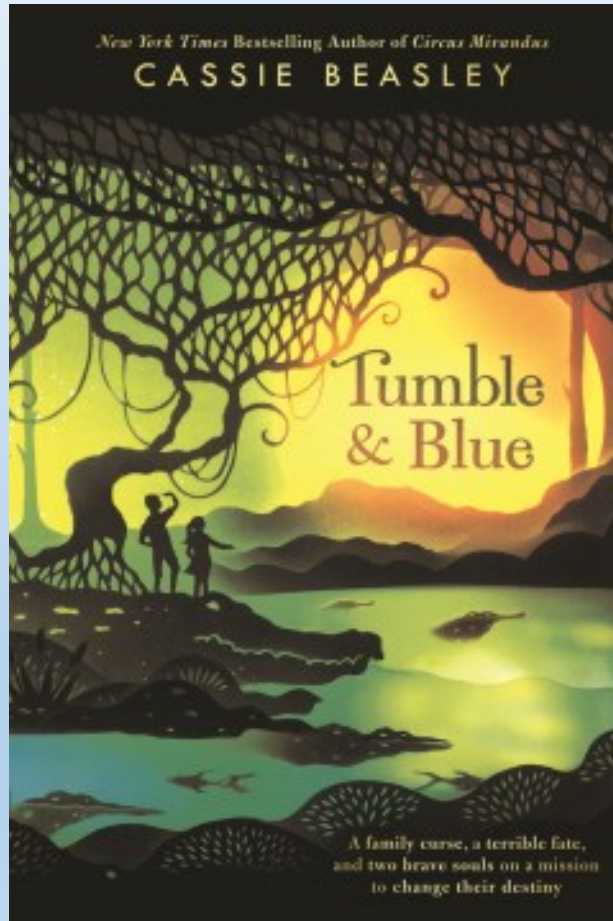


2019-2020
Volunteer State Book Award
Middle School Division



Tumble & Blue

by Cassie Beasley



When the red moon rises over the heart of the Okefenokee swamp, legend says that the mysterious golden gator Munch will grant good luck to the poor soul foolish enough to face him.

But in 1817, when TWO fools reach him at the same time, the night's fate is split. With disastrous consequences for both . . . and their descendants. Half of the descendants have great fates, and the other half have terrible ones.

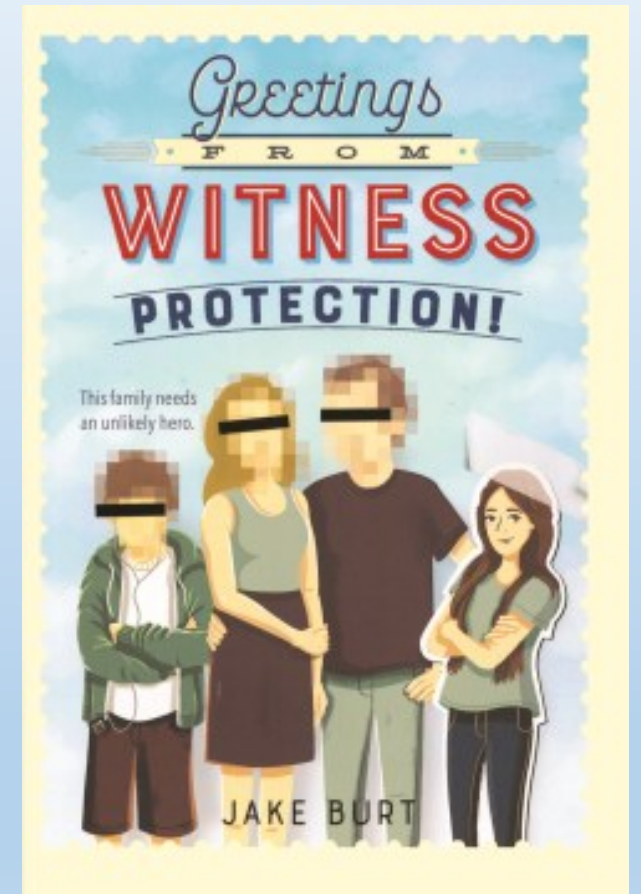
In order for Tumble Wilson and Blue Montgomery to fix their ancestors' mistakes and banish the bad luck that has followed them around for all of their lives, they must face Munch, the mysterious golden alligator who cast the curse centuries ago.

