness. She now must help out with the family flower shop and fold hundreds of paper cranes, which are sold as displays to newlyweds for their wedding day. Angela begrudgingly complies and becomes a vital part of her grandparents' flower business. As she puts her best efforts forth, she learns about her family's past, makes new friends, experiences her first love, and copes with her parents' impending divorce.*

Pros: Interesting characters and dialogue; themes: friendship, teen angst, first love, parental relationships, Japanese culture; primarily set in Los Angeles.

Cons: Might have too much focus on female teen angst for some male readers.

Level: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade +

About the Author: <http://www.naomihirahara.com/bio.html>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://www.naomihirahara.com/1001cranes/index.html>

**YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO SAY GOODBYE**

Patricia Hermes

Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2008

128 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1402213250

ISBN-10: 1402213255

*Thirteen-year-old Sarah Morrow's life changes in one day when her mother announces that she's dying of cancer. Sarah fights her fear and anger by trying to go about her normal daily routine while she watches her mother become sicker and sicker. Her mother spends what little time she has left making happy memories with her beloved daughter.*

Pros: Easy to follow; page turner.

Cons: Themes of death and dying; emotionally charged.

Level: 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

About the Author: <http://www.patriciahermes.com/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: n/a

CHABOT COLLEGE/ESL

## ESL 110C

### THE ACCIDENT

Todd Strasser

Dell, 1988

178 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0595396528

ISBN-10: 0595396526

*High school senior Matt's life changes when four of his friends die in a tragic car accident. His neighbor's son Chris is blamed for the deaths, which included Bobby, the son of a wealthy and well-connected family. Little by little, Matt pieces together the events that led to this tragedy and discovers the real truth behind the cause of the tragic crash. Why are the townspeople covering up the truth? Matt must decide whether to reveal what he's discovered and possibly alienate many of his friends or go along with everyone else and keep the truth buried.*

Pros: Page turner; fairly easy language and dialog.

Cons: A little dated.

Level: Young Adult

About the Author: <http://www.toddstrasser.com/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: n/a

### AFTER

Francis Chalifour

144 pages

Tundra Books, 2005

ISBN-13: 978-0887767050

ISBN-10: 0887767052

Fifteen-year-old Francis is on a school trip in New York City when he is abruptly summoned back home to Montreal only to find out the terrible news that his beloved father has committed suicide. Chalifour's gritty autobiographical novel transports the reader into the lives of those left behind: Francis, his younger brother Luc, and his grief-stricken mother. Chalifour provides the reader with an in-depth account of the emotional ups and downs that Francis and his family have to go through as they try to piece their lives back together again.

Pros: Some cultural insights into French Canadians; the novels transports you inside Francis' head.

Cons: A bleak, somber account of how a teen deals with his father's death. Topic might not be suitable for all readers.

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade +

About the Author:

[http://www.openbooktoronto.com/news/ten\\_questions\\_with\\_francis\\_chalifour](http://www.openbooktoronto.com/news/ten_questions_with_francis_chalifour)

Online Learning Materials/Resources: n/a

### **BLUE JASMINE**

Kashmira Sheth

Hyperion, 2004

186 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0786855650

*A touching story of twelve-year-old Seema, who suddenly finds herself leaving behind her comfortable life in a small village in India to move to Iowa City where her father accepts a new job. Seema must say farewell to her beloved relatives and friends from school and put down new roots in a foreign country. As she adapts to a new city, language, and culture, she experiences many highs and lows. But along the way, she learns a lot about herself and realizes the importance of true friendship and what “home” really is.*

Pros: Immigrant experiences; overall upbeat story.

Cons: None

Level: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade +

About the Author: [http://kashmirasheth.typepad.com/my\\_weblog/biography/](http://kashmirasheth.typepad.com/my_weblog/biography/)

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

[http://kashmirasheth.typepad.com/my\\_weblog/2011/01/blue-jasmine-discussion-guide.html](http://kashmirasheth.typepad.com/my_weblog/2011/01/blue-jasmine-discussion-guide.html)

<http://www.communityeducationcenter.org/book-and-lesson-ideas-5th-graders>

### **BRIAN’S RETURN**

Gary Paulsen

Random House, 1999

115 pages

ISBN-10: 0-440-41379-6

*Gary Paulsen’s popular character, Brian Robeson – first introduced in Hatchet, returns to the wilderness once again. After struggling to try to fit in back home in civilization, Brian decides to “go back in.” He yearns to return to his beloved wilderness and leave the stress and awkwardness of city life behind – at least for a little while. With his parents’ consent, during his summer vacation Brian sets out alone and journeys by canoe and on foot through the beauty of Canada’s northern forests, rivers, and lakes all in hopes of discovering his true path in life. Along the way, he is forced to refine his survival skills as he is once again confronted by many dangers of Mother Nature.*

Pros: A quick read; gripping adventure tale with details of surviving in the wilderness.

