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# **Book Kits for the 2021 Beehive Book Awards Children's Fiction Nominees**

***Beneath the Bed and Other Scary Stories (Mister Shivers, #1)***

***Dragons in a Bag***

***Inkling***

***Mr. Penguin and the Lost Treasure***

***Other Words for Home***

***Over the Moon***

***Shouting at the Rain***

***Sweep: the Story of a Girl and Her Monster***

***The Unteachables***

***A Wolf Called Wander***



# Beneath the Bed and Other Scary Stories

Series: Mister Shivers, #1

Author: Max Brallier

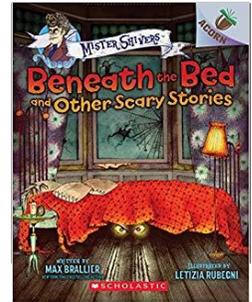
Illustrator: Letizia Rubegni

Publisher: Scholastic Inc.

Publication Date: September 3, 2019

ISBN: 9781338318531

Grade Level: Grades 2-3



## Description

The kids at school dare John to visit the old house on the hill at night, and when he and his sister go in they find dusty dishes set on the table, a book open like it is waiting for a reader, and something hiding under the bed in the attic--and that is only one of the five scary stories with unexpected twists that are included in this collection.

## Themes

Brothers and sisters, Children, Fear, Haunted Houses, Scary

## Author Information

Max Brallier is the New York Times bestselling author of more than thirty books and games, including the middle-grade series *The Last Kids on Earth*. Under the pen name Jack Chabert, Max is the creator and author of the *Eerie Elementary* series for Scholastic Books and author of the New York Times bestselling graphic novel *Poptropica: Mystery of the Map*. He is the creator and writer of *Galactic Hot Dogs* and has written books for properties including LEGO and *Adventure Time*. Author Website: <http://www.maxbrallier.com/>

## Discussion Questions

1. How did the story surprise you?
2. How would you feel if you spent the night in an old house?
3. What do Beth and John learn about the doll under the bed?
4. Why is it important not to sleep with your mouth open?
5. What happens when toys are left outside after dark?

## Activities

1. You Can Draw Buddy Bear activity from the back of the book.
2. What's Your Story? extension activity from the back of the book. Oliver's toys are mad at him for leaving them outside. Imagine what happens next. Write and draw a scary story.
3. How to make a Paper Mouse Finger Puppet Craft- <https://www.redtedart.com/how-to-make-a-paper-mouse-finger-puppet/>
4. Roll a spooky story extension activity- <https://www.playdoughtoplato.com/roll-a-silly-spooky-story/>
5. Make a simple vortex cannon-Create a spooky atmosphere or knock over cups representing the haunted house- <https://www.youclevermonkey.com/2015/01/easyplayidea-10.html>
6. Blanket Name Game- <https://teachers.net/lessons/posts/164.html>

## Similar Books

- *The School is Alive!* By Jack Chabert
- *In a Dark, Dark Room and Other Scary Stories* by Alvin Schwartz
- *Doll Bones* by Holly Black



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- *The Dollhouse Murders* by Betty Ren Wright
  - *Haunted Serpent* by Dora Mitchell
  - *Watch Hollow* by Gregory Funaro
  - *The Girl in the Locked Room: A Ghost Story* by Mary Downing Hahn
  - *Nightbooks* by J. A. White
  - *Small Spaces* by Katherine Arden

### **Related Non-fiction**

- *Frightlopedia: An Encyclopedia of Everything Scary, Creepy, and Spine-chilling, from Arachnids to Zombies* by Julie Winterbottom
- *Squeak!: 100 Fun Facts about Hamsters, Mice, Guinea Pigs, and More* by Rose Davidson
- *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz
- *Haunted Dolls* by Martha London



# Dragons in a Bag

Author: Zetta Elliott

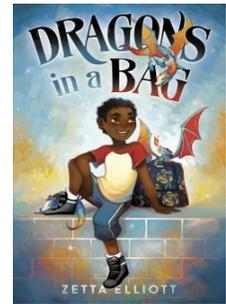
Illustrator: Geneva B

Publisher: Random House

Publication Date: October 23, 2018

ISBN: 9781524770488 (paperback), 9781524770457 (hardcover)

Grade Level: 2-5



## Description

In Brooklyn, nine-year-old Jax joins Ma, a curmudgeonly witch who lives in his building, on a quest to deliver three baby dragons to a magical world, and along the way discovers his true calling.

## Themes

African American boys, City Life, Cultural Differences, Families, Gentrification of Cities, Imaginary Creatures, Individual Differences, Magic, Segregation, Time Travel

## Author Information

Author Website: <https://www.zettaelliott.com/>

Author Visit and Contact Information: Available to give PowerPoint book talks, lead creative writing workshops, and serve on conference panels about race and children's publishing in the US. To learn more about my rates and/or to receive a list of my presentations, use the [contact form](#) on her website or email her directly at [minfo@zettaelliott.com](mailto:minfo@zettaelliott.com).

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you think Jax thought about Ma when he first met her? How would you have felt?
2. Jax was very curious about Ma and had a ton of questions. He said he felt different at Ma's even from the start. Why do you think that is? What are some things that happened at Ma's at the start to set the scene for the magic in the story?
3. How do you think Jax feels when he learns the truth about Ma? How would you feel in you were in his situation?
4. The transporter is pretty cool, if a little unpredictable. If you had a magic transporter, where would you want to go?
5. Why does Jax call on his friend Vikram? Would you want to have a friend help you if you were in his place? Why or why not? How does Vik respond to the situation?
6. What would you do if you found you were watching baby dragons?
7. In this book, people and things are not often as they seem. Can you think of some examples? Do you think this might have relevance in today's world? How can we take this idea and apply it to our own lives?
8. What do you think about the juxtaposition of magic and the setting of big city Brooklyn? What do you think might be happening to the magic?

