

WNC BOOK LISTS

TOPIC CURATED TITLE SUGGESTIONS

NOVELS IN VERSE



HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

In this resource you will find a curated list of novels in verse as well as a variety of accompanying materials.

How to Use This Resource

1. Choose a title from the novels in verse list.
2. Scan the QR code to play the read-aloud video.
3. Students complete the response sheet while listening.
4. Students vote: Would you keep reading?
5. Display the book cover poster to build classroom book buzz.

Classroom Use Ideas Quick List:

- First Chapter Friday
- Sub plans
- Book tasting stations
- Library preview lessons
- Early finisher reading activities



To check the reading level, video length or to find a book purchasing link, look at this [Google Doc](#) that organizes ALL of my First Chapter Friday read aloud videos alphabetically.

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Page 4: What is First Chapter Friday?

Pages 5-6: Book Tracking Charts

Page 7: Book List

Page 8: Full List Book Cover Poster

Pages 10-30 Individual Book First Chapter Friday Sheets

Pages 32-52: Individual Book Posters

** More resources will be added in the future including a Reading Round Up Video to briefly explain every video on this list and possibly even some thematic coloring sheets.

As always, please email me with any title requests or questions. (wordnerd@amandazieba.com)

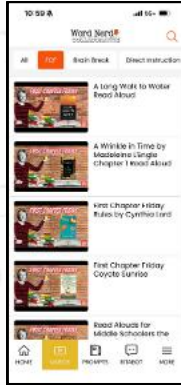
HAPPY READING POETRY FANS!



Word Nerd Daily

an app from Amanda Zieba

MUST TRY!



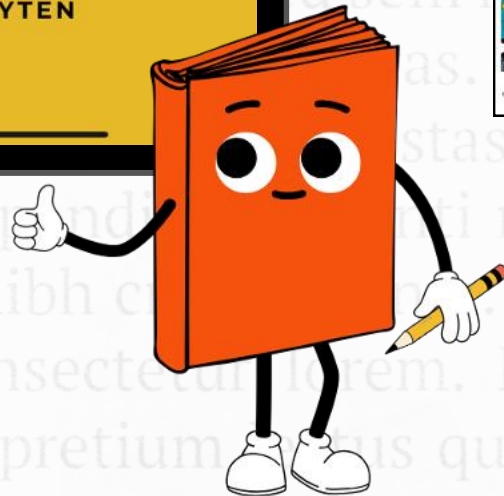
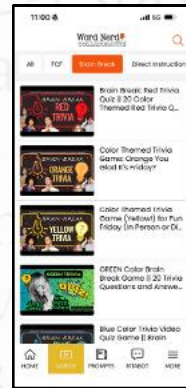
First Chapter Friday Videos

ChatBot for Reading Recs and Lesson Planning



Writing Prompt Library

Brain Break Videos



AVAILABLE FOR APPLE AND ANDROID DEVICES



FIRST CHAPTER *Friday Videos*

Not sure how First Chapter Friday works?

Check out this [video](#) for a full explanation and 4 implementation ideas.

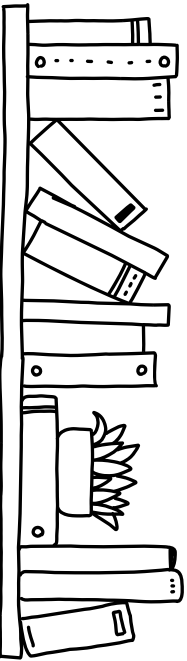


If you prefer a written description in lieu of a video, click [here](#).

[Click here](#) for a live, continually updated, Google Doc of the First Chapter Friday videos on my channel. Additionally you will find links to purchase the books and watch the read aloud videos, as well as book reading levels, genre/format, video length and more!

All my best,
Amanda Zieba

[illegible]



First CHAPTER Fridays

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NAME: _____

NOVELS IN VERSE

The books on this list are written in the format of narrative poems.



Alone by Megan E. Freeman

Becoming Muhammad Ali by James Patterson and Kwame Alexander

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jaqueline Woodson

The Canyon's Edge by Dusti Bowling

Closer to Nowhere by Ellen Hopkins

The Crossover by Kwame Alexander

Eb and Flow by Kelly Baptist

Enemies in the Orchard by Dana VanderLugt

Finding Baba Yaga by Jane Yolen

Good Different by Meg Eden Kuyatt

Hidden by Helen Frost

House Arrest by K.A. Holt

Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai

Iveliz Explains it All by Andrea Beatriz Arango

Kareem Between by Shifa Safadi

Lifeboat 12 by Susan Hood

Ode to a Nobody by Caroline Dubois

Other Words for Home by Jasmine Warga

Out of the Dust by Helen Frost

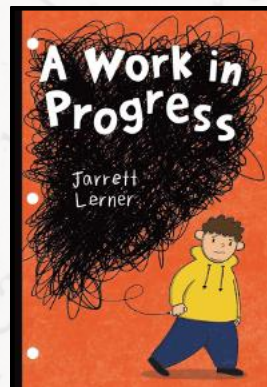
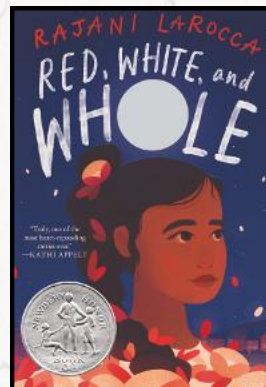
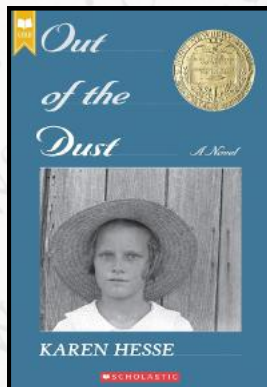
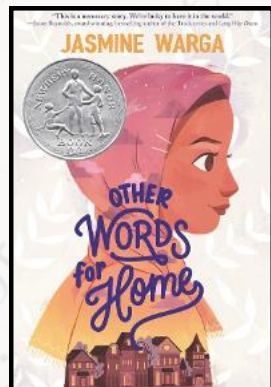
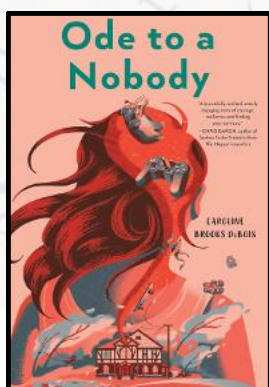
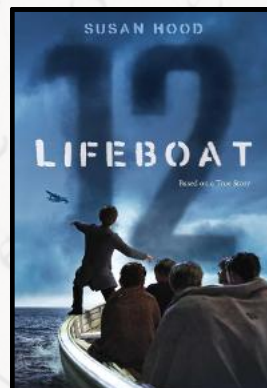
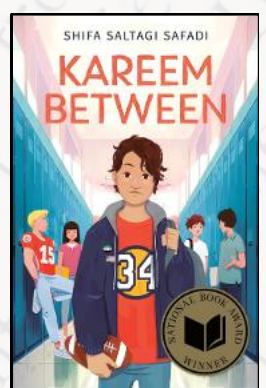
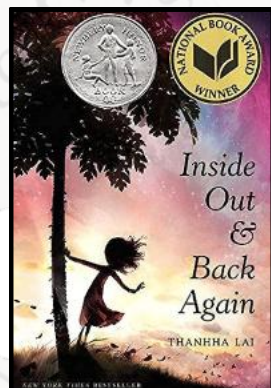
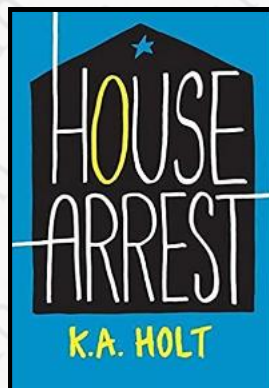
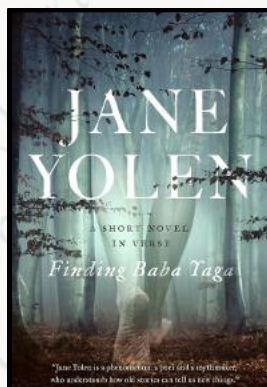
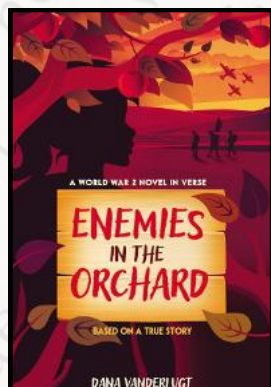
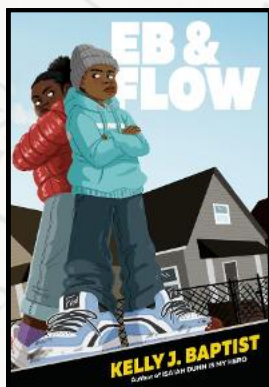
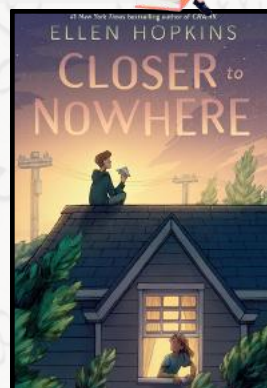
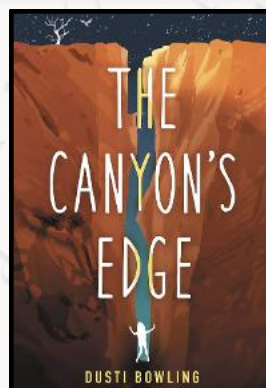
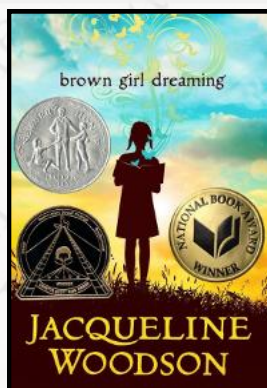
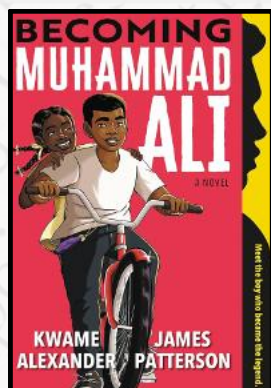
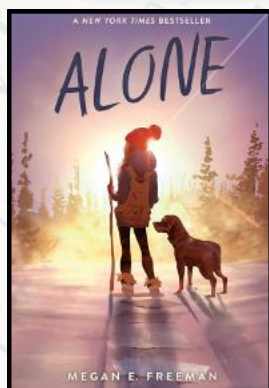
Red, White, and Whole by Rajani La Rocca

A Work in Progress by Jarrett Lerner



WNC BOOK LISTS * TOPIC CURATED TITLE SUGGESTIONS

NOVELS IN VERSE



WNC BOOK LISTS * TOPIC CURATED TITLE SUGGESTIONS

[illegible]

FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

Name _____

Date _____



Alone

by Megan E. Freeman



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

When twelve-year-old Maddie hatches a scheme for a secret sleepover with her two best friends, she ends up waking up to a nightmare. She's alone—left behind in a town that has been mysteriously evacuated and abandoned.