But what if the legend of Munch is nothing but a legend, after all?

Greetings From Witness Protection! by Jake Burt

The marshals are looking for the perfect girl to join a mother, father, and son on the run from the nation's most notorious criminals. After all, the bad guys are searching for a family with one kid, not two, and adding a streetwise girl who knows a little something about hiding things may be just what the marshals need.

Thirteen-year-old Nicki Demere, swears she can keep the Trevor family safe, but to do so she'll have to dodge hitmen, cyberbullies, and the specter of standardized testing, all while maintaining her marshal-mandated B-minus average. As she barely balances the responsibilities of her new identity, Nicki learns that the biggest threats to her family's security might not lurk on the road from New York to North Carolina, but rather in her own past.



The Last Cherry Blossom

by Kathleen Burkinshaw

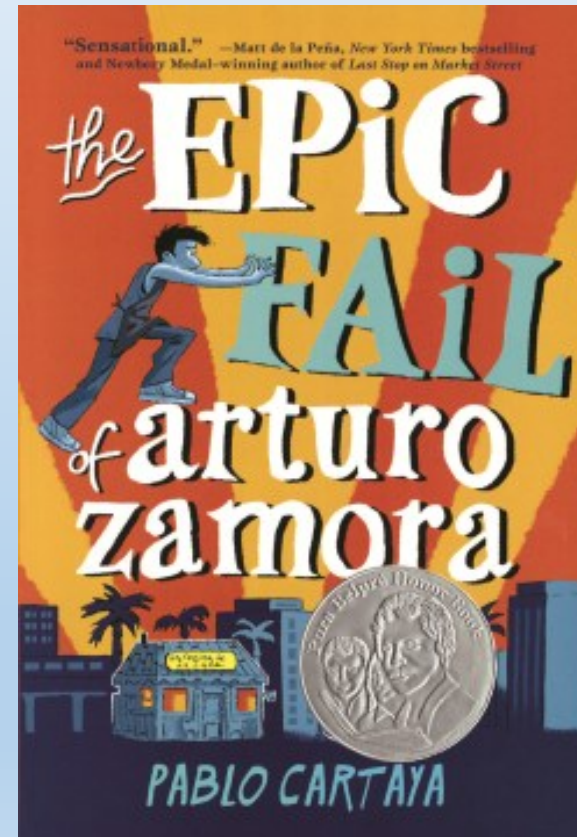


Yuriko is happy growing up in Hiroshima with her Papa, but things quickly change when her aunt Kimiko and her cousin Genji begin living with them and the family threatens to get bigger with talk of a double marriage! However, the world beyond their doors is even more unpredictable. World War II is coming to an end, and Japan's fate is not entirely clear. When the atomic bomb hits Hiroshima, it's through Yuriko's twelve-year-old eyes that we witness the devastation and horror.

Based on author Kathleen Burkinshaw's mother's first-hand experience surviving the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, *The Last Cherry Blossom* hopes to warn readers of the immense damage nuclear war can bring, while reminding readers that the "enemy" in any war is often not so different from ourselves.

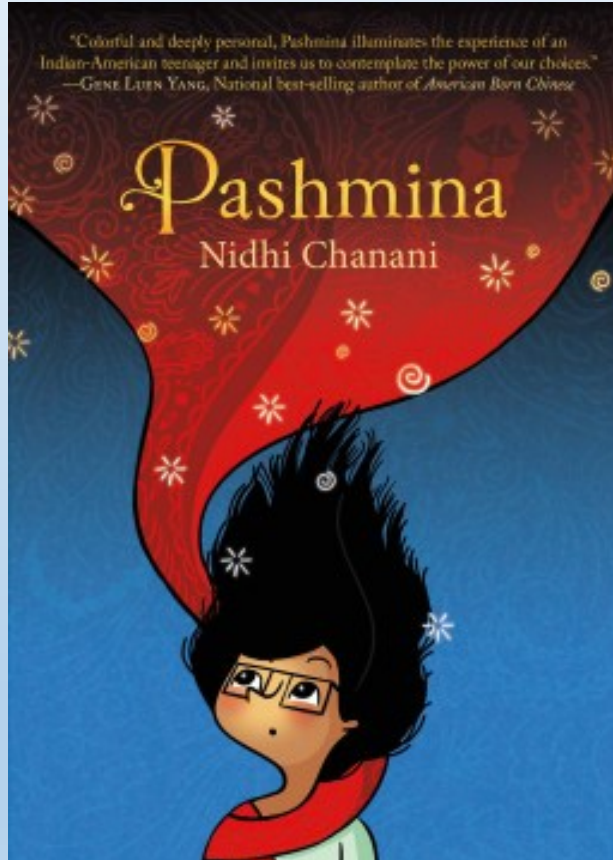
The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora by Pablo Cartaya