Cons: May not appeal to some readers because of its pure adventure theme.

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade +

About the Author: <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/garypaulsen/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

<http://bookwizard.scholastic.com/tbw/viewWorkDetail.do?workId=2274>

[http://litplans.com/authors/Gary\\_Paulsen.html](http://litplans.com/authors/Gary_Paulsen.html)

<http://www.randomhouse.com/book/128302/brians-return-by-gary-paulsen/9780440413790/#aboutthebook>

### **THE FOLD**

An Na

G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2008

280 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0399242762 (Hardcover)

*Joyce Parks leads a typical life of an American teenager living in southern California. She's a good daughter to her parents and helps out in her parents' Korean restaurant. She has a good relationship with her brother and sister although at times she is jealous of her sister's exquisite beauty and keen intellect. Joyce loves hanging out with her best friend, has a big crush on one of her chemistry classmates, and constantly laments over the fact that her sister got all the beauty in the family. When her eccentric Aunt Gomo wins a large sum of money in the lottery and offers to give Joyce an opportunity to have plastic surgery to improve her appearance, Joyce suddenly finds herself on a journey of self discovery and must search for her true self – inside and out.*

Pros: Controversial topics for discussion; easy and straightforward language use.

Cons: Perhaps too much focus on female teen angst for some male readers.

Level: Young Adult

About the Author: <http://www.nationalbook.org/anabio.html>

<http://www.anwriting.com/author.html>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: n/a

### **GOSSAMER**

Lois Lowry

Yearling, 2008

176 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0385734165

ISBN-10: 0385734166

*A tale of fantasy and reality: Littlest One is a “dream giver” in training and every night she and her mentor visit the home of an elderly woman to gather memories which are then transmitted to*

*the home's occupants in the form of dreams. The story weaves effortlessly between the world of the dream givers and the lives of the elderly woman, her foster child John, and his mother.*

Pros: An enchanting coming of age story which weaves fantasy and fiction; sweet characters contrasted with tormented ones.

Cons: Some students may not have a liking for “fantasy” stories.

Level: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade +

About the Author: <http://www.loislowry.com/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://www.multcolib.org/talk/guides-gossamer.html>

## **HATCHET**

Gary Paulsen

Simon & Schuster, 2006

195 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1416936473

*A riveting account of survival in the Canadian north. Thirteen-year-old Brian Robeson finds himself piloting a single engine plane when its pilot suddenly dies of a heart attack. Eventually the plane runs out of fuel and crashes into a remote lake. Brian miraculously survives along with his hatchet that he brought with him on the flight. For the next 54 days, he must use his strength, intelligence, and courage to stay alive and fend off the dangers of the wilderness that threaten to end his very existence. Sequels: The River, Brian's Winter, Brian's Return, Brian's Hunt.*

Pros: An exciting page turner; easy to follow.

Cons: Focus is on one character only; may be too much of an “adventure” story for some readers.

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade +

About the Author: <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/garypaulsen/about.html>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://www.nt.net/~torino/hatchet.html>

<http://www.glencoe.com/sec/literature/litlibrary/hatchet.html> (Click on PDF study guide)

<http://www.mce.k12tn.net/survival/hatchet/hatchet.htm>

## **JOURNEY OF THE SPARROWS**

Fran Leeper Buss

Puffin, 2002

160 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0142302095

ISBN-10: 0142302090

*Fifteen-year-old Maria risks her life along with her pregnant, older sister and younger brother to make the long and dangerous journey from their war torn homeland in El Salvador to the land of hope, America. Once they arrive safely in Chicago, Maria and her siblings must live a life of fear, working menial jobs to earn barely enough money for food. Along the way young Maria befriends many people who share her plight as well as others who graciously help her with*

*money, food, medicine, and support. Soon, however, Maria realizes that the only way to finally be reunited with her baby sister is to slip across the border into Mexico, find her, and sneak back into the United States.*

Pros: Delves into the secret lives and hardships of illegal immigrants; moving story; good pace; realistic.

Cons: Many characters to keep track of.