With no one to rely on, no power, and no working phone lines or internet access, Maddie slowly learns to survive on her own. Her only companions are a Rottweiler named George and all the books she can read. After a rough start, Maddie learns to trust her own ingenuity and invents clever ways to survive in a place that has been deserted and forgotten.

As months pass, she escapes natural disasters, looters, and wild animals. But Maddie's most formidable enemy is the crushing loneliness she faces every day. Can Maddie's stubborn will to survive carry her through the most frightening experience of her life?

Who Wrote It?

Megan E. Freeman attended an elementary school where poets visited her classroom every week to teach poetry, and she has been a writer ever since. *Alone* is Megan's first book and it took her 8 years to write! The idea for it came she read *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell in a Mother-Daughter Book Club. She was thinking about *Karana* being left behind on the island, and I wondered what might happen if a modern-day seventh grader was left behind in a Colorado town. Ideas for poems come from things I see or hear or smell or taste, or from thoughts that pass through my mind. I love to travel, and wherever I go, I explore until I find a local bookstore. I always buy at least two books (one book of poetry by a local poet and one other book I'm excited to read). Then I take a picture of the store so I can remember it.



She used to live in northeast Los Angeles, central Ohio, northern Norway, and on Caribbean cruise ships. Now she lives in northern Colorado. You can learn more about Megan on her website: www.meganefreeman.com.

AR Reading Level: 4.7

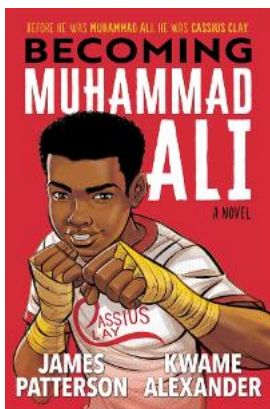
Lexile Level: 690L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.



Name _____

Date _____

Becoming Muhammad Ali

by Kwame Alexander and James Patterson



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

Before he was a household name, Cassius Clay was a kid with struggles like any other. James Patterson and Kwame Alexander join forces to vividly depict his life up to age seventeen in both prose and verse, including his childhood friendships, struggles in school, the racism he faced, and his discovery of boxing. Readers will learn about Cassius's family and neighbors in Louisville, Kentucky, and how Cassius began training as an amateur boxer at age twelve. Before long, he won his first Golden Gloves bout and began his transformation into the unrivaled Muhammad Ali. Fully authorized by and written in cooperation with the Muhammad Ali estate, *Becoming Muhammad Ali* dynamically captures the budding charisma and youthful personality of one of the greatest sports heroes of all time.

AR Reading Level: 5.4

Who Wrote It?

Things Kwame and James have in common...

- Award Winning Authors
- Both have written more than 40 books!
- Advocates for Children's Literature
- Some of their books have been turned into movies and TV shows!
- They are philanthropists, which means they donate money to charitable causes.

Some differences...

- James lives in Florida.
- Kwame lives in London.
- James has a son.
- Kwame has a daughter.
- James writes prose.
- Kwame writes poetry.



Lexile Level: 1010L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆ ☆ WHAT I THINK ☆ ☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.

Name _____

Date _____



Brown Girl Dreaming

by Jacqueline Woodson



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement.

Touching and powerful, each poem is both accessible and emotionally charged, each line a glimpse into a child's soul as she searches for her place in the world. Woodson's eloquent poetry also reflects the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, despite the fact that she struggled with reading as a child. Her love of stories inspired her and stayed with her, creating the first sparks of the gifted writer she was to become.

Who Wrote It?

"I used to say I'd be a teacher or a lawyer or a hairdresser when I grew up but even as I said these things, I knew what made me happiest was writing."

Fun Facts about Jaqueline:

- I can only write with my notebook turned sideways. When I was a kid, I wrote with it turned upside down.
- I have only lost at checkers once or twice. I have only won at Chess once.
- I can jump double-dutch.
- Even though I can walk to a Brooklyn Nets game from my house, I'm still a die-hard Knicks fan.



Check out Jaqueline's website for more info including a great video on her about page.

www.jacquelinewoodson.com/

AR Reading Level: 5.3

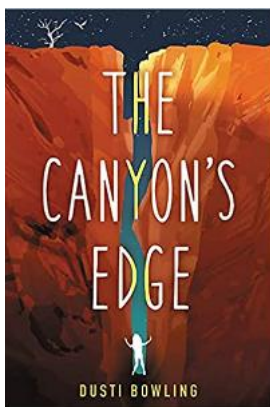
Lexile Level: 990L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.



Name _____

Date _____

The Canyon's Edge

by Dusti Bowling



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

Hatchet meets Long Way Down in this heartfelt and gripping novel in verse about a young girl's struggle for survival after a climbing trip with her father goes terribly wrong.

One year after a random shooting changed their family forever, Nora and her father are exploring a slot canyon deep in the Arizona desert, hoping it will help them find peace. Nora longs for things to go back to normal, like they were when her mother was still alive, while her father keeps them isolated in fear of other people. But when they reach the bottom of the canyon, the unthinkable happens: A flash flood rips across their path, sweeping away Nora's father and all of their supplies.

Suddenly, Nora finds herself lost and alone in the desert, facing dehydration, venomous scorpions, deadly snakes, and, worst of all, the Beast who has terrorized her dreams for the past year. If Nora is going to save herself and her father, she must conquer her fears, defeat the Beast, and find the courage to live her new life.

Who Wrote It?

DUSTI BOWLING grew up in Scottsdale, Arizona, where, as her family will tell you, she always had her nose in a book. She released her first middle grade novel in 2017 and hasn't stopped writing since.

Dusti's books have won all sorts of amazing awards! And the best part is she keeps coming out with new books all the time. Currently, she is up to 7!!

Dusti currently lives in Eagar, Arizona with her husband, three daughters, several tarantulas, some guinea pigs, a gopher snake named Burrito, and a



cockatiel named Gandalf the Grey. Yes, her real name is Dusti and yes she really does have all of those pets! You can learn more about Dusti and her books at www.dustibowling.com.

AR Reading Level: 4.8

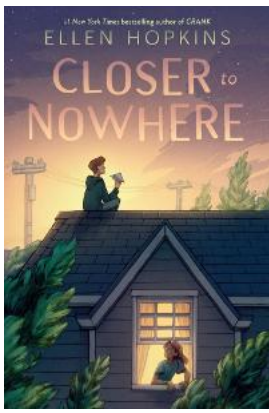
Lexile Level: 750L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.



Name _____

Date _____

Closer to Nowhere

by Ellen Hopkins



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

For the most part, Hannah's life is just how she wants it. She has two supportive parents, she's popular at school, and she's been killing it at gymnastics. But when her cousin Cal moves in with her family, everything changes. Cal tells half-truths and tall tales, pranks Hannah constantly, and seems to be the reason her parents are fighting more and more. Nothing is how it used to be. She knows that Cal went through a lot after his mom died and she is trying to be patient, but most days Hannah just wishes Cal never moved in.

For his part, Cal is trying his hardest to fit in, but not everyone is as appreciative of his unique sense of humor and storytelling gifts as he is. Humor and stories might be his defense mechanism, but if Cal doesn't let his walls down soon, he might push away the very people who are trying their best to love him. Told in verse from the alternating perspectives of Hannah and Cal, this is a story of two cousins who are more alike than they realize and the family they both want to save.

Who Wrote It?

Ellen was born in California and adopted soon after. She lived in Hollywood near famous people including Elvis Presley! She was a smart student who always liked to read and write, but admits to being a bit of a rebel! One of her hobbies as a child was riding horses. Now as an adult she likes to garden and cook. She also likes to travel and spends around 100 days a year, doing school and library visits, book signings and festivals, writers conferences, and other events. Before Ellen wrote books she wrote articles for newspapers and magazines.



Closer to Nowhere is Ellen's first middle grade book, but she has many other YA novels in verse. You can learn more about Ellen and her books on her website: www.ellenhopkins.com.

AR Reading Level: 3.7

Lexile Level: 490L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

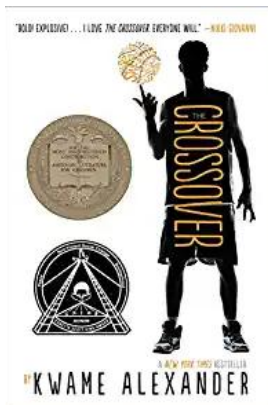
☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.

Name _____

Date _____



The Crossover

by Kwame Alexander



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

12-year old Josh Bell. He and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood, he's got mad beats, too, that tell his family's story in verse, in this fast and furious middle grade novel of family and brotherhood from Kwame Alexander. Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story's heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.

This book is a novel in verse, which means it is told in poems. Many are styled like raps.

- ** Soon to be a show on Disney+
- ** Won the Newbery Award
- ** New York Times Bestseller!

Who Wrote It?

Kwame Alexander has written 35 books, three of them in a chair next to a fireplace at his neighborhood Panera Bread. He now writes in a penthouse in London, where he lives. When he's not writing, Kwame's playing Softball with his soon-to-be six feet tall middle school daughter, walking around London listening to audio books, and travelling to schools and libraries across the globe...on Zoom. Kwame has eaten snails, chocolate covered bugs, and grasscutter, which is like a big rat, which he had no idea he was eating



because it was in a really tasty stew he ate in Ghana while building a library and a health clinic in a village called Konko. Kwame loves jazz. Kwame loves his family. Kwame loves his job.

AR Reading Level: 4.3

Lexile Level: 750L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.

Name _____

Date _____



Eb and Flow

by Kelly Baptist



Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.



Read Aloud Video

What's It About?

Two kids. One fight. No one thinks they're wrong.

Ebony and De'Kari (aka Flow) do not get along. How could they when their cafeteria scuffle ended with De'Kari's ruined shoes, Ebony on the ground, and both of them with ten days of at-home suspension? Now Eb and Flow have two weeks to think about and explain their behavior—to their families, to each other, and ultimately to themselves.

Award-winning author Kelly J. Baptist delivers a novel in verse that follows Eb and Flow as they navigate their parallel lives. Single-parent homes, tight funds, and sibling dynamics provide a balancing act for the growing tweens. And whether they realize it or not, these two have a lot more in common than they think.

Who Wrote It?