## Activities

1. Make a paper cup or paper bag dragon. Follow the link for instructions: <http://www.createinthechaos.com/paper-bag-dragon-puppet/>
2. Make a dragon puppet. Here is a link with directions: <https://rufflesandrainboots.com/a-cute-i-mean-fierce-dragon-craft/>



3. Make a dragon corner bookmark: <https://www.redtedart.com/dragon-corner-bookmark-design/>
4. Play a hide the dragon game using stuffed dragons inside real bags and purses or using cut out paper dragons and a paper bags. Kids could try to guess where the dragon is hiding. You could expand it to a guess the magical creature in the bag game giving clues about the characteristics of different magical creatures.
5. Sample some Indian peda cake, marshmallows, or mints.
6. Give everyone a mint tin and mini-dragon to keep inside.
7. Play a "Transporter" game. Have kids pretend to enter the Transporter and be transported to different time periods or locations that they can act out. It could be done whole group or as a game similar to charades where the group has to guess where the transporter has landed based on acting it out or answering questions.

### **More Resources**

- Interesting article on the story behind *Dragons in a Bag*: <https://socialjusticebooks.org/dragons-bag-cover-reveal/>

### **Similar Books**

- *Upside Down Magic* series by Sarah Mlynowski
- *Arcade and the Triple Tokens* by Rashad Jennings
- *The Magic Misfits* by Neil Patrick Harris
- *Dactyl Hill Squad* by Daniel Older
- *Knights vs. Dragons* by Matt Phelan
- *Henry Heckelbeck Gets a Dragon* by Wanda Coven

### **Related Non-fiction**

- *Behold the Dragons* by Gail Gibbons
- *Imagine a Dragon* by Laurence Pringle
- *Brooklyn ABCs* by Krzysztof Poluchowicz
- *Marley Dias Gets It Done and So Can You* by Marley Dias



# Inkling

**Author: Kenneth Oppel**

**Illustrator: Sydney Smith**

**Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf**

**Publication Date: November 6, 2018**

**ISBN: 9781524772819**

**Grade Level: 3-7**



## Description

Ethan struggles with his comic strip assignment at school, until an inkblot from his father's sketchbook comes to life. His new art assistant Inkling seems like the solution to all of Ethan's problems, but the situation quickly gets out of hand and Ethan's secret may be exposed.

## Themes

Artists, Grief, Families, Friends, Juvenile Fiction

## Author Information

Author website: <https://www.kennethoppel.ca/>

Kenneth Oppel is a Canadian children's writer. Born August 31, 1967 in Port Alberni, a mill town on Vancouver Island, Canada. His family friend, Roald Dahl, sent a story of Oppel's to his own literary agent, and they decided to take Oppel on as a client.

Email him at [kenneth.oppel@sympatico.ca](mailto:kenneth.oppel@sympatico.ca) for information on the author speaking at libraries, schools and conferences.

## Discussion Questions

1. Ethan promises to illustrate a project for his group when he has almost no skills. Have you ever gotten in a difficult situation by pretending to be better at something than you really are?
2. Ethan's dad pushes off some of his parenting responsibilities on to Ethan. Did you find this aspect of the book realistic? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever experienced a family member or friend being so talented at something, the way Ethan's dad is at art, that you feel insignificant in comparison?
4. Ethan's family is coping with the loss of his mother. Have you or a friend ever experienced that loss of someone important in your life? How do you relate to the Rylance family?
5. Sarah is a child with disabilities, who requires some extra help from her brother Ethan. Do you think Ethan is a good brother? Give examples of why or why not?

## Activities

1. Sarah wants to get a puppy. Use library books to research different breeds of dogs. List your top five choices, and the pros and cons of each one.
2. Ethan and his father are both working on art projects. Try your hand at illustrating by designing your own comic strips or filling in a comic strip form online.
3. With an adult, experiment with different liquids and papers to see if you can find a combination that allows the ink to roll off paper instead of being absorbed. What happens when you add oil or alcohol? How is the liquid affected by coated papers?



4. Ethan and his friend use a drone find where the stolen Inkling is being hidden. Practice your own drone skills by learning to take off and land a drone.
5. Take a look at your library's graphic novel section. Try reading two or three graphic novels or comic book collections. Discuss with your group how it is different from reading a traditional book. What did you like or dislike?

### **More Resources**

Children and grieving: [ChildrenGrieve.org](http://ChildrenGrieve.org); [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org); [ChildMind.org](http://ChildMind.org); [SocialWorkToday.com](http://SocialWorkToday.com)

Children and drones: "Should I Buy a Drone for My Kids?"

<https://www.southernphone.com.au/Blog/2018/Feb/a-parents-guide-to-drones-for-kids>

Graphic novels: "17 Awesome Graphic Novels for Kids" <https://www.todayparent.com/family/books/awesome-graphic-novels-for-kids/>; "The Best Graphic Novels for Children" <http://www.ilovelibraries.org/article/best-graphic-novels-children>

### **Similar Books**

- *Caterpillar Summer* by Gillian McDunn
- *Every Hidden Thing* by Kenneth Oppel
- *My Life as a Diamond* by Jenny Manzer
- *Wicked Nix* by Lena Coakley
- *Anyone's Game* by Sylv Chiang
- *Mac Undercover* by Mac Barnett

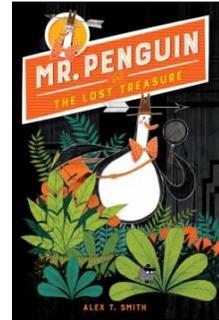
### **Related Non-fiction**

- *How Do Drones Work* by Baby Professor
- *Special Siblings: Growing Up with Someone with a Disability* by Mary McHugh
- *It Isn't Fair!: Siblings of Children with Disabilities* by Stanley D. Klein
- *Grieving the Death of a Mother* by Harold Ivan Smith
- *The Loss that Is Forever: The Lifelong Impact of the Early Death of a Mother or Father* by Maxine Harris
- *Drawing Cartoons* by Anna Milbourne



# Mr. Penguin and the Lost Treasure

Author/Illustrator: Alex T. Smith  
Publisher: Peach Tree Publishers  
Publication Date: April 1, 2019  
ISBN: 9781682631201  
Grade Level: 2-6



## Description

Indiana Jones meets Hercule Poirot in this new Alex T. Smith series with plenty of slapstick humor, mystery and adventure. Highly illustrated throughout with a striking black and orange design. It has been weeks since Mr. Penguin's last adventure and he's been stuck at his desk, twiddling his flippers ever since. That is until the phone rings! Mr. Penguin and Colin (a spider and Mr. Penguin's silent right-hand man) are called in to find the missing treasure somewhere in the Museum of Extraordinary Objects. The quest finds them solving secret codes, fighting ferocious beasts, eating fish finger sandwiches, and travelling deep below the museum to a lost jungle.