For Arturo, summertime in Miami means playing basketball until dark, sipping mango smoothies, and keeping cool under banyan trees. And maybe a few shifts as junior lunchtime dishwasher at Abuela's restaurant. Maybe. But this summer also includes Carmen, a poetry enthusiast who moves into Arturo's apartment complex and turns his stomach into a deep fryer. He almost doesn't notice the smarmy land developer who rolls into town and threatens to change it. Arturo refuses to let his family and community go down without a fight, and as he schemes with Carmen, Arturo discovers the power of poetry and protest through untold family stories and the work of José Martí.



Pashmina

by Nidhi Chanani

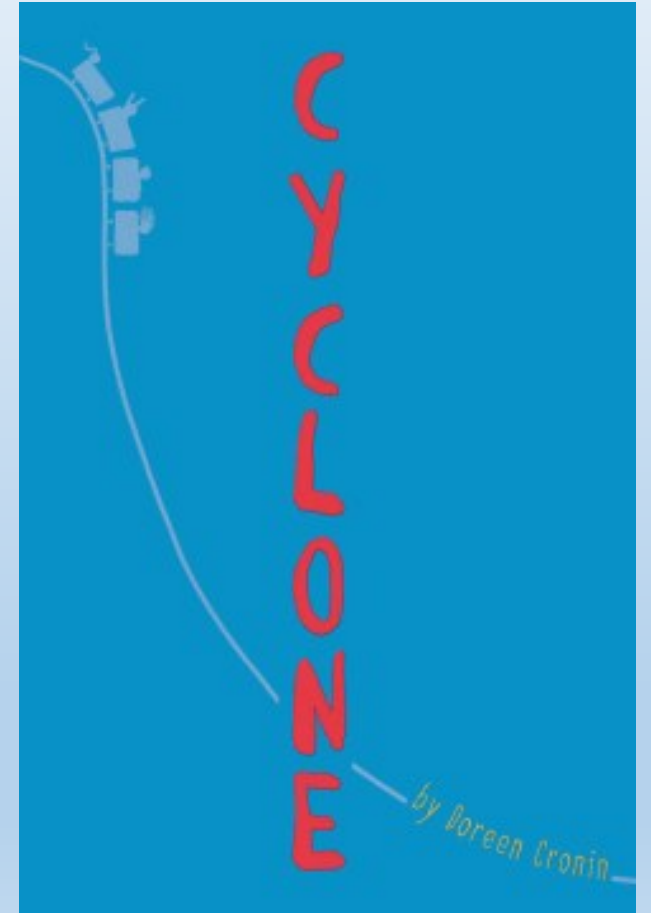


In this debut graphic novel, teenaged Priyanka's mother's homeland of India can only exist in her imagination. That is, until she finds a mysterious Pashmina tucked away in a forgotten suitcase. When she wraps herself in it, she is transported to a place more vivid and colorful than any guidebook or Bollywood film. But is this the real India? And what is that shadow lurking in the background? To learn the truth Pri must travel farther than she's ever dared and find the family she never knew.