Kelly has been writing since...well, since she learned how to write! She started with notes and letters to her parents, then poems and short stories. Kelly J. Baptist was born and raised in the great state of Michigan. She's lived in Alabama, Florida, and Minnesota, but somehow found herself right back in her home state. Kelly won the 2015 We Need Diverse Books short story contest, and her winning entry is included in the middle grade anthology, *Flying Lessons* and



Other Stories. Kelly is a huge Kobe Bryant fan, and incorporates Mamba Mentality in all aspects of her life, especially writing!

Find more on Kelly's website:
www.kellyiswrite.com

AR Reading Level: N/A

Lexile Level: N/A

I want to read this book: YES / NO

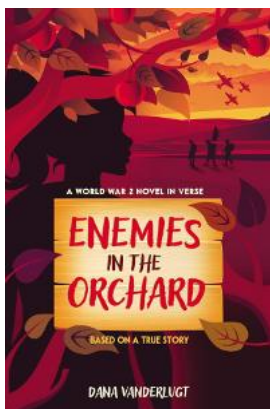
☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.

Name _____

Date _____



Enemies in the Orchard

by Dana Vanderlugt



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

It's October 1944, and while Claire's older brother, Danny, is off fighting in World War II, her dad hires a group of German POWs to help with the apple harvest on their farm. Claire wants nothing to do with the enemies in the orchard, until she meets soft-spoken, hardworking Karl. Could she possibly have something in common with a German soldier? Karl, meanwhile, grapples with his role in the war as he realizes how many lies Hitler's regime has spread—and his complacency in not standing up against them. But his encounters with Claire give him hope that he can change and become the person he wants to be. Inspired by the little-known history of POW labor camps in the United States, this lyrical verse novel is told in alternating first-person poems by two young people on opposite sides of the war. Against a vivid backdrop of home front tensions and daily life, intimate entries reveal Claire's and Karl's hopes and struggles, and their growing friendship even as the war rages on. What are their chances of connection, of redemption, of peace?

Who Wrote It?

Dana VanderLugt is a writer and teacher who descends from a family of Michigan apple growers and storytellers. A former middle school English teacher, Dana now works as a literacy consultant and has an MFA in Creative Writing from The Sena Jeter Naslund-Karen Mann Graduate School of Writing at Spalding University. She lives in Michigan with her husband, three sons, and a spoiled golden retriever. And yes, she makes a mean apple pie.



Teachers! Dana has used her former middle school teacher skills to create an amazing educator's guide for using the novel in your classroom!

Find it on her website:
www.danavanderlugt.com

AR Reading Level: N/A

Lexile Level: N/A

I want to read this book: YES / NO

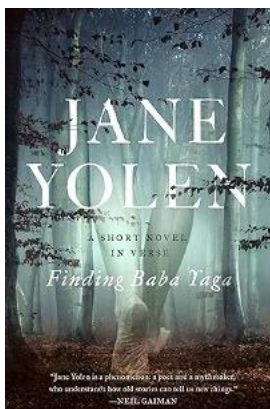
☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.

Name _____

Date _____



Finding Baba Yaga by Jane Yolen



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.



Novel in Verse

What's It About?

In order to develop a secure defense against a hostile alien race's next attack, government agencies breed child geniuses and train them as soldiers. Young Ender is the Wiggin drafted to the orbiting Battle School for rigorous military training. Ender's skills make him a leader in school and respected in the Battle Room, where children play at mock battles in zero gravity. Yet growing up in an artificial community of young soldiers Ender suffers greatly from isolation, rivalry from his peers, pressure from the adult teachers, and an unsettling fear of the alien invaders. The war with the Buggers has been raging for a hundred years, and the quest for the perfect general has been underway for almost as long. Ender's two older siblings are every bit as unusual as he is, but in very different ways. Between the three of them lie the abilities to remake a world. If, that is, the world survives.

Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game* is the winner of the 1985 Nebula Award for Best Novel and the 1986 Hugo Award for Best Novel.

Who Wrote It?

Jane was born in 1939 to parents who were writers. My father was a café journalist at the time, writing columns for the New York newspapers. He'd been a police reporter before that. My mother was a psychiatric social worker until I was born. After that, she never held another full-time out of the home paid job (though she did volunteer work), but wrote short stories that didn't sell and crossword puzzles and acrostics that did. They bounced back and forth between the coast living in New York and California. Jane went to Smith College (an all girls school) and by the end of 4 years she



was president of the Press Board, won all the poetry writing awards, the journalism award, and wrote the lyrics to the class musical. She went on to write 400 books!

AR Reading Level: N/A

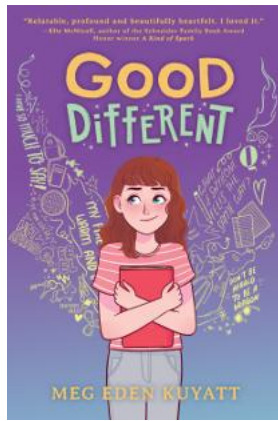
Lexile Level: N/A

I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.



Name _____

Date _____

Good Different by Meg Eden Kuyatt



Novel in Verse



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

Selah knows her rules for being normal. She always, always sticks to them. This means keeping her feelings locked tightly inside, despite the way they build up inside her as each school day goes on, so that she has to run to the bathroom and hide in the stall until she can calm down. So that she has to tear off her normal-person mask the second she gets home from school, and listen to her favorite pop song on repeat, trying to recharge. Selah feels like a dragon stuck in a world of humans, but she knows how to hide it.

Until the day she explodes and hits a fellow student. Selah's friends pull away from her, her school threatens expulsion, and her comfortable, familiar world starts to crumble. But as Selah starts to figure out more about who she is, she comes to understand that different doesn't mean damaged. Can she get her school to understand that, too, before it's too late? This is a moving and unputdownable story about learning to celebrate the things that make us different. Good Different is the perfect next read for fans of Counting by 7s or Jasmine Warga.

Who Wrote It?

Meg Eden is a follower of Jesus, neurodivergent (autistic and anxiety disorder), an extroverted-introvert, and a complete nerd for all things Pokémon and Fire Emblem. She loves to hear about what people believe, what shows and games they love, and why. She lives with her husband and two cats, Chaos Theory (CT) and Hazel, also known as 'Floaf' (the fluffy loaf). Besides being a writer, Meg has worked as an advertising manager, creative writing instructor, eBay seller, research assistant in linguistics and neuroscience, and publishing and



marketing contact for a small press. Meg received her MFA in creative writing from the University of Maryland College Park. She teaches creative writing courses.

AR Reading Level: 5.1

Lexile Level: unavailable

I want to read this book: YES / NO



WHAT I THINK





Name _____

Date _____



Hidden

by Helen Frost



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

When Wren Abbott and Darra Monson are eight years old, Darra's father steals a minivan. He doesn't know that Wren is hiding in the back. The hours and days that follow change the lives of both girls. Darra is left with a question that only Wren can answer. Wren has questions, too.

Years later, in a chance encounter at camp, the girls face each other for the first time. They can finally learn the truth—that is, if they're willing to reveal to each other the stories that they've hidden for so long. Told from alternating viewpoints, this novel-in-poems reveals the complexities of memory and the strength of a friendship that can overcome pain.

This book is a novel in verse and told in the two voices of the main characters.

Fun surprise poems await you at the end!

Who Wrote It?

Helen Frost was born in Brookings, South Dakota, the fifth of ten children. When she was 11, her family moved to Wilbraham, Massachusetts, where she spent her teenage years. She graduated from Syracuse University with a degree in Elementary Education and a concentration in English. She received her Masters degree in English from Indiana University in 1994. Throughout her career, writing and teaching have been inter-woven threads. She has published poetry, children's books, anthologies, and a play, as well as a book about teaching writing. She has taught writing at all



levels, from pre-school through adults. You can learn more about Helen at www.helenfrost.net or in this video's interview with her!

AR Reading Level: 3.9

Lexile Level: 670L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆ ☆ WHAT I THINK ☆ ☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.

Name _____

Date _____



House Arrest

by K.A. Holt



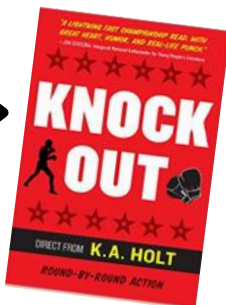
Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

Timothy is a good kid who did a bad thing. Now he's under house arrest for a whole year. He has to check in weekly with a probation officer and a therapist, keep a journal, and stay out of trouble. But when he must take drastic measures to help his struggling family, staying out of trouble proves more difficult than Timothy ever thought it would be.

- A Novel in Verse
- This book has a sequel: Knock Out
- 800+ 5 star reviews on Amazon



Who Wrote It?

FIVE FAST FACTS ABOUT KA HOLT

1. Kari Anne was born in Atlanta, Georgia on September 10th, 1990.
2. When she was 13, Kari Anne accidentally stomped through a gerbil cage, resulting in five stitches on her calf. You can still see the zigzag scar.
3. When she was young, her favorite author was Paula Danziger, followed closely by Lois Lowry.
4. Kari Anne's favorite food is almost always a taco, but there are times when a cheeseburger wins.
5. She has synesthesia, which means she



sees letters and numbers as colors, and she sometimes mixes up other senses, too. (Examples: the letter C is orange, the number one is icy white) You can learn more about KA on her website or YouTube Channel www.kaholt.com.

AR Reading Level: 4.0

Lexile Level: 610L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

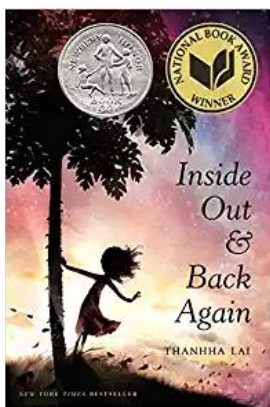
☆ ☆ WHAT I THINK ☆ ☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.

Name _____

Date _____



Inside Out and Back Again

by Thanhha Lai



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

Inspired by the author's childhood experience as a refugee—fleeing Vietnam after the fall of Saigon and immigrating to Alabama—this coming-of-age debut told in verse has been celebrated for its touching child's-eye view of family and immigration. Hà has only ever known Saigon: the thrills of its markets, the joy of its traditions, and the warmth of her friends close by. But now the Vietnam War has reached her home. Hà and her family are forced to flee as Saigon falls, and they board a ship headed toward hope—toward America.

This book is told in poems.

This book was the winner of the National Book Award, a Newbery Honor, and was a #1 New York Times bestseller!

Who Wrote It?

Thanhha Lai is a Vietnamese-American writer of middle-grade and young adult novels. She lives in upstate New York with her husband and daughter. Her dog Pico assists her by stepping directly onto the keys of her computer as she types. Aside from writing, she started a non-profit organization called Viet Kids Inc. Her goal was, and still is, so simple: to buy bicycles for poor students who otherwise would walk two hours to and two hours from school. With a bike, the trip would shorten to half an hour, leaving energy to spend in the



classrooms. You can learn more about this project and Thanhha's other book on her website: www.thanhhaai.com/

AR Reading Level: 4.8

Lexile Level: 800L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆ ☆ WHAT I THINK ☆ ☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.