## Themes

Action, Adventure, Animals, Buried Treasure, Detective, Friends, Humor, Maps, Mystery, Penguins, Spiders, Thieves

## Author Information

Alex T. Smith is an English author and illustrator of children's books, including Primrose, Egg, Ella, and the Claude book series. He was the illustrator for World Book Day 2014 in September 2013. You can find out more about him here: <https://www.alexsmith.com/>

## Discussion Questions

1. Penguin and Colin are good friends but have different talents. What does their friendship teach you about being a "best chum?"
2. When things get tough Penguin wonders if he should have advertised "gentle adventurers, only solve easy problems." What does the story teach you about not giving up, and how can you keep going when the going gets tough?
3. Edith couldn't shake a funny feeling that something was wrong so she acted on it. Have you ever had an unsettled feeling and how did you act on it?
4. Edith says, "Don't ever underestimate old ladies" (or Penguins, or Colins). Have you ever felt underestimated or have you misjudged someone else?
5. When the O'Hoolihans have the upper hand on Penguin and his friends they continually insult them with phrases like, "You are stupid and pathetic." How did Penguin and his friends respond and how can you respond when people you interact with are critical?

## Activities

1. Make Mr. Penguin's favorite fish sandwiches: [http://peachtree-online.com/pdfs/Activity\\_Event/MrPenguinActivitySheets.pdf](http://peachtree-online.com/pdfs/Activity_Event/MrPenguinActivitySheets.pdf)
2. Complete the Mr. Penguin Maze: [http://peachtree-online.com/pdfs/Activity\\_Event/MrPenguinActivitySheets.pdf](http://peachtree-online.com/pdfs/Activity_Event/MrPenguinActivitySheets.pdf)
3. Activities about Penguins across all subjects: [KidZone Penguin Activities](#)
4. Activities about Spiders across all subjects: [Spider Facts](#)
5. Penguin art projects: [15+ Adorable Penguin Crafts for Kids](#)



6. Recreate a map of Penguin's underground adventure or create your own treasure map for someone else to follow. You may consider hiding a treasure at the end for a reward!
7. Visit a local museum and consider making a treasure hunt or scavenger hunt to guide your visit. (many museums offer these types of activities)

### **More Resources**

1. YouTube: [All About Penguins for Kids: Penguins of the World for Children - FreeSchool](#)
2. YouTube: [Interesting facts about Spiders | Educational Video for Kids.](#)
3. YouTube: [Alex T Smith Talks About His Sketchbook](#)
4. [Alex T. Smith Illustrates Awesome Scots Words | Book Week Scotland](#)
5. Website: [Emperor Penguin](#)
6. Website: [Spider Facts](#)

### **Similar Books**

- *Mr. Penguin and the Fortress of Secrets* by Alex T. Smith
- *Mr. Penguin and the Tomb of Doom* by Alex T. Smith
- *Inspector Flytrap* series by Tom Angleberger
- *Baby Monkey, Private Eye* By Brian Selznick and David Serlin
- *Two Dogs in a Trench Coat* series by Julie Falatko
- *The Trouble with Chickens* by Doreen Cronin and Kevin Cornell
- *Mac B., Kid Spy* series by Mac Barnett
- *Geronimo Stilton* series by Geronimo Stilton

### **Related Non-fiction**

- *National Geographic Readers: Penguins!* by Anne Schreiber
- *Penguins* by Seymour Simon
- *National Geographic Readers: Spiders* by Laura Marsh
- *Spiders: Amazing Pictures & Fun Facts on Animals in Nature (Our Amazing World Series)* by Kay de Silva
- *Treasure Hunting and Real-Life Treasure Hunters* by Catherine Fet



## Other Words for Home

Author: Jasmine Warga

Publisher: Balzer and Bray

Publication Date: May 28, 2019

ISBN: 0062747800

Grade Level: 3-7



### Description

Jude never thought she'd be leaving her beloved older brother and father behind, all the way across the ocean in Syria. But when things in her hometown start becoming volatile, Jude and her mother are sent to live in Cincinnati with relatives.

At first, everything in America seems too fast and too loud. The American movies that Jude has always loved haven't quite prepared her for starting school in the US—and her new label of “Middle Eastern,” an identity she's never known before.

But this life also brings unexpected surprises—there are new friends, a whole new family, and a school musical that Jude might just try out for. Maybe America, too, is a place where Jude can be seen as she really is.

### Themes

Immigration, Emigration, Middle School, War, Family, Syrians

### Author Information

Author Website: <http://jasminewarga.com/>

Jasmine Warga is a writer from Cincinnati, Ohio who currently resides in the Chicago area. She is the author of *Other Words for Home*, which was awarded a John Newbery Honor, a Walter Honor, and a Charlotte Huck Honor. She is also the author of *My Heart and Other Black Holes*, and *Here We Are Now*. Her books have received multiple starred reviews and have been published in over twenty-five countries. Jasmine lives in a house filled with books with her husband, two tiny daughters, rowdy dog, and mischievous cat.

For school visits, contact Jasmine Warga's publicist, Phil Binder, from the Author Village, at [hello@theauthorvillage.com](mailto:hello@theauthorvillage.com). For Skype talks, email [wargabookevents@gmail.com](mailto:wargabookevents@gmail.com).

### Discussion Questions

1. If you could read the story from another character's perspective, who would you choose and why?
2. What struggles and emotions of Jude and her family settling into America were surprising to you? What was predictable?
3. *Other Words for Home* was written in verse. Did it fit the feel of the story?
4. What parts of Jude's story can you relate to?
5. How did the characters change throughout the book? How did your opinion of them change?

### Activities

1. Send a letter of hope to refugees around the world via [https://my.care.org/site/SPageNavigator/CARE\\_SpecialDelivery.html](https://my.care.org/site/SPageNavigator/CARE_SpecialDelivery.html)
2. Seeking Safety Activity Pack <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/activity-pack-seeking-safety>
3. Write a poem about something difficult and scary that you went through.
4. *Other Words for Home* has a beautiful cover that shows parts of her life. Draw the book cover for your own life.