Level: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

About the Author: n/a

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

<http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/free-lesson-plans/immigration-to-the-united-states.cfm>

[http://edhelper.com/books/Journey\\_of\\_the\\_Sparrows.htm](http://edhelper.com/books/Journey_of_the_Sparrows.htm)

### **THE LITTLE PRINCE**

Antoine de Saint Exupery

Scholastic Inc, 1943 (translated version by Katherine Woods unavailable)

Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1998

111 pages – illustrated

ISBN-13: 978-1853261589

ISBN-10: 1853261580

*An aviator crashes alone in the vast Sahara Desert and while he frantically is trying to repair the wreckage, he meets the lonely Little Prince, who regales him with tales of his journeys from one planet to another. And so begins a fantastical dialog between these two individuals. The Little Prince poignantly describes his encounters with each lone occupant of each planet his sets foot on and shares the lessons he learns from his experiences.*

Pros: A truly unique children's tale that has stood the test of time.

Cons: May be difficult to find new copies from publisher; 1943 edition is out of print.

Level: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade +

About the Author: <http://www.pbs.org/kcet/chasingthesun/innovators/aexupery.html>

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

[http://thebestnotes.com/booknotes/Little\\_Prince\\_Exupery/The\\_Little\\_Prince\\_Study\\_Guide01.html](http://thebestnotes.com/booknotes/Little_Prince_Exupery/The_Little_Prince_Study_Guide01.html)

### **OR GIVE ME DEATH**

Ann Rinaldi

Graphia, 2004

240 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0152050764

ISBN-10: 0152050760

*Historical fact meets fiction in this riveting tale of life in Patrick Henry's household. As told through the eyes of two of Henry's daughter, Patsy and Anne, the reader is given an insider's look of what life was like growing up in Henry's family during the critical era of America's early independence from Britain. The relationships between the elder statesman, his mentally-ill wife, and their numerous children and household help are brought to life in this unique and captivating story.*

Pros: Provides a wonderful historical perspective; interesting character development.

Cons: Some difficult language, slang, idiomatic expressions.

Level: Young Adult

About the Author: <http://www.annrinaldi.net/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/>

### **THE TENT**

Gary Paulsen

Bantam Doubleday Dell Books, 1995

86 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0440219194

ISBN-10: 0440219191

*Steven's father is broke; he's sick and tired of being poor and having to work menial jobs. One day he decides to become a preacher, but not because he wants to share his devotion to God with other followers but because he figures out that it's a great way to make easy cash. And so begin the erratic travels of Steven and his father as they set up shop in small towns across Texas, preach, collect reams of cash, and befriend other swindlers. Eventually, a guilty conscious catches up with the "Preacher" and he must decide whether to continue with his scam or accept poverty but lead an honest life.*

Pros: A quick read; thought provoking content.

Cons: Somewhat repetitive content; religious themes.

Level: Young Adult

About the Author: <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/garypaulsen/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: n/a

### **TIES THAT BIND, TIES THAT BREAK**

Lensey Namioka

Laurel Leaf, 2000

154 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0440415992

*Ailen lives a happy life with her upper middle class family in China. However, one day her life changes dramatically as her parents demand that she have her feet bound, as all "good"*

daughters do. Ailen puts up a fight and refuses, thereby jeopardizing her arranged marriage to the son of a wealthy family. As Ailen enters adolescence, her family no longer supports her in her pursuit of her dream to become a teacher. Ailen must embark on a new life and becomes a nanny to the children of an American missionary couple. Her life heads off in a new direction when she leaves China with the family and accompanies them to their hometown of San Francisco.

Pros: Thoughtful exploration of cultural pressures from the past; a quick read.

Cons: None

Level: Young Adult

About the Author: <http://www.lensey.com/home.html>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: [http://www.pps.k12.or.us/schools-c/curriculum/midd/r\\_student/TiesThatBindTiesThatBreak.htm](http://www.pps.k12.or.us/schools-c/curriculum/midd/r_student/TiesThatBindTiesThatBreak.htm)

<http://betterlesson.org/lesson/11842/introduction-to-ties-that-bind-ties-that-break#/course/2068/7th-grade-english-language-arts> (Click on Ties that Bind...)

<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780440415992&view=tg>  
Log onto the Developmental Blackboard Site for ESL 110C – Ties that Bind, Ties that Break.