Name _____

Date _____



Iveliz Explains it All by Andrea Beatriz Arango



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.



Novel in Verse

What's It About?

Seventh grade is going to be Iveliz's year. She's going to make a new friend, help her abuela Mimi get settled after moving from Puerto Rico, and she is not going to get into any more trouble at school. . . .

Except is that what happens? Of course not. Because no matter how hard Iveliz tries, sometimes people say things that just make her so mad. And worse, Mimi keeps saying Iveliz's medicine is unnecessary—even though it helps Iveliz feel less sad. But how do you explain your feelings to others when you're not even sure what's going on yourself?

Powerful and compassionate, Andrea Beatriz Arango's debut navigates mental health, finding your voice, and discovering that those who really love you will stay by your side no matter what.

AR Reading Level: Unavailable

Who Wrote It?

Andrea was born and raised in Puerto Rico, and is a former public school teacher with almost a decade of teaching experience. Andrea now writes the types of children's books she wishes students had more access to. She balances her life in Virginia with trips home to see her family and eat lots of tostones de pana. When she's not busy writing, you can find her enjoying nature in the nearest forest or body of water.



Lexile Level: 940L

I want to read this book: YES / NO



WHAT I THINK





Name _____

Date _____



Kareem Between

by Shifa Saltagi Safadi



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

Seventh grade begins, and Kareem's already fumbled it. His best friend moved away, he messed up his tryout for the football team, and because of his heritage, he was voluntold to show the new kid—a Syrian refugee with a thick and embarrassing accent—around school. Just when Kareem thinks his middle school life has imploded, the hotshot QB promises to get Kareem another tryout for the squad. There's a catch: to secure that chance, Kareem must do something he knows is wrong.

Then, like a surprise blitz, Kareem's mom returns to Syria to help her family but can't make it back home. If Kareem could throw a penalty flag on the fouls of his school and home life, it would be for unnecessary roughness. Kareem is stuck between. Between countries. Between friends, between football, between parents—and between right and wrong. It's up to him to step up, find his confidence, and navigate the beauty and hope found somewhere in the middle.

AR Reading Level: 4.7

Who Wrote It?

Shifa Saltagi Safadi is the National Book Award Winning author of *Kareem Between*, the *Amina Banana* series, and several picture books, including *The Gift of Eid*. She was born in Syria and immigrated to the US with her parents when she was a young girl. When she got married, she moved to the Chicagoland area and says she is a Midwest gal, through and through! She is a bilingual Arabic/English speaker, and is very familiar with the challenges of learning English and navigating two languages. Shifa also used to be a teacher and a book reviewer. Shifa loves to cook and says her favorite foods are Shakriyeh, a lamb yogurt stew served with rice, as well as cheeseburgers with extra



onions (yummy) and of course, CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES! You can learn more about Shifa (and get free printables and activities for her books) here: <https://shifasafadi.com/>

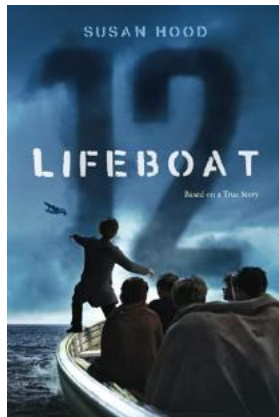
Lexile Level: Unavailable

I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



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Name _____

Date _____

Lifeboat 12 by Susan Hood



Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.



Read Aloud Video

What's It About?

With Nazis bombing London every night, it's time for thirteen-year-old Ken to escape. He suspects his stepmother is glad to see him go, but his dad says he's one of the lucky ones—one of ninety boys and girls to ship out aboard the SS City of Benares to safety in Canada. Life aboard the luxury ship is grand—nine-course meals, new friends, and a life far from the bombs, rations, and his stepmum's glare. And after five days at sea, the ship's officers announce that they're out of danger. They're wrong. Late that night, an explosion hurls Ken from his bunk. They've been hit. Torpedoed! The Benares is sinking fast. Terrified, Ken scrambles aboard Lifeboat 12 with five other boys. Will they get away? Will they survive?

A Junior Library Guild Selection
The 2019 Golden Kite Middle Grade Fiction Award Winner
A 2019 ALSC Notable Children's Book
The 2019–2020 Lectoria Book Award Winner
The 2020–2021 Florida Sunshine State Young Readers Award List
The 2020 Oklahoma Library Association's Children's Sequoyah Book Award Winner
The Connecticut Book Award Winner

Who Wrote It?

Where I was born: Brooklyn, New York
Where I went to college: Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts
Where I got my first (real) job: Scholastic in New York City
Where I live now: A small town in coastal Connecticut

Little-known facts:

- Until I was 10, I had really long braids. Really long!
- My eyes are green, but most people think they're blue. They change, depending on the color I'm wearing.
- I was the youngest person in my hometown with a library card.
- My mom adored animals, so we always had a parade of pets, two or three at a time. They were mostly dogs and cats, but also included fish, turtles, a parakeet, and rabbits.

Discover more facts about Susan on her amazing website:
www.susanhoodbooks.com



AR Reading Level: 4.0

Lexile Level: 610

I want to read this book: YES / NO



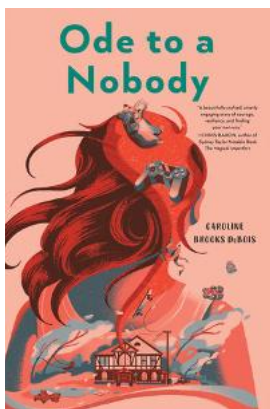
WHAT I THINK





Name _____

Date _____



Ode to a Nobody

by Caroline Brooks Dubois



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.



Novel in Verse

What's It About?

A devastating tornado tears apart more than just houses in this striking novel in verse about a girl rebuilding herself. Before the storm, thirteen-year-old Quinn was happy flying under the radar. She was average. Unremarkable. Always looking for an escape from her house, where her bickering parents fawned over her genius big brother. But after the storm, Quinn can't seem to go back to average. Her friends weren't affected by the tornado in the same way. To them, the storm left behind a playground of abandoned houses and distracted adults. As Quinn struggles to find stability in the tornado's aftermath, she must choose: between homes, friendships, and versions of herself. Told in rich, spectacular verse, Caroline Brooks DuBois crafts a powerful story of redemption as Quinn makes her way from Before to After. There's nothing average about the world Quinn wakes up to after the storm; maybe there's nothing average about her, either. This emotional coming-of-age journey for middle grade readers proves that it's never too late to be the person you want to be.

Who Wrote It?

Caroline has taught poetry workshops, creative writing and composition classes, and English at the middle school, high school, and college levels. In May 2016, she was recognized as a Nashville Blue Ribbon Teacher for her dedication to her students and excellence in teaching adolescents. Caroline is the director of the Literary Arts Conservatory at Nashville School of the Arts High School in Nashville, Tennessee. She lives with her singer-songwriter husband, with



whom she's co-written songs, and their two children and dog.

AR Reading Unavailable

Lexile Level: Unavailable

I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.

Name _____

Date _____



Other Words for Home

by Jasmine Warga



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

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. This lyrical, life-affirming story written as a novel in verse is about losing and finding home and, most importantly, finding yourself.

Who Wrote It?

I was born on April 24, 1988 at 11:59 PM in Cincinnati, Ohio. This means that I am a Taurus if you are into astrology and star stuff, which I most definitely am. Also, like all other people from Cincinnati, I am inordinately proud of my little Midwestern city and think that Graeter's black raspberry chip ice cream is the most delicious food in the whole world. (I'm really into a baby hippo named Fiona, too. She makes her home at the Cincinnati Zoo.) I loved to read. I also loved to tell stories. I come from a long-line of story-tellers. I only met my paternal grandmother twice—she lived in Jordan—but one of my most distinct childhood



memories is of her telling me a story about the mermaids that live in the Dead Sea. That story has stayed with me for years. Stories are the way I make sense of our messy and complicated world.

AR Reading Level: 5.3

Lexile Level: 930L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

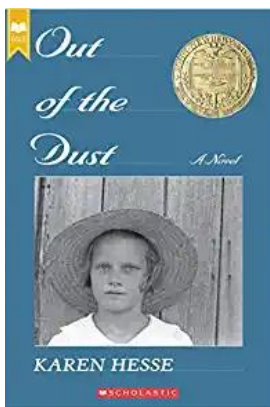
☆ ☆ WHAT I THINK ☆ ☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.

Name _____

Date _____



Out of the Dust

by Karen Hesse



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

"Dust piles up like snow across the prairie. . . ."

A terrible accident has transformed Billie Jo's life, scarring her inside and out. Her mother is gone. Her father can't talk about it. And the one thing that might make her feel better -- playing the piano -- is impossible with her wounded hands. To make matters worse, dust storms are devastating the family farm and all the farms nearby. While others flee from the dust bowl, Billie Jo is left to find peace in the bleak landscape of Oklahoma -- and in the surprising landscape of her own heart.

This book is a novel in verse, which means it is told in poems.

This book is historical fiction.

This book won the Newbery Award in 2010.

Who Wrote It?

I was born in 1952, in Baltimore, Maryland. I lived in a brick, row house in the city and my neighborhood brimmed with children my age. Summers were spent flying in and out of each other's homes. We played everything from jacks to hopscotch, jump rope to 'swinging statues', 'talent show' to 'mothers and babies'. There was a park about five blocks from my house in one direction and a public library about the same distance in the other direction and I loved going to both. I graduated from high school when I was sixteen and later earned my English degree from the University of Maryland. I've lived in Vermont since 1976 where, with my



husband, I've raised two amazing daughters. I love to knit dolls, go hiking, take photographs, read, write little tunes for the piano, paint, sing, and cook. Learn more about Karen and her books at <https://karenhesseblog.wordpress.com/>.

AR Reading Level: 5.3

Lexile Level: currently unavailable

I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.

Name _____

Date _____



Red, White and Whole

by Rajanni LaRocca



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

Reha feels torn between two worlds: school, where she's the only Indian American student, and home, with her family's traditions and holidays. But Reha's parents don't understand why she's conflicted—they only notice when Reha doesn't meet their strict expectations. Reha feels disconnected from her mother, or Amma, although their names are linked—Reha means 'star' and Punam means 'moon'—but they are a universe apart.

Then Reha finds out that her Amma is sick. Really sick. Reha, who dreams of becoming a doctor even though she can't stomach the sight of blood, is determined to make her Amma well again. She'll be the perfect daughter, if it means saving her Amma's life.

A heartbreakingly hopeful novel in verse about an Indian American girl whose life is turned upside down when her mother is diagnosed with leukemia. New England Book Award finalist!

If you like the 1980's, you'll love all the pop culture references in this book!

Who Wrote It?