5. Create the front page of a newspaper reporting on the refugee crisis.  
<https://www.actionaid.org.uk/school-resources/resource/syria-children-in-conflict>

### **More Resources**

- Saja's Letter - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfYpe8Zy3Dc>
- Children on the Move: Key Facts and Figures - <https://data.unicef.org/resources/children-move-key-facts-figures/>
- Teaching about Refugees <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/teaching-about-refugees.html>

### **Similar Books**

- *The Boy at the Back of the Class* by Onjali Rauf
- *Home of the Brave* by Katherine Applegate
- *Amina's Voice* by Hena Khan
- *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai
- *The Night Diary* by Veera Hiranandani

### **Related Non-fiction**

- *A Refugee's Journey from Syria* by Helen Mason
- *Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees* by Mary Beth Leatherdale
- *Kunkush: The True Story of a Refugee Cat* by Marne Ventura
- *Why Are People Refugees* by Cath Senker
- *Refugees* by Harriet Brundle



# Over the Moon

Author: Natalie Lloyd

Publisher: Scholastic

Publication Date: March 26, 2019

ISBN: 9781338118490

Grade Level: 3-5



## Description

Twelve-year-old Mallie knows better than to dream. In Coal Top, you live the story you're given: boys toil in the mines and girls work as servants. Mallie can't bear the idea of that kind of life, but her family is counting on her wages to survive.

It wasn't always this way. Before the Dust came, the people of Coal Top could weave starlight into cloth. They'd wear these dreaming clothes to sleep and wake up with the courage to seek adventure . . . or the peace to heal a broken heart. But now nothing can penetrate Coal Top's blanket of sorrow.

So when Mallie is chosen for a dangerous competition in which daring (and ideally, orphaned) children train flying horses, she jumps at the chance. Maybe she'll change her story. Maybe she'll even find the magic she needs to dream again.

But the situation proves even more dangerous when Mallie uncovers a sinister mystery at the heart of Coal Top's struggles -- a mystery some powerful people will do anything to protect.

## Themes

Adventure, Child Labor, Family, Fantasy, Friendship, Folktale, Mining Community, Mythical, Oppression, Physical Disability, Social Change, Survival

## Author Information

Natalie Lloyd lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee. She collects old books, listens to bluegrass music, and loves exploring quirky mountain towns with her dog, Biscuit. She is the author of *A Snicker of Magic* and *The Key to Extraordinary*.

For more author information, please visit: <https://natalielloyd.com/>

For contact information for scheduling events, please visit the website below: <https://natalielloyd.com/contact/>

## Discussion Questions

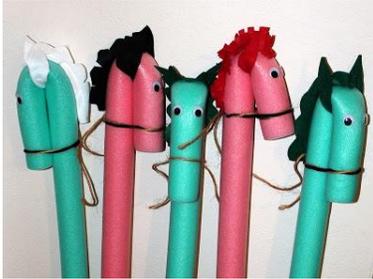
1. In the book, at the age of 12 the girls work as servants to the rich and the boys go to work in the coal mine. Do you think boys and girls are treated as differently today? In what ways? Do you think this is good or bad?
2. What was Mallie's motivation for participating in the competition when it was dangerous and only boys entered? What motivates you to do hard things?
3. At the beginning of the book, Mallie is working in Wind Valley as a servant for the Trumbel family. Mrs. Trumbel tells Mallie she "isn't capable of the work" because Mallie is missing her right arm. How does Mallie prove that her arm was not a hindrance in the story?
4. The contest is run by the Head Guardian Mr. Mortimer. What does Mallie think of him when she first meets him? Does her opinion of him change by the end of the story?



5. How does Mallie convince Iggy to stop working for Mr. Mortimer as the caretaker of the Starbirds? Have you ever had a time where you have felt deceived?

### Activities

1. **Galaxy/Stardust slime.** Below is a link to a slime recipe that includes glitter. The glitter could be related to the stars in the book: <https://www.thebestideasforkids.com/galaxy-slime/>
2. **Make Coal Dust.** The sight calls is moon rocks, but can be called coal dust: <https://thecraftingchicks.com/diy-moon-rocks/>
3. **Under the Earth:** An activity designed to help kids understand the concepts of underground mining. Click on the "Under the Earth" link on this page: <https://www.nevadaming.org/classroom-activities/>
4. **Identify Rocks and Minerals:** Have students collect several rocks on a field trip and identify them with this website: <https://geology.com/rocks/>
5. **Horse racing:** Make play horses out of pool noodles and have racing competitions



### More Resources

- **Nevada Mining Classroom Activities:** This website has a wealth of resources and activities to teach kids about mining: <https://www.nevadaming.org/classroom-activities/>
- **Mining in the Appalachians:** A government website that gives information on mining in the Appalachians: <https://www.epa.gov/sc-mining>

### Similar Books

- *Igraine the Brave* by Cornelia Funke
- *The Thickety: A Path Begins* by J.A. White
- *Jinx* by Sage Blackwood
- *The Two Princesses of Bamarre* by Gail Carson Levine
- *The Secret of Zoom* by Lynne, Jonell

### Related Non-fiction

- *You Wouldn't Want to be a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Coal Miner* by John Malam
- *Coal Miner* by Nick Gordon
- *Rocks and Minerals* DK Eyewitness books



## Title: Shouting At The Rain

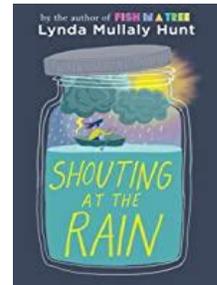
Author: Lynda Mullaly Hunt

Publisher: Nancy Paulsen Books

Publication Date: May 7, 2019

ISBN: 9780399175152

Grade Level: 5-8



### Description

Delsie loves tracking the weather--lately, though, it seems the squalls are in her own life. She's always lived with her kindhearted Grammy, but now she's looking at their life with new eyes and wishing she could have a "regular family." Delsie observes other changes in the air, too--the most painful being a friend who's outgrown her. Luckily, she has neighbors with strong shoulders to support her, and Ronan, a new friend who is caring and courageous but also troubled by the losses he's endured. As Ronan and Delsie traipse around Cape Cod on their adventures, they both learn what it means to be angry versus sad, broken versus whole, and abandoned versus loved. And that, together, they can weather any storm.