### **VEIL OF ROSES**

Laura Fitzgerald

Bantam Books, 2006

320 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0553383881

*Twenty-seven-year old Tamila Soroush leaves behind her parents in Iran to come to America to live with her sister and brother-in-law in Tuscon, Arizona. She welcomes this opportunity to escape the oppression of her native land and soak up her newfound freedom in the desert southwest. Unfortunately, she realizes that in order to stay beyond her tourist visa expiration date, she needs to find an American to marry. The ensuing months chronicle her experiences learning English, adjusting to American culture, living with her somewhat overbearing sister, and falling in love. Sequel: Dreaming in English.*

Pros: A fun and easy read; focus on Iranian-American culture/immigration.

Cons: Chick lit – may appeal more to a female readership.

Level: Adult

About the Author: <http://www.laurafitzgerald.com/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: n/a

## **WATER TALES**

Alice Hoffman

Scholastic Press, 2003

198 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0439474146

*Alice Hoffman's charming Water Tales consists of two novellas: Aquamarine and Indigo. Both stories weave a tale of friendship, water, and mermaids. These are magical stories that invoke childhood imaginations.*

Pros: Delightful tales of love and friendship.

Cons: Fantasy coupled with reality; very short content for semester-length assignment.

Level: 6<sup>th</sup> Grade +

About the Author: <http://search.barnesandnoble.com/Alice-Hoffmans-Water-Tales/Alice-Hoffman/e/9780439474146>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: n/a

## **WEEDFLOWER**

Cynthia Kadohata

Atheneum, 2009

272 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1416975663

*Sumiko and her younger brother Tak Tak have been living with their aunt and uncle ever since their parents perished in a tragic car accident. Sumiko lives a peaceful life helping out on her uncle's flower farm in southern California. Her life takes a sudden turn of events after the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor and the U.S. government decides to lock many Japanese Americans away in internment camps. Sumiko and her family must interrupt their life and leave behind their familiar surroundings to start over in a camp in the high desert of Arizona. Once there, Sumiko encounters the reality of the unfair treatment her people are subjected to as the war continues. However, as the months pass, she also makes new friends and learns to deal with the dire circumstances of her new, sparse surroundings.*

Pros: Poignant story about the internment of Japanese during World War II; well researched.

Cons: Some use of pigeon English; a little lengthy.

Level: Young Adult

About the Author: <http://authors.simonandschuster.com/Cynthia-Kadohata/19010675>

Online Learning Resources and Materials:

[http://books.simonandschuster.com/Weedflower/Cynthia-Kadohata/9780689865749/reading\\_group\\_guide](http://books.simonandschuster.com/Weedflower/Cynthia-Kadohata/9780689865749/reading_group_guide)

## **ESL 110D**

### **BEFORE I DIE**

Jenny Downham  
David Fickling Books, 2009  
336 pages  
ISBN-13: 978-0385751834

*Seventeen-year-old Tessa has been fighting leukemia since the age of twelve. She's been in and out of remission and up until now has been able to live a fairly normal life. However, the cancer has returned with a vengeance and her treatments are taking a toll on her and her family. Realizing that her death is only months away, she makes a list of the top ten things she wants to do before she dies – sex being first on her list. With the help of her best friend, Zoey, she sets about completing her list. As her final days inch closer, she learns a lot about herself, her family, and the true meaning of living life to its fullest.*

Pros: Colorful characters; moving and controversial plot.  
Cons: Themes of death and dying; some British English will require explanation.  
Level: Young Adult  
About the Author: <http://www.teenreads.com/authors/au-downham-jenny.asp>  
Online Learning Materials/Resources: [http://writingfix.com/I\\_Pod\\_Prompts/BeforeIDie1.htm](http://writingfix.com/I_Pod_Prompts/BeforeIDie1.htm)

### **BRIAN'S HUNT**

Gary Paulsen  
Laurel Leaf, 2005  
112 pages  
ISBN-13: 978-0553494150  
ISBN-10: 0553494155

*Brian Robeson feels more at home in the wilderness than he does back in civilization. Ever since he survived a small plane crash and had to learn to live moment by moment in the Canadian wilderness, he hasn't been able to truly be happy unless he is on his own, far from any people. Brian returns to his beloved wilderness and is camping and canoeing through the calm lake waters. One day he spots an injured dog that he befriends and nurses back to health. He is curious as to how this dog got injured and where it came from. Together he and the dog set out to solve the mystery only to come upon a tragedy, which could cost both of them their lives. (This is the last of the sequels to Paulsen's popular *Hatchet*).*

Pros: High adventure; man vs. nature themes; Cree Indians.  
Cons: Lack of characters.  
Level: 6<sup>th</sup> grade +  
About the Author: <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/garypaulsen/about.html>  
Online Learning Materials/Resources: [http://litplans.com/authors/Gary\\_Paulsen.html](http://litplans.com/authors/Gary_Paulsen.html)