I was born in Bangalore, India and immigrated to the U.S. as a baby. I spent most of my childhood in Louisville, Kentucky. I attended Harvard College and Harvard Medical School, and trained in Internal Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital. I've been working as a primary care physician since 2001. I live in eastern Massachusetts with my wonderful husband, our two brilliant kids, and an impossibly cute dog. I've always been an omnivorous reader – cereal boxes, comic books, fortune cookie fortunes, magazine articles, and, of course, novels. The books I read as a child helped shape who I am today in ways that I'm still discovering. Books inspired me to pursue medicine as a



Bo career; books made me yearn to live in different worlds; books helped me consider what it's like to walk in someone else's shoes. Learn more about Rajanni in this video's interview.

AR Reading Level: 3.7

Lexile Level: currently unavailable

I want to read this book: YES / NO

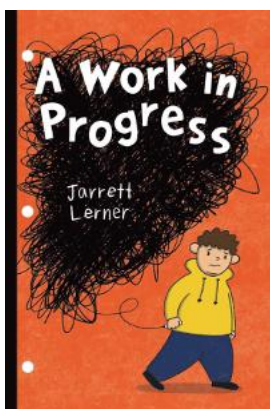
☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



Use this graphic organizer with the First Chapter Friday videos on YouTube from the Word Nerd.

Name _____

Date _____



A Work in Progress

by Jarrett Lerner

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.



Read Aloud Video



Novel in Verse

What's It About?

Will is the only round kid in a school full of string beans. So he hides...in baggy jeans and oversized hoodies, in the back row during class, and anywhere but the cafeteria during lunch. But shame isn't the only feeling that dominates Will's life. He's also got a crush on a girl named Jules who knows he doesn't have a chance with—string beans only date string beans—but he can't help wondering what if?

Will's best shot at attracting Jules's attention is by slaying the Will Monster inside him by changing his eating habits and getting more exercise. But the results are either frustratingly slow or infuriatingly unsuccessful, and Will's shame begins to morph into self-loathing.

As he resorts to increasingly drastic measures to transform his appearance, Will meets skateboarder Markus, who helps him see his body and all it contains as an ever-evolving work in progress.

Who Wrote It?

Author-illustrator Jarrett Lerner is the award-winning creator of the EngiNerds series of Middle Grade novels, the Geeger the Robot series of early chapter books, the activity books Give This Book a Title and Give This Book a Cover, The Hunger Heroes series of graphic novel chapter books, and the Nat the Cat series of early readers. Jarrett is also the creator of the illustrated novel in verse *A Work in Progress*, as well as several as-yet-unannounced projects. In addition to writing, drawing, and visiting schools and libraries across the country, Jarrett spearheads fundraisers for various reading- and book-related causes. He is also



the founder and operator of Jarrett Lerner's Creator Club. He can be found at jarrettlerner.com and on Twitter and Instagram at [@Jarrett_Lerner](https://twitter.com/Jarrett_Lerner). He lives with his wife and daughters in Massachusetts.