### Themes

Cape Cod, Families, Friendship, Grandmothers, Massachusetts, Neighborliness, Weather

### Author Information

Lynda Mullaly Hunt ([www.lyndamullalyhunt.com](http://www.lyndamullalyhunt.com)) has received many honors for her debut novel, *One for the Murphys*, which is on over twenty state award lists, including Bank Street's 2013 Best Books of the Year. She's a former teacher, and holds writers retreats for the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. She lives in Connecticut with her husband, two children, impetuous beagle, and beagle-loathing cat.

For more information visit Lynda Mullaly Hunt at <https://www.lyndamullalyhunt.com/about-me/>. To view the book trailer, book talk and watch a video of the author reading from her book: <https://www.lyndamullalyhunt.com/books/shouting-at-the-rain/> She is not doing Skype Visits at this time.

### Discussion Questions

1. When Delsie is introduced to Brandy's new friend, Tressa, Delsie says "The little voice warns me." What might the voice say? Have you ever heard a little voice, and did you listen to it?
2. Delsie has a fascination with and a vast knowledge of weather patterns and loves tracking big storms. What does this tell us about her?
3. As Delsie's friendship with Brandy fades, she recognizes a friend in Ronan. Do you think one replaced the other? Why or why not?
4. When asked about his mother, Ronan says she is dead, but Delsie (and the reader) later learn Ronan's mom didn't die, she sent him away. Explain why you think Ronan lied. Is it ever necessary to lie? In what circumstances?
5. Explain Grammy's response to Delsie: Strength comes in all kinds of forms, you know. I think your momma's strength came in leaving-not staying.

### Activities

1. **Research Cape Cod, Massachusetts** – Find Cape Cod on a map. What is the history of the area? What industries is the area known for?



2. **Dear Mom** – Assume the voice of Delsie and write a letter to Mellie (Delsie's mother). Write whatever you feel – small anecdotes about their day or bigger questions and answers.
3. **Bully for you!** - Tressa's treatment of Delsie comes across as a way to put herself (and Brandy) above her and her grandmother. She bullies her bases on her clothes, her home, her interests, and her other friends. How should friends, classmates, adults and younger kids be treated?
4. **Support for Delsie** – who provides help for Delsie? What kind of support groups or organizations could help her?
5. **Anagram-it!**

Here is a list of anagrams that are in the book with the answers:

Olive Tinselly – I love silently  
Brandy Fiester – betrays friend  
Delsie McHill – Mellie's child  
Katrinka Schofield – It's a hard knock life  
Bridget Maeve McHill – be calm, deliver might  
Henry I. Lasko – is lanky hero

Solve the rest: Joseph A. McHill, Ronan N. Gale, Sherman Gale, Aimee Polloch, Michael Poole, Esmarelda, Ruby Loren Saucepan Lynn

### **More Resources**

Lynda Mullaly Hunt's blog with anagram hints: <https://www.lyndamullalyhunt.com/books/shouting-at-the-rain/>

### **Similar Books**

- *My Louisiana Sky* by Kimberly Holt
- *The Summer of Owen Todd* by Tony Abbott
- *Chicken Boy* by Frances O'Roark Dowell
- *Sweet Treats and Secret Crushed* by Lisa Greenwald
- *Louisiana's Way Home* by Kate DiCamillo

### **Related Non-fiction**

- *Predicting the Weather* by Nancy Dickmann
- *Tides* by Lisa Bullard
- *Shells* by Shari Skeie
- *C is for Cape Cod: Exploring the Cape from A to Z* by Christina Laurie
- *Boats (You Can Draw)* by Mark Bergin



## Sweep

Author: Jonathan Auxier

Publisher: Puffin Books

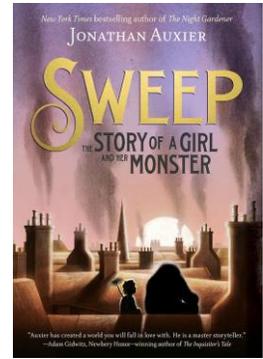
Publication Date: September 25, 2018

ISBN: 9781419731402

Grade Level: 4-6

### Description

A chimney sweep disappears from a London rooftop, leaving six-year-old Nan Sparrow alone, save for a hat and a lump of mysteriously ever-warm charcoal—her char. To survive, Nan joins a gang of “climbing boys” owned by the abusive Wilkie Crudd. By age 11, she is the finest sweep of them all, but following a brutal chimney fire, she discovers that her char has become a golem, which she names Charlie, and that he has saved her life. As the two hide from Crudd, Nan grows to love Charlie and his particular brand of magic, and she learns that golems are, by nature, ephemeral: if Charlie can flame up, he can almost certainly flame out. A cast of fully fleshed (and sooted) characters contribute texture and community, and Auxier (*The Night Gardener*) mixes moments of triumph and pure delight (new snow, rooftop vistas) with dark, Dickensian themes (child labor, sickness, poverty). Told in two allusive sections—“Innocence” and “Experience,” after Blake’s volume—that pivot between Nan’s past and present, this dazzling, warmhearted novel contemplates selflessness and saving, deep love and what makes a monster. ([Publisher’s Weekly](#))



### Themes

Child labor, poverty, anti-semitism, class structure, social justice, community, friendship, love, protecting others, selflessness, bigotry, Victorian society, grief

### Author Information

Jonathan Auxier’s website: <https://www.thescop.com/about>

### Discussion Questions

1. How does the Sweep try to keep Nan safe? Is he successful?
2. Nan is rescued from a fiery death by a piece of coal char she names Charlie. How and why does Charlie become more lifelike as the story progresses?
3. How do Toby and Nan protect each other? How does their friendship mature and change?
4. Given his life history, do you think Roger had a choice in how he treated others? Why or why not?
5. In the end, who or what saves Nan from the oppression and poverty she lives in?
6. In addition to kindness, what other gifts does Miss Bloom offer Nan? How does Nan pay these gifts forward?
7. Why do you think the people of Victorian London looked the other way when young children were being used as “climbing boys,” to do the brutally dangerous work of chimney sweeping?

### Activities

1. What was Victorian London like? How is it different from current times? Research this era and find details in the story that help you describe and understand the setting.
2. Create a map of the house that Nan and Charlie live in. What kinds of rooms would you have if you lived all by yourself in a house with a golem? Create a map of this fantasy house.
3. Research and explore Jewish folklore surrounding the golem. Use clay to create your own “golem.” Write a story about your “monster.” Give it a name. What will it protect you from?