Cyclone

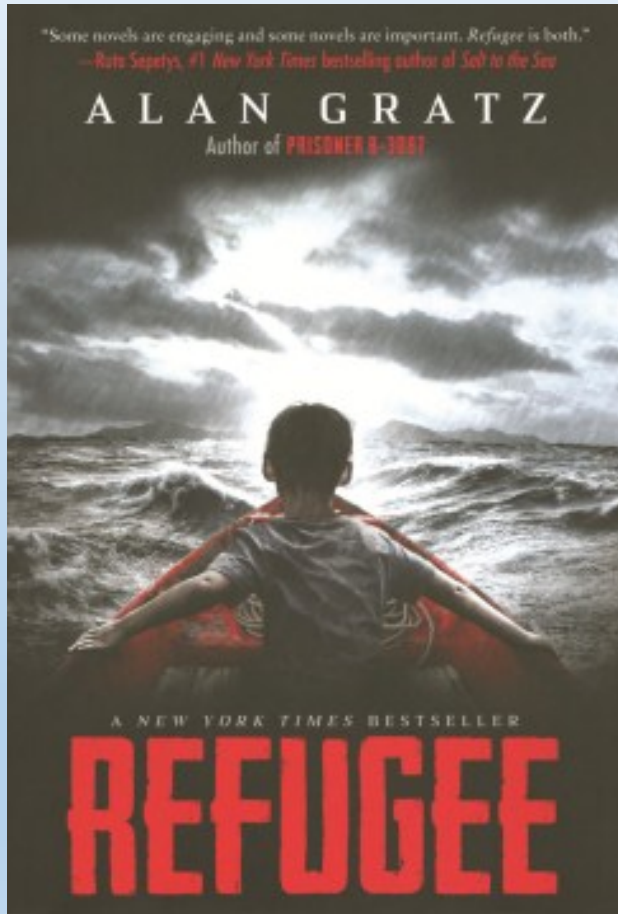
by Doreen Cronin

Riding the Cyclone, the world famous Coney Island rollercoaster, was supposed to be the highlight of Nora's summer. But right after they disembark, Nora's cousin Riley falls to the ground...and doesn't get up. Nora had begged and dragged Riley onto the ride, and no matter what the doctors say, that she had a heart condition, that it could have happened at any time, Nora knows it was her fault. Then, as Riley comes out of her coma, she's not really Riley at all. The cousin who used to be loud and funny and unafraid now can't talk, let alone go to the bathroom by herself. No, she's only 10% Riley. How to get 100% Riley back. But what Nora doesn't realize is that the guilt will only get worse as that percentage rises.



Refugee

by Alan Gratz



Although separated by continents and decades, Josef, a Jewish boy living in 1930s Nazi Germany; Isabel, a Cuban girl trying to escape the riots and unrest plaguing her country in 1994; and Mahmoud, a Syrian boy in 2015 whose homeland is torn apart by violence and destruction, embark on harrowing journeys in search of refuge, discovering connections tying their stories together.

Real Friends

by Shannon Hale and LeUyen Pham

The graphic memoir of Shannon Hale in which she reflects on her childhood friendships. As the middle child between two older and two younger close-in-age siblings, young Shannon feels lost within her family, and at school, where it's a similar situation with her never quite fitting in anywhere. As the story progresses and Shannon's anxiety becomes more evident, each chapter focuses on a pivotal relationship and demonstrates the shifting loyalties, petty jealousies, and moments of short-lived triumph common to childhood friendships.



Midnight Without a Moon

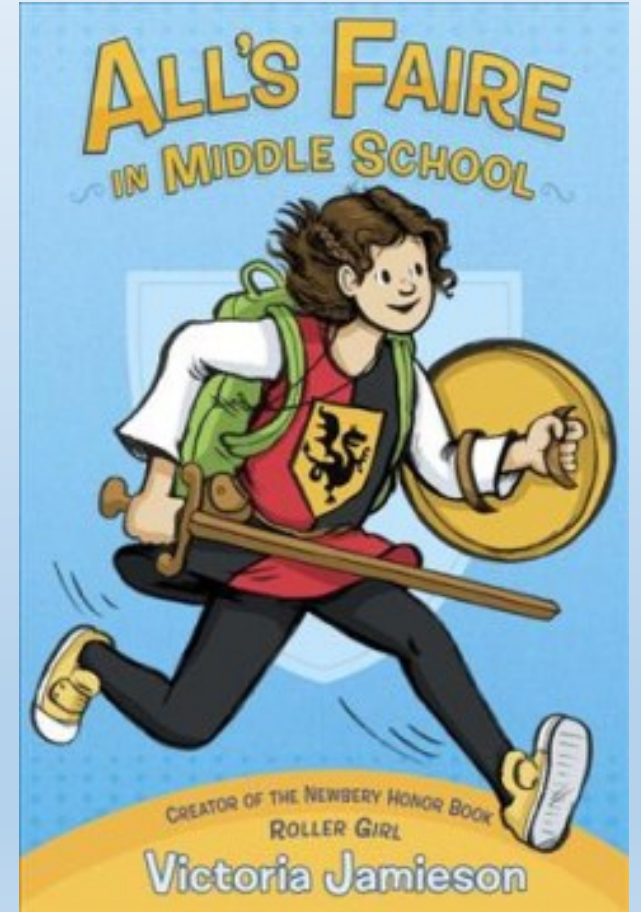
by Linda Williams Jackson



Rose Lee Carter, a thirteen-year-old African-American girl, dreams of life beyond the Mississippi cotton fields during the summer of 1955. When Emmett Till is murdered for allegedly whistling at a white woman and his killers are unjustly acquitted, Rose is torn between seeking her destiny outside of Mississippi or staying and being a part of an important movement.