AR Reading Level: unavailable

Lexile Level: unavailable

I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



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INDIVIDUAL BOOK POSTERS



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

ALONE

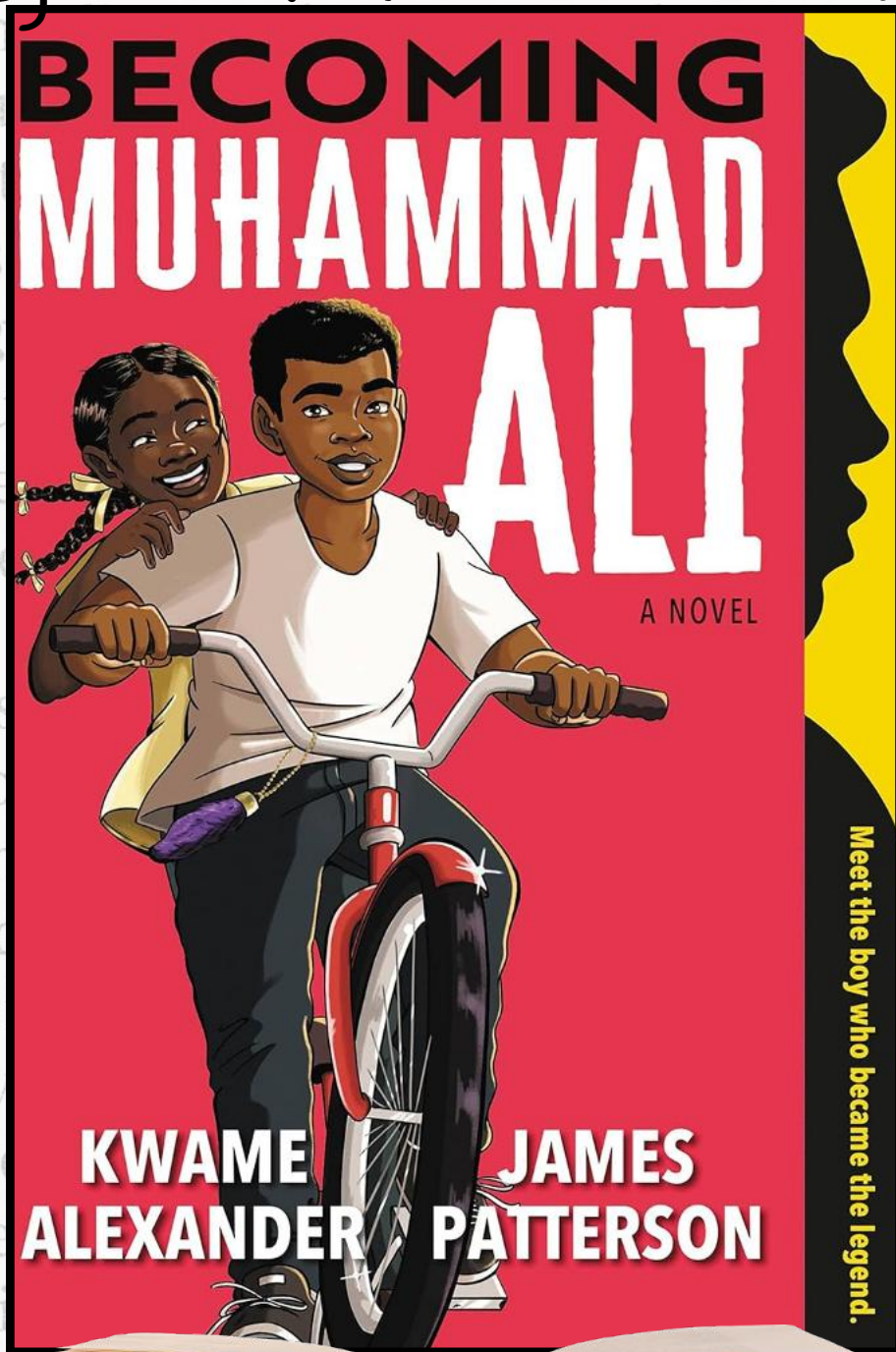
By Megan E. Freeman



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

BECOMING MUHAMMAD ALI

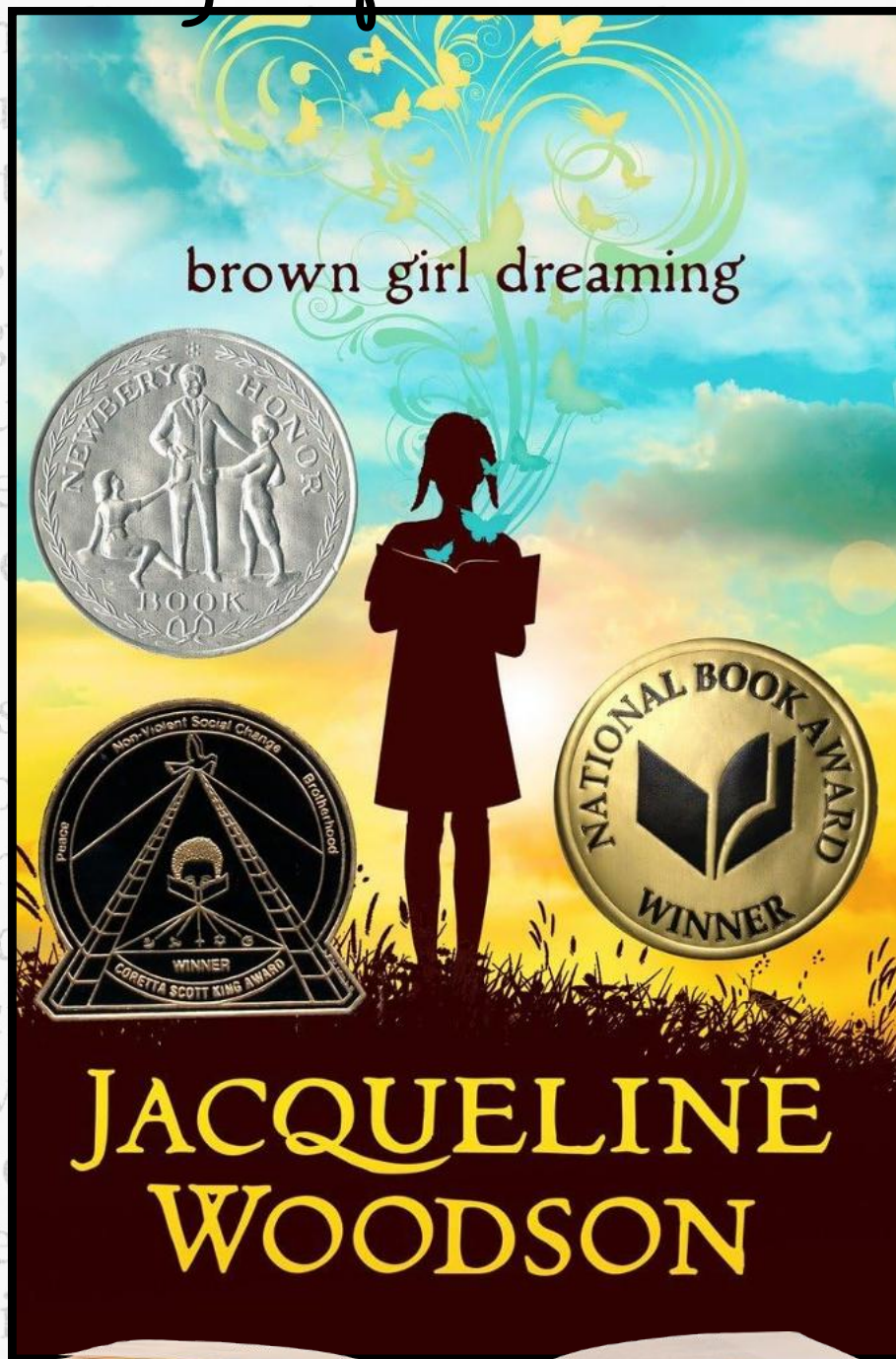
By Kwame Alexander & James Patterson



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

BROWN GIRL DREAMING

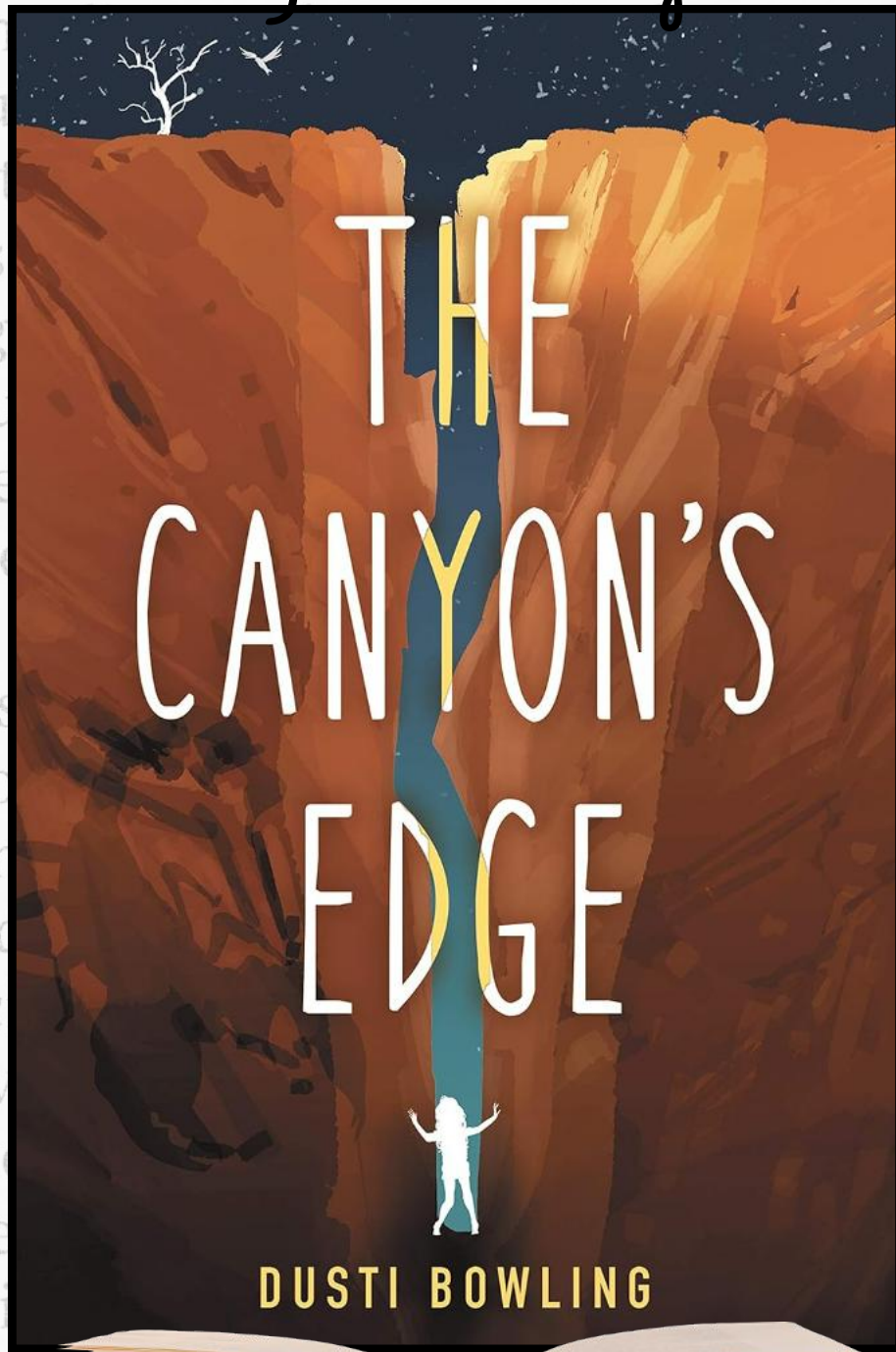