4. Using clues from *Sweep* and other historical sources, pretend to interview a “climbing boy.” Ask about a typical day. What is the climbing boy’s greatest fears? What are his/her greatest hopes? What would the climbing boy like to say to those who employ him to sweep their chimneys?
5. Nan and Toby discover that you save yourself by saving others. Can you find examples in your own life or in local news or current events that demonstrate this idea?
6. Story Soup. In an author’s note, Jonathan Auxier explains how certain ingredients came together to help him create *Sweep*. (A clay figure, a copy of *The Water Babies*, a swaddling cloth and a public library card.) Find your own set of interesting story ingredients and use them to write a story.

### **More Resources**

- The Library of Congress has lesson plans focused on child labor using primary sources: <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/child-labor/>
- A comprehensive web page about Chimney Sweeps: <http://owlcation.com/humanities/The-History-of-Children-at-Work-The-Poor-Life-of-An-Apprentice-Chimney-Sweep>
- Short explanation about Jewish golems: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/golem/>

### **Similar Books**

- *Golem* by David Wisniewski
- *The Golem of Prague* by Irene Cohen-Janca
- *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens
- *The BFG* by Roald Dahl
- *Dodger* by Terry Pratchett (for older students)
- *The Girl Who Saved Christmas* by Matt Haig
- *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate
- *Inkling* by Kenneth Oppel

### **Related Non-fiction**

- *The Victorians* by Ruth Brocklehurst
- *Chimney Sweeps: Yesterday and Today* by James Cross Giblin
- *You Wouldn't Want to be a Victorian Servant* by Fiona McDonald
- *Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor* by Russell Freedman
- *Kids on Strike!* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti
- *On Our Way to Oyster Bay: Mother Jones and Her March for Children's Rights* by Monica Kulling



# The Unteachables

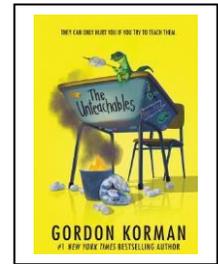
**Author:** Gordon Korman

**Publisher:** Balzer + Bray

**Publication Date:** January 8, 2019

**ISBN:** 9780062563880 (hardcover); 9780062563903 (paperback)

**Grade Level:** 3-7



## Description

The Unteachables never thought they'd find a teacher who had a worse attitude than they did. And Mr. Kermit never thought he would actually care about teaching again. Over the course of a school year, though, room 117 will experience mayhem, destruction—and maybe even a shot at redemption. A hilarious new middle grade novel from beloved and bestselling author Gordon Korman about what happens when the worst class of kids in school is paired with the worst teacher—perfect for fans of *Ms. Bixby's Last Day*.

## Themes

Burnout, Cheating, Differences, Difficult students, Fiction, Flaws, Humorous fiction, Judgment, Juvenile fiction, Kindness, Middle schools, Misfits, Perspective, Redemption, Retirement, School stories, Schools, Teacher-student relationships, Teaching, Teamwork, Troublesome students, Underdogs.

## Author Information

Gordon Korman was born in Montreal, Canada, and grew up in Toronto. When he was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the track and field coach was his English teacher. For creative writing, the coach gave his class freedom to work on whatever they wanted to for the rest of the year. Gordon Korman wrote his first book, *This Can't Be Happening in Macdonald Hall*, during the last four months of the school year. He sent the manuscript off to Scholastic because he was the class monitor for Scholastic Book Orders because he figured he was practically an employee. When he was a freshman in high school, Scholastic published his book and he started his career as an author of more than 90 books for kids. He has a BFA degree from New York University with a major in Dramatic Writing and a minor in Film and TV. He lives on Long Island, outside New York City, with his wife and family. If he's not driving one of his kids to a practice, rehearsal, or game, he's traveling to schools, libraries, and bookstores to visit readers. <https://gordonkorman.com/>

## Discussion Questions

1. What does the word, perspective, mean to you? How did this book help you see things from a different point-of-view? What did you think about the way the book was written with each chapter being from first-person point-of-view with multiple narrators?
2. What do you think the main theme of the book is?
3. Which character do you think changed the most during the book? Why? How did the students change? How did the teacher, Mr. Kermit, change?
4. What does justice mean? Did Mr. Kermit stand up for justice with his students?
5. How do you feel about what happened to Mr. Kermit when Jake Terranova was caught cheating in 1992? Did you think it was fair? Why?
6. How was Mr. Kermit affected by the cheating scandal? (he lost his fiancée and his fire for teaching)
7. Why do you think Mr. Terranova helped Mr. Kermit's class with the science fair? Did it made up for the problems he caused when he was a student? Was it difficult for Mr. Kermit to forgive him?



## Activities

1. Watch Gordon Korman's videos about the books he has written: <https://gordonkorman.com/video>  
Divide up the 23 videos so each group of 2 is in charge of watching one video. Have each group give a 2-minute talk about what they learned from their video about the book or topic in the short video.
2. Read the picture book *Hoop Genius: How a Desperate Teacher and a Rowdy Gym Class Invented Basketball* by John Coy out loud to everybody. Have everybody write down the similarities and differences they see between the picture book and *The Unteachables*.
3. Each student should choose a learning disability, problem, personality characteristic, mental health disorder, or other impediment to learning to research, then prepare an oral presentation with visual aids to present to the group. Some ideas: dyslexia, unsupportive family, serious injury, anger management issues, anxiety, depression, on the autism spectrum, low self-esteem, etc.
4. Watch Korman's 3½ minute video, "Some of My Favorite Writing Tips" - <https://gordonkorman.com/video>. Have students take notes of 6 tips; then write a short story—trying to use all the tips:
  - a. "What if?"
  - b. What makes an interesting character? The most important thing about characters is their ability to change.
  - c. What makes a good plot? A plot means beginning, middle, and end. The middle is usually the hardest. For the ending, see if you can come up with a twist—something unexpected.
  - d. How do you know when to end the story? Look for the ending in the beginning—every plot provides some kind of quest, journey, goal or conflict for the characters to attempt, pursue, or resolve. How does it come out? That's your ending. Remember, your characters don't have to succeed.
  - e. Okay. I have a draft. Now what do I do? Revision isn't always fun, but it's the most important part. It's where your story becomes your story.
  - f. What happens if I get stuck? Show your story to your family and friends; ask what they think.
5. Have each student pick a character from the book to make a creative name illustration of, such as the one pictured above. A student at a school Gordon Korman visited made this artwork of the author's name using characters and designs from some of his books. Names from the book are: Aldo Braff, Parker Elias, Kiana Roubini, Elaine Okafor, Rahim Barclay, Mateo Hendrickson, Barnstorm Armstrong, Mr. Kermit (Mr. Ribbit or Zachary Kermit), Emma Fountain, Jake Terranova, Christina Vargas (principal), or Dr. Thaddeus.
6. *The Art of Doing: How Superachievers Do What They Do and How They Do It So Well* by Camille Sweeney. Copy pages 148-155 of "How to Inspire a Student: Erin Gruwell" and have students read about Ms. Gruwell. Then have students write a report or paper about how Gruwell overcame the difficulty of teaching poverty-stricken, disinterested students at Woodrow Wilson High School in Long Beach, California. Her dedication helped her succeed academically and express themselves through their class journals that were published in the best-selling collection of essays, *The Freedom Writers Diary*. Erin runs the Freedom Writers Foundation today to help disadvantaged students across the United States and was depicted in the 2007 film "Freedom Writers," starring Hilary Swank.