All's Faire in Middle School by Victoria Jamieson

Eleven-year-old Imogene (Impy) has grown up with two parents working at the Renaissance Faire, and she's eager to begin her own training as a squire. First, though, she'll need to prove her bravery. Luckily Impy has just the quest in mind—she'll go to public school after a life of being homeschooled! But it's not easy to act like a noble knight-in-training in middle school. Impy falls in with a group of girls who seem really nice (until they don't) and starts to be embarrassed of her thrift shop apparel, her family's unusual lifestyle, and their small, messy apartment. Impy has always thought of herself as a heroic knight, but when she does something really mean in order to fit in, she begins to wonder whether she might be more of a dragon after all.



Amina's Voice

by Hena Khan



Amina has never been comfortable in the spotlight. She is happy just hanging out with her best friend, Soojin. Except now that she's in middle school everything feels different. Soojin is suddenly hanging out with Emily, one of the "cool" girls in the class, and even talking about changing her name to something more "American." Does Amina need to start changing too? Or hiding who she is to fit in? While Amina grapples with these questions, she is devastated when her local mosque is vandalized.

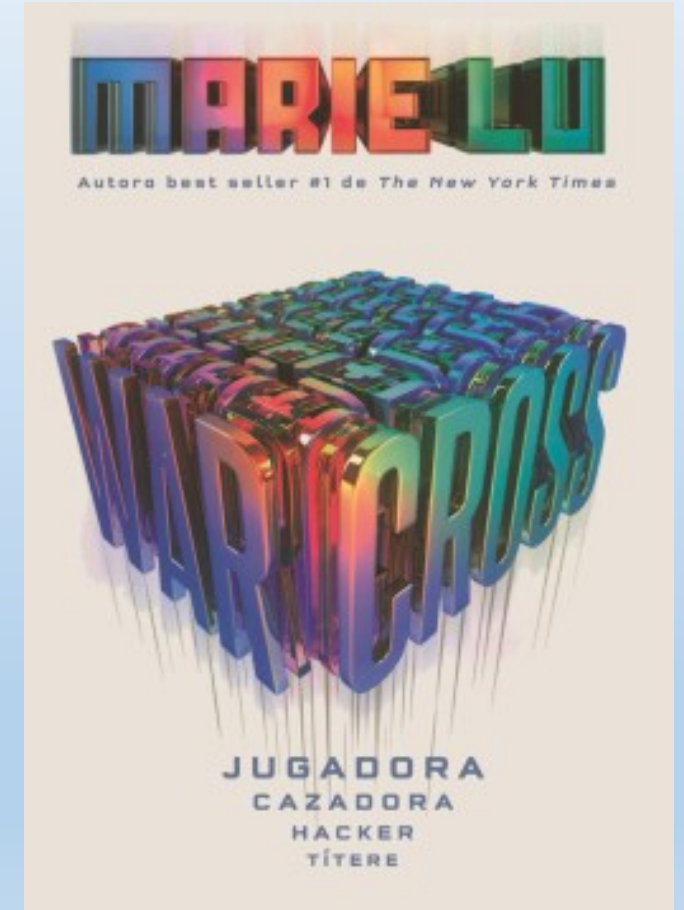
Amina's Voice brings to life the joys and challenges of a young Pakistani American and highlights the many ways in which one girl's voice can help bring a diverse community together to love and support each other.