By Jacqueline Woodson



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

THE CANYON'S EDGE

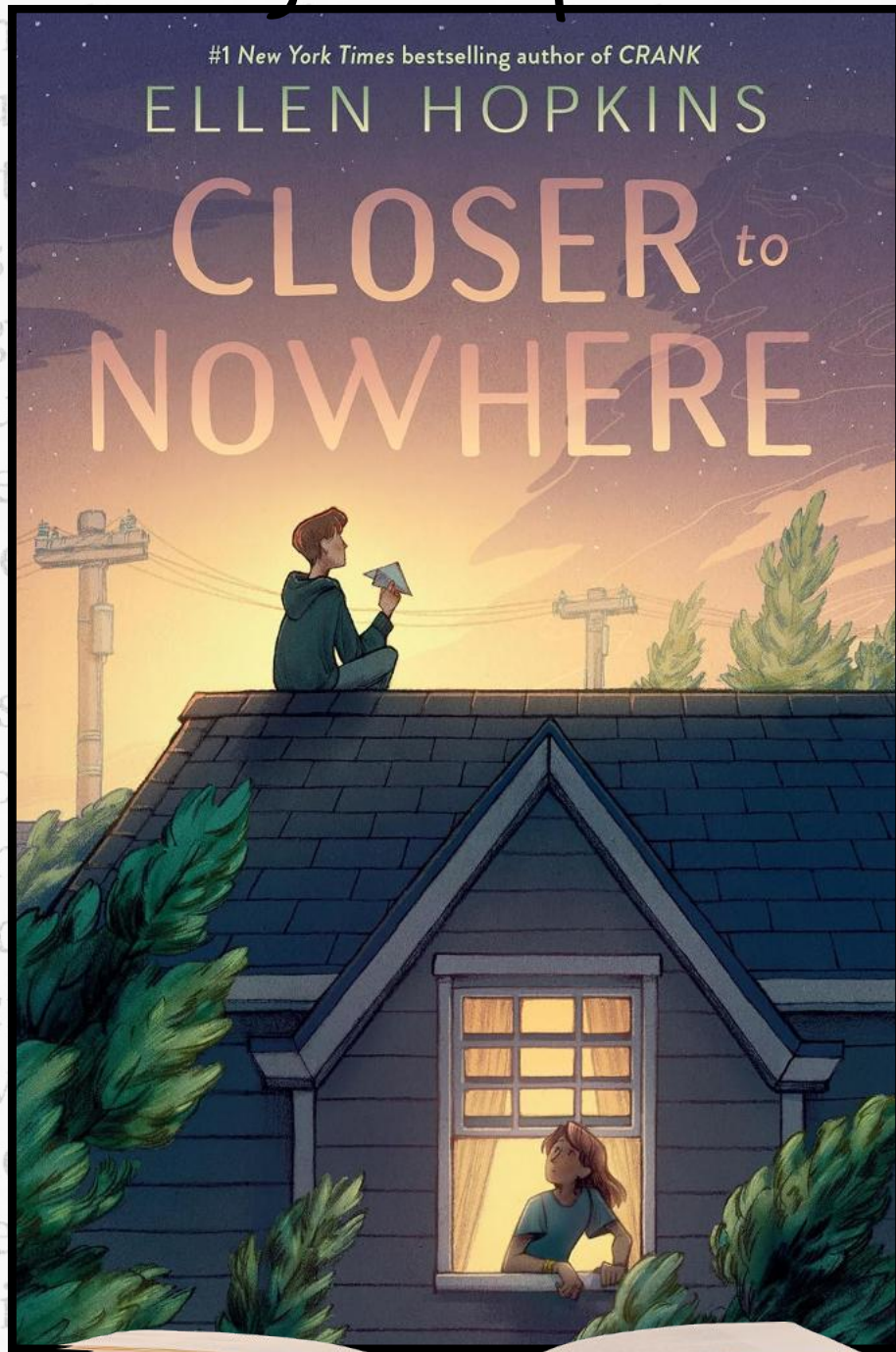
By Dusti Bowling



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

CLOSER TO NOWHERE

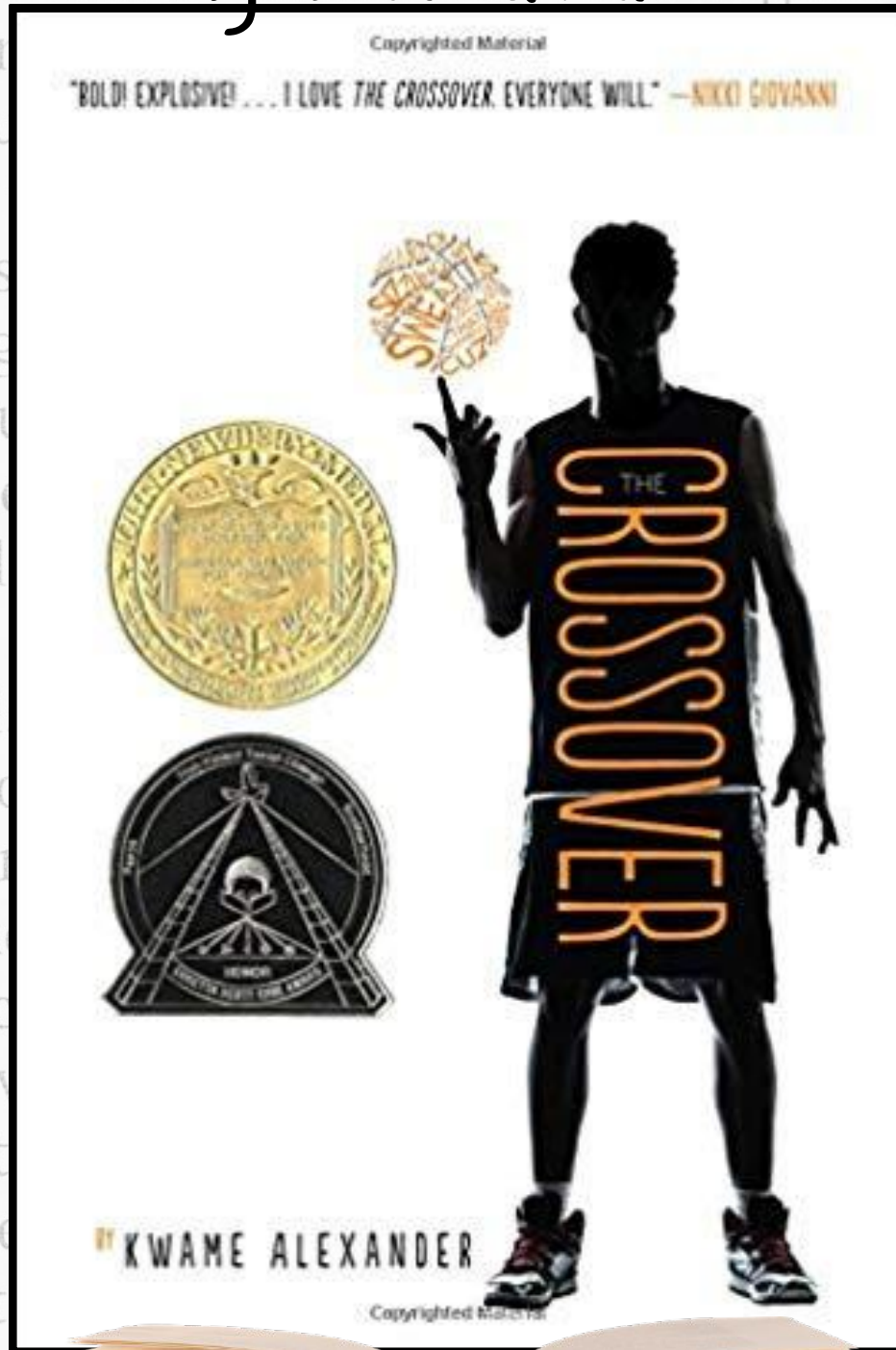
By Ellen Hopkins



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

THE CROSSOVER

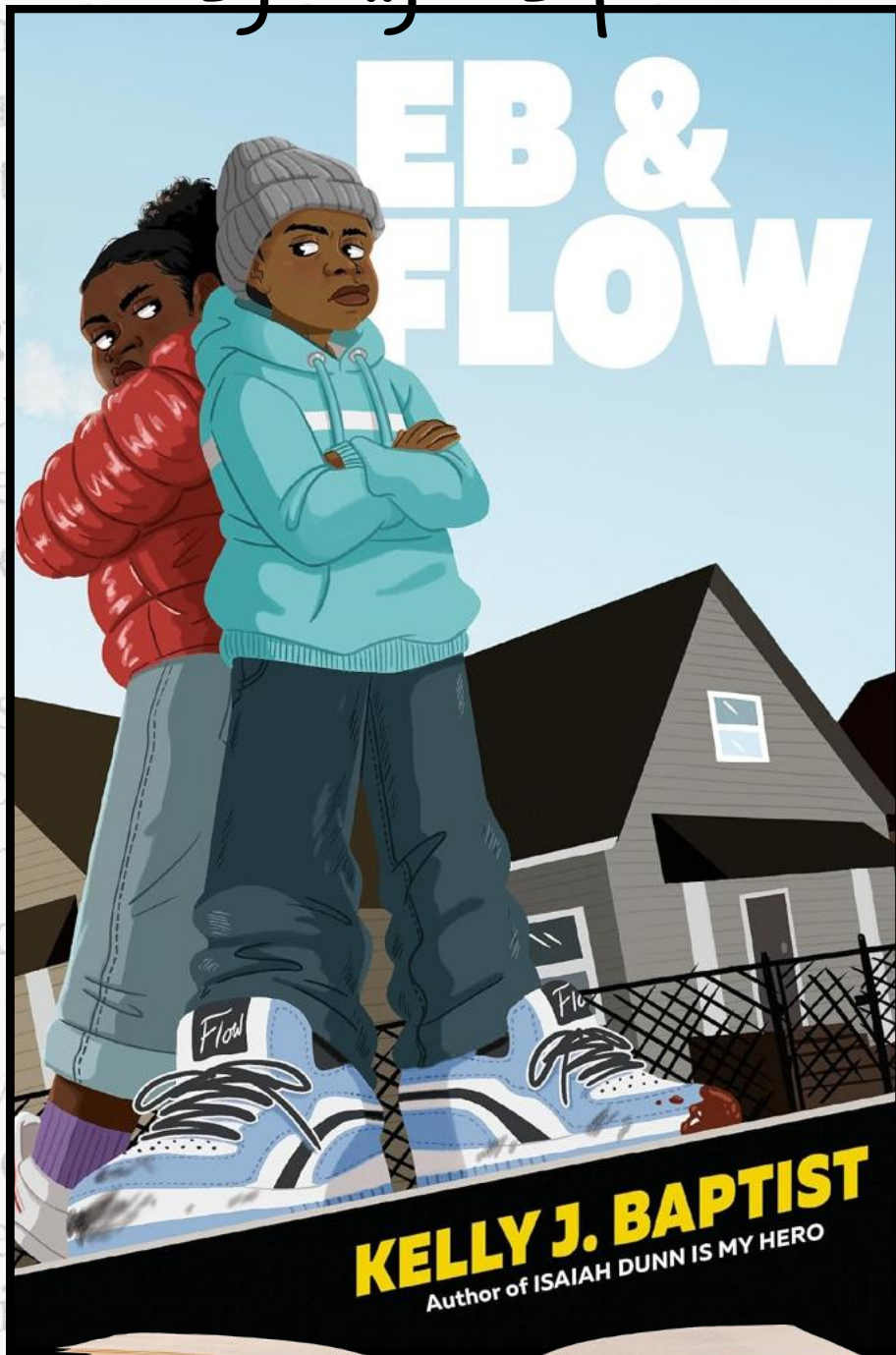
by Kwame Alexander



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

EB \$ FLOW

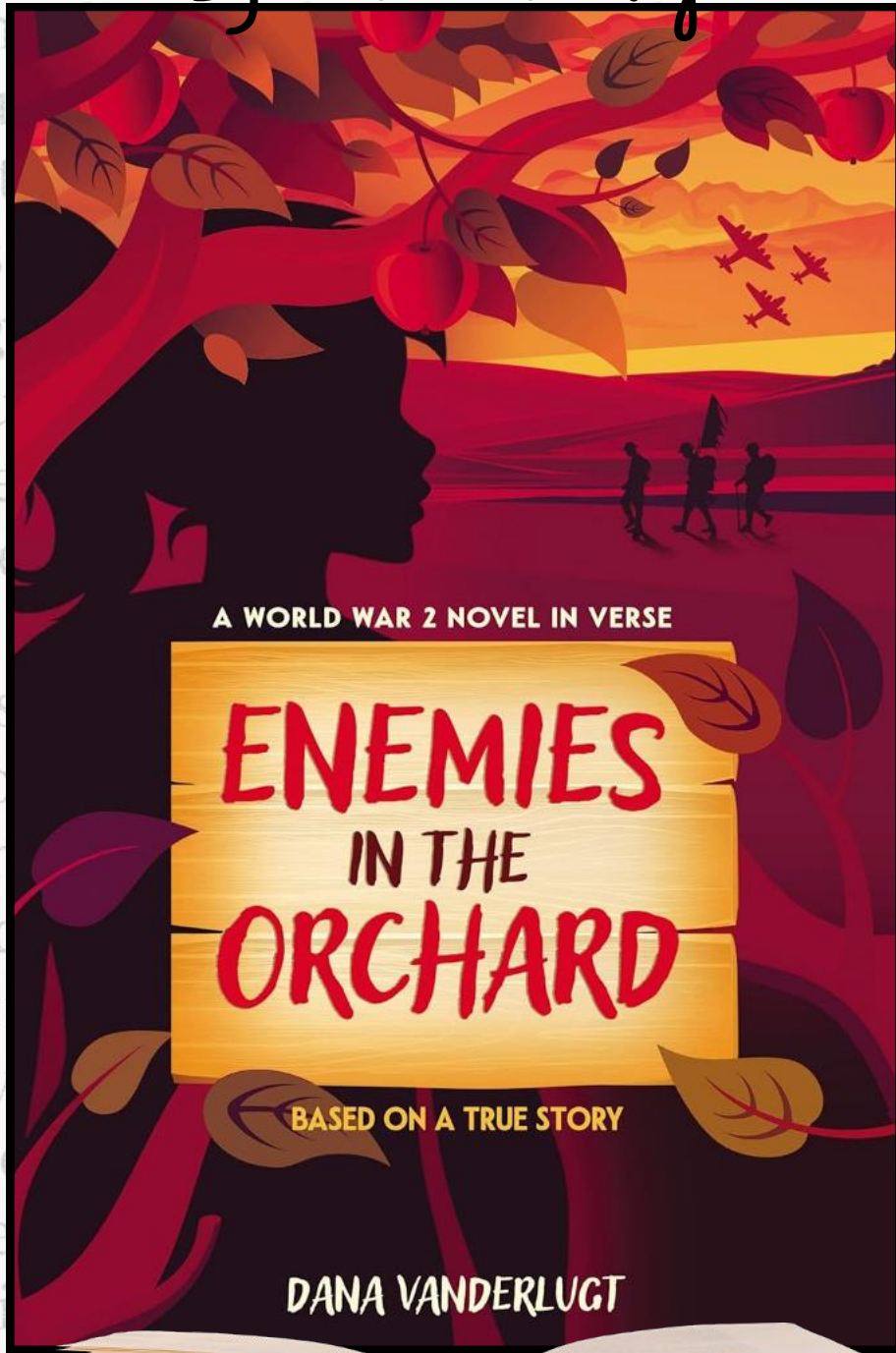
By Kelly J. Baptist