### **CALIFORNIA BLUE**

David Klass  
Scholastic Inc., 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 1996  
208 pages  
ISBN-13: 978-0590466899  
ISBN-10: 0590466895

*Seventeen-year-old John Rodgers lives with his parents in a small lumber mill town north of San Francisco. John, somewhat of a loner, struggles to follow in the footsteps of his athletic father and older brothers by participating in the high school track team. He never achieves first place in any of the races, but he excels in his academic studies, in particular science. One day he discovers an unusual butterfly in the company timberland. He shares this exciting find with his science teacher and before he knows it, his town is in an uproar as environmentalists converge on it and try to protect this rare species from the saws of the local lumberjacks.*

Pros: Controversial topic about man vs. nature; father-son relationship; environmentalism.

Cons: Lots of dialog, which could be confusing to follow at times.

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> grade +

About the Author: <http://www.myspace.com/davidklass>

<http://us.macmillan.com/author/davidklass>

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

Log onto the Developmental Blackboard Site for ESL 110D – California Blue.

CHABOT COLLEGE/ESL

### **FEVER 1793**

Laurie Halse Anderson  
Simon & Shuster Children's Publishing, 2002  
272 pages  
ISBN-13: 978-0689848919

*The horrors of the yellow fever epidemic that swept through Philadelphia in the summer of 1793 are vividly recounted through the eyes of sixteen-year-old Mattie Cook, who lives above the family coffeeshouse with her widowed mother and grandfather. Life suddenly changes for the worse when thousands of fellow city residents succumb to the deadly disease. Young Mattie must grow up quickly and learn to adapt to her new living conditions as she watches the fever take its toll on her friends, neighbors, and family. A compelling and well-researched historical account of how this epidemic swept through our nation's first capital.*

Pros: Fascinating historical account of survival tales; well researched; colorful characters.

Cons: Some difficult language; historical references will need clarification.

Level: Young Adult

About the Author: [http://authors.simonandschuster.ca/Laurie-Halse-](http://authors.simonandschuster.ca/Laurie-Halse-Anderson/1791921/biography)

[Anderson/1791921/biography](http://madwomanintheforest.com/)

<http://madwomanintheforest.com/>

Online Learning materials/Resources:

<http://www.southernct.edu/%7Eils69313/fever1793/webquest.htm>

<http://madwomanintheforest.com/teachers/historical-fever/>

### **THE FORTUNES OF INDIGO SKYE**

Deb Caletti

Simon Pulse, 2009

320 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1416910084

*Indigo Skye is looking forward to graduating from high school soon. She lives in Seattle with her single mother and two siblings. Indigo's always been somewhat of a free spirit and in spite of her mother's pleas to go to college, she's content working at a local coffee shop as a waitress. She takes her job very seriously and has perfected her skills at serving and taking excellent care of her customers' many food needs. One day she finds herself the lucky recipient of a 2.5 million dollar tip from a mysterious, well-dressed man who frequents the restaurant. Her life changes in ways she never expected as she adjusts to her new-found wealth.*

Pros: Fun, unique story with engaging characters.

Cons: Some difficult dialog and idiomatic expressions; slightly outlandish plot.

Level: Young Adult

About the Author: <http://authors.simonandschuster.com/Deb-Caletti/16780997>

<http://debcaletti.com/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

[http://resources.chuh.org/CHHS/Library/summerreading/2010Summer/11thGrade/English3\\_2010.htm#Assignments](http://resources.chuh.org/CHHS/Library/summerreading/2010Summer/11thGrade/English3_2010.htm#Assignments)

### **LORD OF THE FLIES**

William Golding

Penguin, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1999

192 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0140283334

ISBN-10: 0140283331

*As this classic tale begins, a plane transporting a group of young boys from England to Australia crashes on a remote tropical island. Only the boys survive – no adults. As the boys slowly regroup, they set about exploring the island and envision hopes of being rescued. What ensues is an adventure packed account of how this group of boys descends into darkness as evil, distrust, and power begin to take hold of the relationships they establish with one another. An excellent commentary on savagery versus humanity in civilization.*

Pros: Thought provoking story; provides for extensive discussions and investigations; interesting characters.

Cons: Highly descriptive; a lot of intense dialog to follow and understand; violence.