Warcross

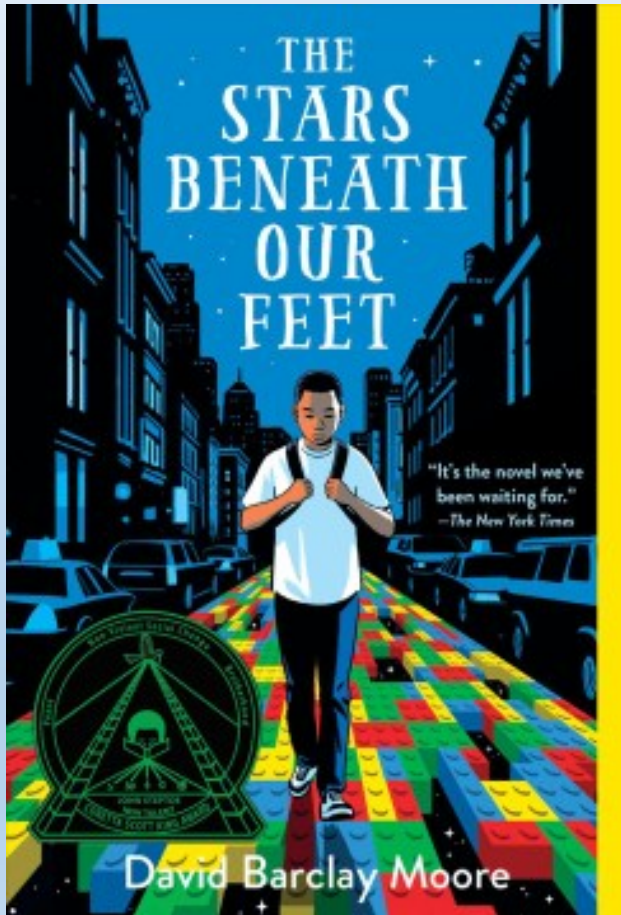
by Marie Lu

For the millions who log in every day, Warcross isn't just a game—it's a way of life. The obsession started ten years ago and its fan base now spans the globe, some eager to escape from reality and others hoping to make a profit. Struggling to make ends meet, teenage hacker Emika Chen works as a bounty hunter, tracking down Warcross players who bet on the game illegally. But the bounty-hunting world is a competitive one, and survival has not been easy. To make some quick cash, Emika takes a risk and hacks into the opening game of the international Warcross Championships—only to accidentally glitch herself into the action and become an overnight sensation.

Convinced she's going to be arrested, Emika is shocked when instead she gets a call from the game's creator, the elusive young billionaire Hideo Tanaka, with an irresistible offer. He needs a spy on the inside of this year's tournament in order to uncover a security problem . . . and he wants Emika for the job.



The Stars Beneath Our Feet by David Barclay Moore



It's Christmas Eve in Harlem, but twelve-year-old Lolly Rachpaul and his mom aren't celebrating. They're still reeling from his older brother's death in a gang-related shooting just a few months earlier. Then Lolly's mother's girlfriend brings him a gift that will change everything: two enormous bags filled with Legos. Lolly's always loved Legos, and he prides himself on following the kit instructions exactly. Now, faced with a pile of building blocks and no instructions, Lolly must find his own way forward.

His path isn't clear—and the pressure to join a “crew,” as his brother did, is always there. When Lolly and his friend are beaten up and robbed, joining a crew almost seems like the safe choice. But building a fantastical Lego city at the community center provides Lolly with an escape—and an unexpected bridge back to the world.