## More Resources

- Gordon Answers the Top Ten Questions Kids Ask: <https://gordonkorman.com/more-resources/gordon-answers-the-top-ten-questions-kids-ask>



- Divide group into 5 smaller groups who each read one of Gordon Korman's 5 Short Fiction Stories, then present a short synopsis of each story to the class orally. <https://gordonkorman.com/short-fiction>
- *The Unteachables* Chapter 1-5 free quiz: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/The-Unteachables-by-Gordon-Korman-chapter-1-5-quiz-5240333>
- Gordon Korman Resources, About the Author, Author Interviews, Books, and Series: <https://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?aid=797>
- Quizlet flashcards and matching game from the book: <https://quizlet.com/413685221/unteachables-the-by-gordon-korman-flash-cards/>
- Illustrated, inspirational quotes on free downloadable posters about teachers, schools, tolerance, diversity, etc. Examples: "The schools of a country are its future in miniature." ~Tehyi Hsieh, Summer 2014; "Let us remember: One book, one pen, and one teacher can change the world." ~Malala Yousafzai, Fall 2014; "No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship." ~Dr. James Comer, Fall 2013. <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/one-world-posters>

### **Similar Books**

- *Ms. Bixby's Last Day* by John David Anderson
- *Because of Mr. Terupt* by Rob Buyea
- *Fish in A Tree* by Linda Mullaly Hunt
- *Look Both Ways* by Jason Reynolds
- *The Losers Club* by Andrew Clements
- *Guts* by Raina Telgemeier
- *Middle School is Worse than Meatloaf: A Year Told Through Stuff* by Jennifer L. Holm
- *The Next Great Paulie Fink* by Ali Benjamin
- *Because of the Rabbit* by Cynthia Lord
- *The Strange Case of Origami Yoda* by Tom Angleberger
- *Charlie Joe Jackson's Guide to Not Reading* by Tommy Greenwald
- *Slacker* by Gordon Korman; *Ungifted* by Gordon Korman

### **Related Non-fiction**

- *Thank You, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco
- *Dyslexia is my superpower: (most of the time): interviews* by Margaret Rooke
- *The Survival Guide for Kids with ADD or ADHD* by John F. Taylor, Ph.D.
- *Fantastic Failures: True Stories of People who Changed the World by Falling Down First* by Luke Reynolds
- *Science Educator and Advocate Bill Nye* by Heather E. Schwartz
- *Helen's Big World: The Life of Helen Keller* by Doreen Rappaport
- *Who Was Helen Keller?* by Gare Thompson
- *Helen's Eyes: A Photobiography of Annie Sullivan, Helen Keller's Teacher* by Marfe Ferguson Delano



# A Wolf Called Wander

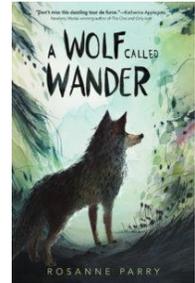
Author: Rosanne Parry

Publisher: Greenwillow Books, a division of HarperCollins Publishers

Publication Date: May 7, 2019

ISBN: 9780062895936 (hardcover); 9780062895943 (paperback)

Grade Level: 3 - 6



## Description

A young wolf called Swift is separated from his large, happy pack after rival wolves their territory. He travels 1,000 miles across the Pacific Northwest, encountering forest fires, hunters, highways, and hunger before finding a new home. Based on the true story of OR-7, a real wolf that naturalists tracked across Oregon and Northern California, *A Wolf Called Wander* conveys the curious, alert, social nature of wolves who are now returning to the wild.

## Themes

Action-packed writing, Adventure stories, First person narratives, Illustrated novels, Stories told by animals

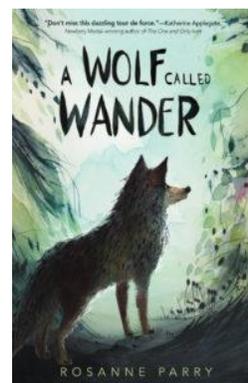
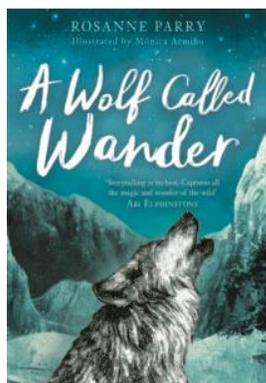
## Author Information

Roseanne Parry lives in Oregon, where she writes books for children and teens. In summer, she writes in a treehouse! See her website: [rosanneparry.com](http://rosanneparry.com) for more biographical information as well as information about scheduling author workshops and Skype visits.

See Roseanne Parry's American publisher's website, <https://www.harpercollins.com/9780062895936/a-wolf-called-wander/> for additional information about Rosanne Parry & *A Wolf Called Wander*.