Level: 9<sup>th</sup> Grade +

About the Author: <http://www.william-golding.co.uk/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/free-lesson-plans/lord-of-the-flies.cfm>

<http://www.aresearchguide.com/lord.html>

<http://www.bellmore-merrick.k12.ny.us/lord.html>

### **MY SISTER'S KEEPER**

Jodi Picoult

Washington Square Press, 2004

428 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0743454537

*When Kate is young, she is diagnosed with a serious form of leukemia. Her parents decide to have another child, Anna, in hopes that she will be an ideal match for curing Kate's cancer or at least putting it into remission. Over the years, Anna is subjected to numerous medical procedures to help sustain her sister's life. Wanting to take control of her own life, Anna sues her parents in court for emancipation so that she can begin to make her own medical decisions. A court drama ensues and the story culminates in a very surprising and shocking conclusion.*

Pros: Riveting storyline told from multiple perspectives.

Cons: Controversial topic of genetic planning; somewhat lengthy.

Level: Adult

About the Author: <http://www.jodipicoult.com/index.html>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://www.jodipicoult.com/my-sisters-keeper.html>

### **SHANGHAI GIRLS**

Lisa See

Random House, 2010

336 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0812980530

*A moving historical novel about the intertwined lives of two beautiful sisters, Pearl and May. Told through the eyes of Pearl, the older more dutiful sister, Shanghai Girls follows these two sisters as they experience ups and downs in China, their mother country, and America, their new homeland. The bonds of sisterhood strengthen their love and caring for each other and help see them through the pitfalls of their immigration experience as they first arrive at Angel Island and then eventually move to Los Angeles to be reunited with the two brothers their father married*

*them off to. Melodrama ensues as they try to settle down, adjust, and create a new life for themselves and their new family. Sequel: Dreams of Joy.*

Pros: Gracefully written; lively dialog; excellent description of Chinese community in southern California.

Cons: Very descriptive language could require lots of explanation; lengthy; melodramatic.

Level: Adult

About the Author: <http://www.lisasee.com/>

<http://old.urbanatomy.com/index.php/arts/books/1574-interview-with-shanghai-girls-author-lisa-see>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: n/a

### **SPEAK**

Laurie Halse Anderson

Penguin Group, 2006

240 pages

ISBN-13: 978-0142414736

*Melinda Sordino knows that she doesn't fit in with the rest of her high school peers. She is, in fact, a social outcast – whispered about, shunned, and ignored, all because of a fateful night at a party during summer vacation. Traumatized from the violent act she experienced at that party but unable to share the truth of what happened to her, Melinda retreats into her head and rarely speaks and mostly remains just silent. The story spans her freshman year at Merryweather High School in Syracuse, New York, and eloquently depicts how she deals with her inner turmoil and ultimately confronts the person who violated her.*

Pros: Uniquely told; focus on American high school scene.

Cons: Sexual content; idiomatic/slang.

Level: Young Adult

About the Author: [http://authors.simonandschuster.ca/Laurie-Halse-](http://authors.simonandschuster.ca/Laurie-Halse-Anderson/1791921/biography)

[Anderson/1791921/biography](http://madwomanintheforest.com/)

<http://madwomanintheforest.com/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources: <http://mshogue.com/ce9/Speak/speak.htm>

<http://www.viterbo.edu/perspgs/faculty/GSmith/LessonPlanforSpeak.htm>

## **WINTERGIRLS**

Laurie Halse Anderson

Penguin Group, 2009

278 pages

ISBN: 978-0-14-241557-3

*Lia and Cassie, best friends since elementary school, are in a deadly competition to see who can be the skinniest. When Cassie's ever-worsening bulimic condition leads to her gruesome death, Lia is left behind to deal with her feelings of guilt and her belief that she could have somehow saved her tormented friend. As Lia's relationships with her family quickly unravel, she plummets deeper and deeper into her grim reality. She struggles to hold onto a thread of hope and makes attempts at a recovery while simultaneously dealing with her own self-destruction and fragile mental state.*

Level: Young Adult

Pros: Uniquely told; an insider's look into the world of bulimia and anorexia; includes discussion guide.

Cons: Possible low interest level for male readers; emotionally charged and disturbing topic; not a "happy" read.

About the Author: <http://authors.simonandschuster.ca/Laurie-Halse-Anderson/1791921/biography>

<http://madwomanintheforest.com/>

Online Learning Materials/Resources:

[http://www.bookbrowse.com/reading\\_guides/detail/index.cfm/book\\_number/2268/wintergirls](http://www.bookbrowse.com/reading_guides/detail/index.cfm/book_number/2268/wintergirls)