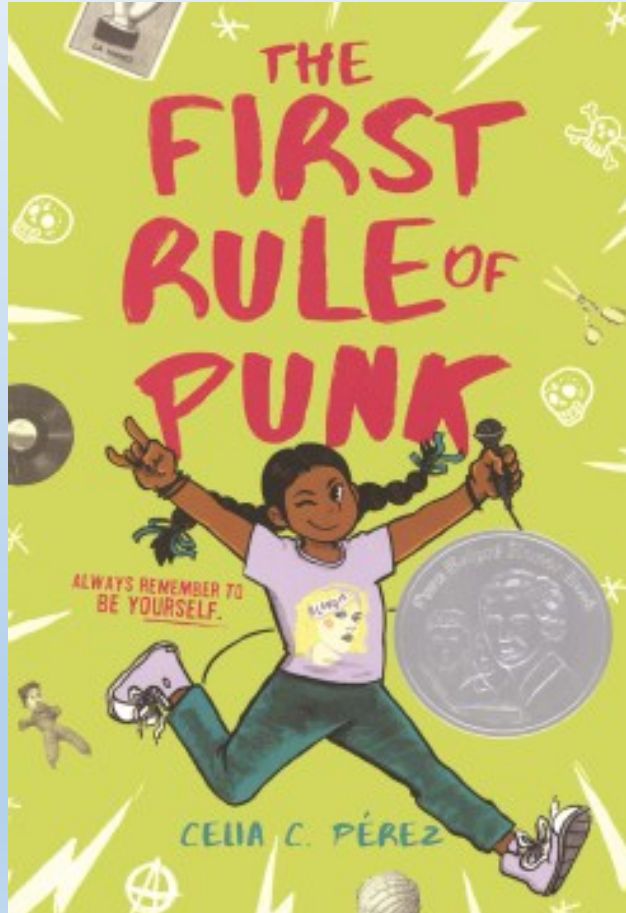
Spirit Hunters by Ellen Oh

Harper doesn't trust her new home from the moment she steps inside, and the rumors are that the Raine family's new house is haunted. Harper isn't sure she believes those rumors, until her younger brother, Michael, starts acting strangely. The whole atmosphere gives Harper a sense of déjà vu, but she can't remember why. She knows that the memories she's blocking will help make sense of her brother's behavior and the strange and threatening sensations she feels in this house, but will she be able to put the pieces together in time?



The First Rule of Punk

by Celia C. Perez



Twelve-year-old Maria Luisa O'Neill-Morales (Malu) reluctantly moves with her Mexican-American mother to Chicago and starts seventh grade with a bang--violating the dress code with her punk rock aesthetic and spurning the middle school's most popular girl in favor of starting a band with a group of like-minded weirdos.

he **First Rule of Punk** is a wry and heartfelt exploration of friendship, finding your place, and learning to rock out like no one's watching. ... Her dad, who now lives a thousand miles away, says things will get better as long as she remembers the **first rule of punk**: be yourself.

Tentacle & Wing by Sarah Porter

Twelve-year-old Ada is a Chimera, someone born with human and animal DNA thanks to a genetic experiment gone wrong. When she is shipped off to a quarantined school for other kids like herself, she senses that the facility is keeping a secret, which, if discovered, could upend everything the world knows about how Chimeras came into being.



Miles Morales: Spider-Man by Jason Reynolds



Brooklyn Visions Academy student Miles Morales may not always want to be a super hero, but he must come to terms with his identity--and deal with a villainous teacher--as the new Spider Man.

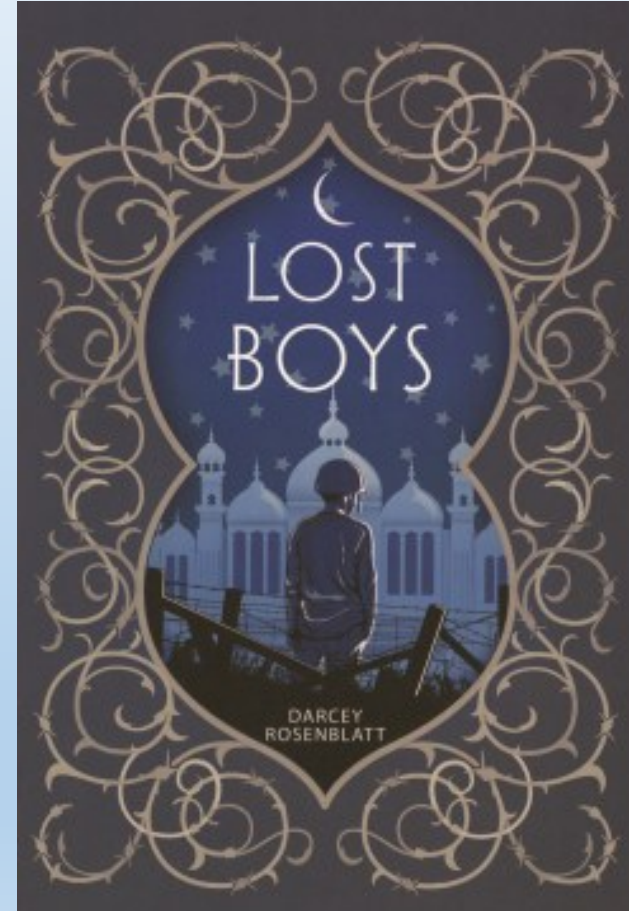
Miles Morales is just your average teenager. Dinner every Sunday with his parents, chilling out playing old-school video games with his best friend, Ganke, crushing on brainy, beautiful poet Alicia. He's even got a scholarship spot at the prestigious Brooklyn Visions Academy. Oh yeah, and he's Spider Man.