## Discussion Questions

1. In the beginning of *A Wolf Called Wander*, Swift grows up with brothers and sisters who sometimes come into conflict with each other. Do you have similar conflicts with siblings, friends, or other relatives? What advice could you give Swift to help him deal with conflicts he faces?
2. Lots of scenes in *A Wolf Called Wander* are illustrated. Were there any illustrations that made you understand a scene in a different way? Can you think of any scenes that you would have illustrated differently?
3. There are two covers for *A Wolf Called Wander*, one with a blue background used in the British edition, and another with a light green background. Which one do you feel best captures the spirit of the book? If you designed a different book cover, what would it look like?





4. Swift got his name because he was the fastest young wolf in his pack. If you had a “young wolf name” that represented something you have a talent for, what would it be?
5. Later in the book, Swift feels he’s outgrown his birth name, and renames himself Wander to better capture the adult wolf he’s become. Thinking about your hopes for your future as an adult, what are some ideas you have for your “adult wolf name”?
6. We know about the real wolf, OR-7, because he was fitted with a radio collar as a young wolf. If you could radio collar any animal to find out about its life, which animal would you want to learn more about? What other ways do you know about that help a scientist learn about animal lives?
7. Look at the back matter, or extra information, at the end of *A Wolf Called Wander*. Did the author do a good job of including extra facts and information to help you understand the lives of wild wolves better? What information was most interesting and meaningful to you? What information is missing? How could you find out more information about wild wolves?

## **Activities**

### **1. Create a Wolf Ornament Using Crayon Wax**

Best for: small groups

Materials: 1 wolf cookie cutter per participant, old crayons, sheet tray, oven, large sheet tray lined with aluminum foil, more aluminum foil. You could also offer other shapes such as raven, trees, etc.

Setup: before the program: remove wrappers from crayons. Sort crayons roughly by color in bowls. You need sufficient crayons to mostly fill each cookie cutter. Melting crayons of similar colors creates a multi-colored stained-glass effect; having color families together makes a prettier ornament. However, participants are free to experiment with color and color mixing as part of the activity.

Procedure: have participants tightly seal the bottoms of their cookie cutters with foil so the wax won’t run out. More foil = better chance of success. Have students select crayons in a color family they like, then break them into smallish pieces, and put them in the cookie cutters on the baking sheet. Cookie cutters should be mostly full. Melt the crayons in a 200-250F oven. When melted, remove tray from oven and let cool. To create hanging ornaments, thread a large eyed needle with yarn, and pierce the shape while the shape is semi-set, then return to the oven for final melting. This is a little tricky, but doable. You can also insert one end of a bent paperclip into the ornament when the wax is melted to create a hanger. Myself I prefer to simplify by not offering a hanging ornament.

Note: you can reuse the melted crayon wax by just breaking up the wax and re-melting it at low temperature. It is fun to melt crayons in a muffin tin to make round crayons as well.

### **2. Create a Wolf Called Wander Chutes & Ladders Game**

Materials: Poster board: 1/participant, pencils, markers. 1 die/student. Example chutes and ladders game. Checkers or similar as game pieces.

Setup: Before the program, use a sharpie to draw a grid of squares on each poster board, leaving a large space at the top of the game board for children to name their game. Tip: keep grids large to simplify game creation. 5 across and 10 down is a good size.

Procedure: Show the example Chutes & Ladders game. Discuss what makes the game fun, and have participants plan how many chutes & how many ladders to create. After participants plan the layout of their game, they can draw the chutes and ladders in pencil, then illustrate the chutes and the ladders



with designs based on the book. Offer the markers after the pencil outlines are complete. Use old checkers or rocks as game markers, and the die for game play.

### 3. **Create a scene for a Wolf Called Wander Graphic Novel**

Best for: individuals or groups of any size.

Materials: Two 3-4 panel comic strip templates per participant, pencils, markers.

Procedure: Students select a scene from the book. Discuss what makes this scene memorable. Is it a turning point? What dialog will characters say? How big of a speech bubble will you need? This impacts how big drawings can be. Have students use the first template to outline their scenes, then draw the characters & blank speech bubbles. Create the final draft on the second template. Graphic novelists do their drawings in pencil, then color in the drawing, then add the text in speech bubbles.

### 4. **Use Google Earth to explore the setting**

Best for: individuals and small groups

Materials: 1 internet connected Chromebook, iPad, or desktop computer per person

Procedure: Participants use the map and resources in the back matter of *A Wolf Called Wander* to explore the terrain described in the book. You can save your map or draw & color your own version.

### 5. **Change the Story, Then Illustrate a New Cover**

Best for: individuals or groups of any size

Materials: lined paper, pencils, heavy blank paper or cardstock, markers, colored pencils, or watercolor paints. Graphic organizer with 4 panels (fold a piece of paper into quarters or create a template on your computer).

Have participants consider what the story would be like if a fundamental change was made. Brainstorm what would happen if a character was removed, a character was added, or a pivotal event didn't take place, etc. Use the graphic organizer to record results: panel 1: What change are you making? Panel 2: How does the change you made change the rest of the story? Panel 3: How does the change you made change the ending of the book? Panel 4: rough sketch of new cover. Final product: use art supplies to create a new cover.

## **More Resources**

- [A Wolf Called Wander Educator's Guide](#): download this three-page PDF, provided by the publisher, which contains discussion questions, additional resources, and extension activities.

## **Similar Books**

- *A Pup Called Trouble* by Bobbie Pyron
- *A Dog's Life* by Ann Martin
- *The Incredible Journey* by Shelia Burnford
- *Pax* by Sara Pennypacker
- *The Wild Robot* by Peter Brown
- *Wolves of the Beyond* (series) by Kathryn Lasky



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## **Related Non-fiction**

- *Crow Smarts: Inside the Brain of the World's Smartest Bird* by Pamela S. Turner, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016.
- *Living With Wolves: True Stories of Adventures With Animals* by Jim Dutcher, National Geographic Kids, 2017.
- *Lobos: A Wolf Family Returns to the Wild* by Brenda Peterson, Little Bigfoot Books, 2018.
- *Moonbird: a Year on the Wind With the Great Survivor B-95* by Phillip M. Hoose, Farrar Straus Giroux, 2012.
- *Running With Wolves: Our Story of Life With the Sawtooth Pack* by Jim Dutcher, National Geographic Press, 2019
- *The Wolves Return: A New Beginning for Yellowstone National Park* by Celia Godkin, Pajama Press, 2017.