But lately, Miles's spidey-sense has been on the fritz. When a misunderstanding leads to his suspension from school, Miles begins to question his abilities. After all, his dad and uncle were Brooklyn jack-boys with criminal records. Maybe kids like Miles aren't meant to be superheroes. Maybe Miles should take his dad's advice and focus on saving himself.

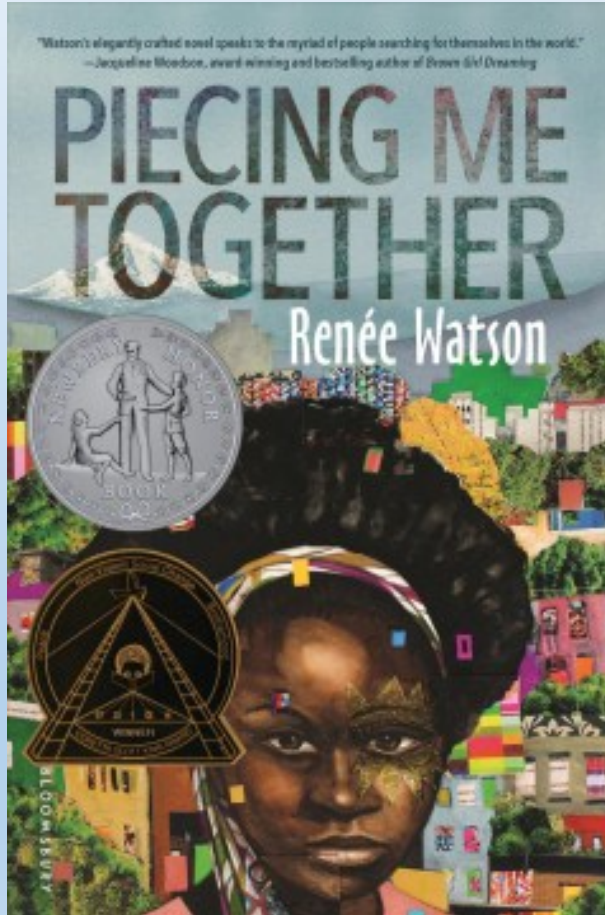
Lost Boys

by Darcey Rosenblatt

- In 1982, twelve-year-old Reza has no interest in joining Iran's war effort. But in the wake of a tragedy and at his mother's urging, he decides to enlist, assured by the authorities that he will achieve paradise should he die in service to his country.
- War does not bring the glory the boys of Iran have been promised, and Reza soon finds himself held in a prisoner-of-war camp in Iraq, where the guards not only threaten violence—they act upon it. Will Reza make it out alive? And if he does, will he even have a home to return to?
- In this unforgettable tale of friendship and survival against the odds, Reza finds solace through music and forges his own path, wherever that might take him. *Lost Boys* is a stunning debut from Darcey Rosenblatt. It is perfect for readers interested in current events, history, and the Middle East.



Piecing Me Together by Renee Watson



Jade believes she must get out of her poor neighborhood if she's ever going to succeed. Her mother tells her to take advantage of every opportunity that comes her way. And Jade has: every day she rides the bus away from her friends and to the private school where she feels like an outsider, but where she has plenty of opportunities. But some *opportunities* she doesn't really welcome, like an invitation to join Women to Women, a mentorship program for "at-risk" girls. Just because her mentor is black and graduated from the same high school doesn't mean she understands where Jade is coming from. She's tired of being singled out as someone who needs help, someone people want to fix. Jade wants to speak, to create, to express her joys and sorrows, her pain and her hope. Maybe there are some things she could show other women about understanding the world and finding ways to be real, to make a difference.

Beyond the Bright Sea by Lauren Wolk

Crow has lived her entire life on a tiny island off the coast of Massachusetts. Her only companions are Osh, the man who rescued her as an infant and raised her, and Miss Maggie, their neighbor across the sandbar. But it isn't until the night when a mysterious fire appears across the water that an unspoken question of her own history forms in her heart and an unstoppable chain of events is triggered. Using her bravery and perseverance, Crow must follow clues that not only lead to a personal treasure, but to uncovering her lost identity and, ultimately, understanding what it means to be a family.