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

ENEMIES IN THE ORCHARD

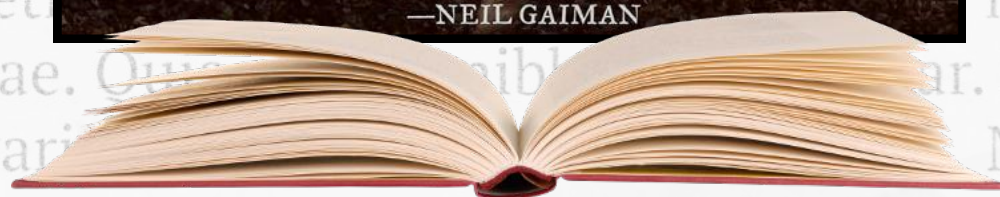
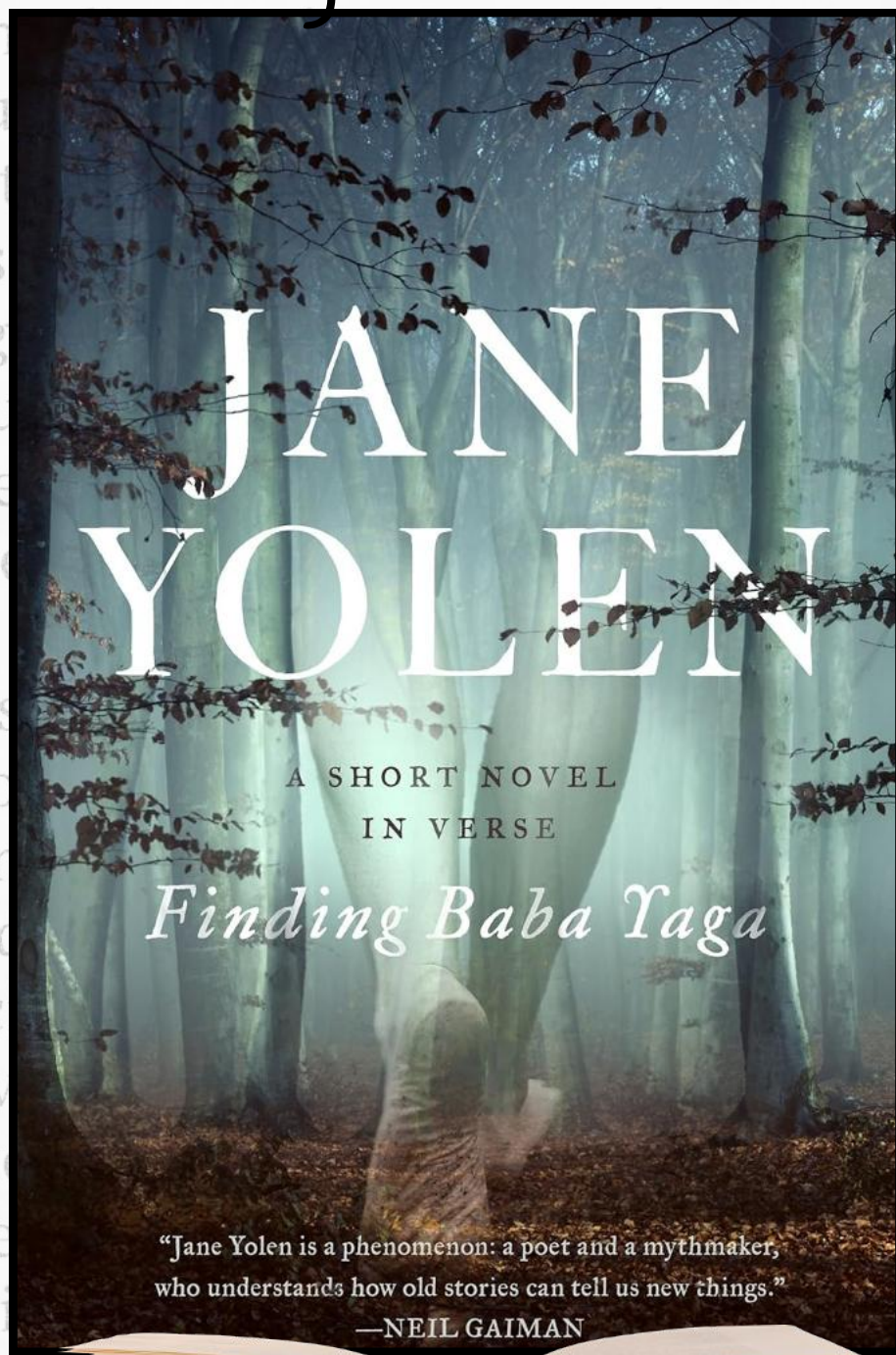
By Dana Vanderlugt



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

FINDING BABA YAGA

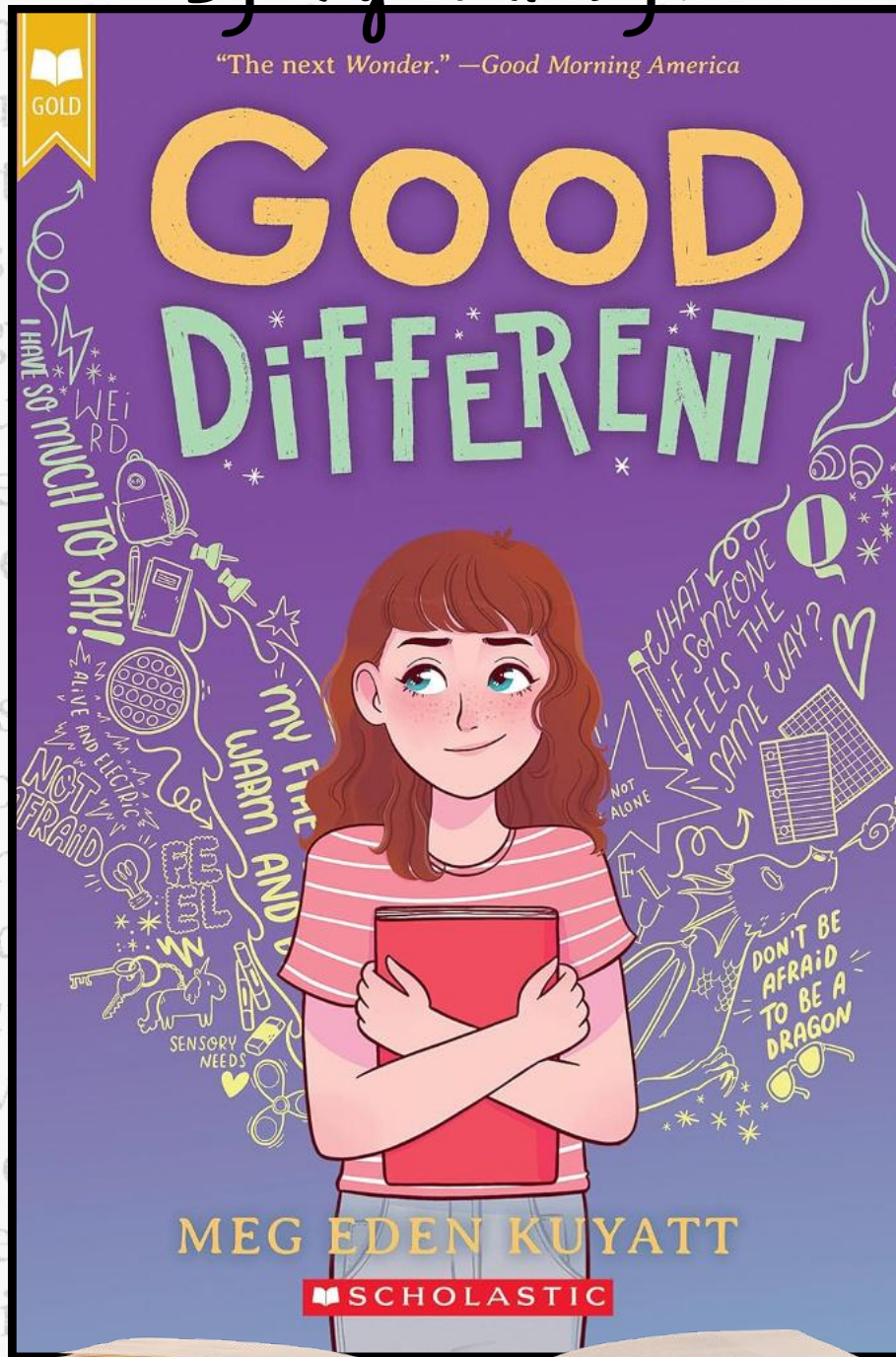
By Jane Yolen



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

GOOD DIFFERENT

By Meg Eden Kuyatt



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

HIDDEN

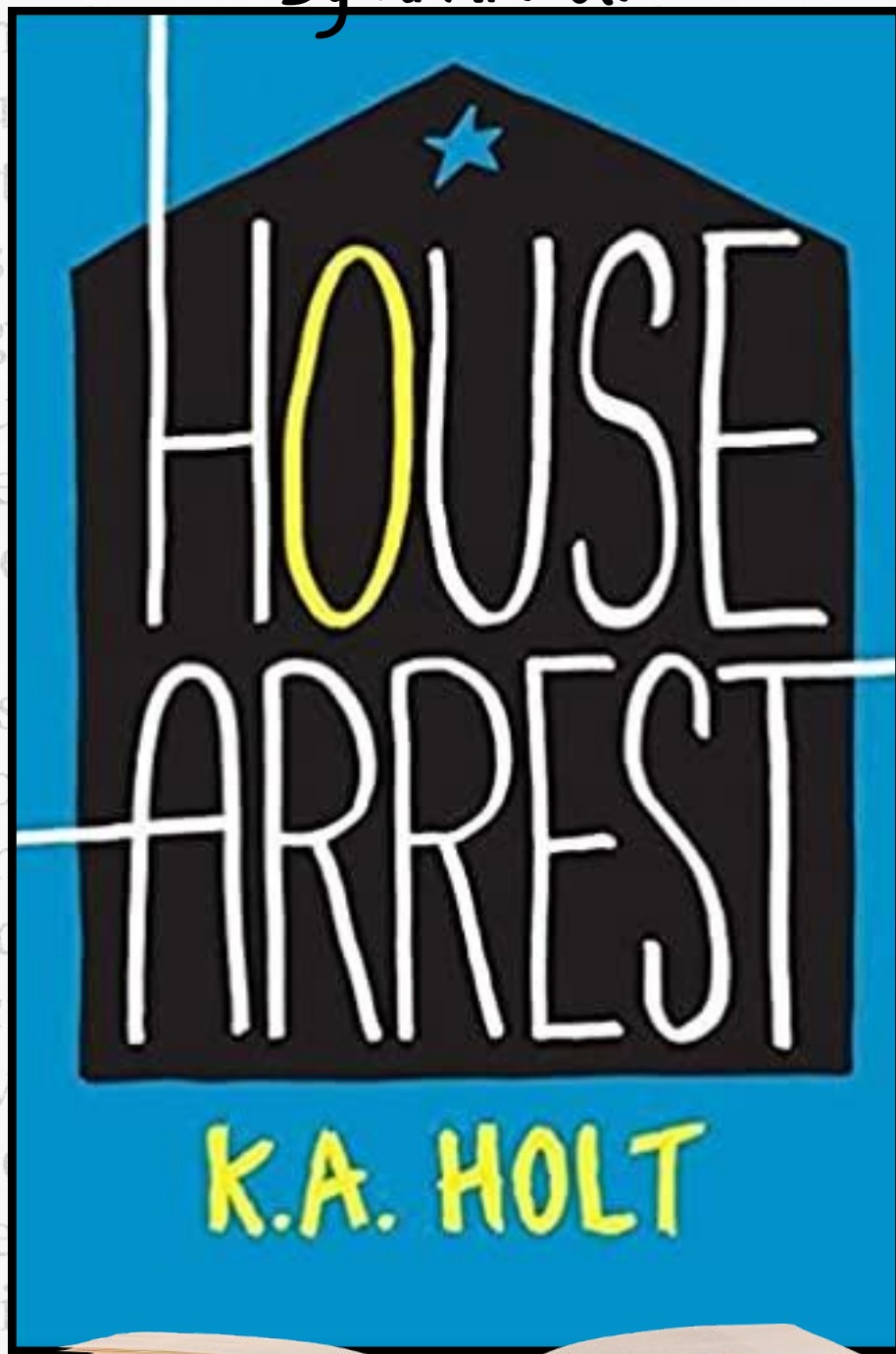
By Helen Frost



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

HOUSE ARREST

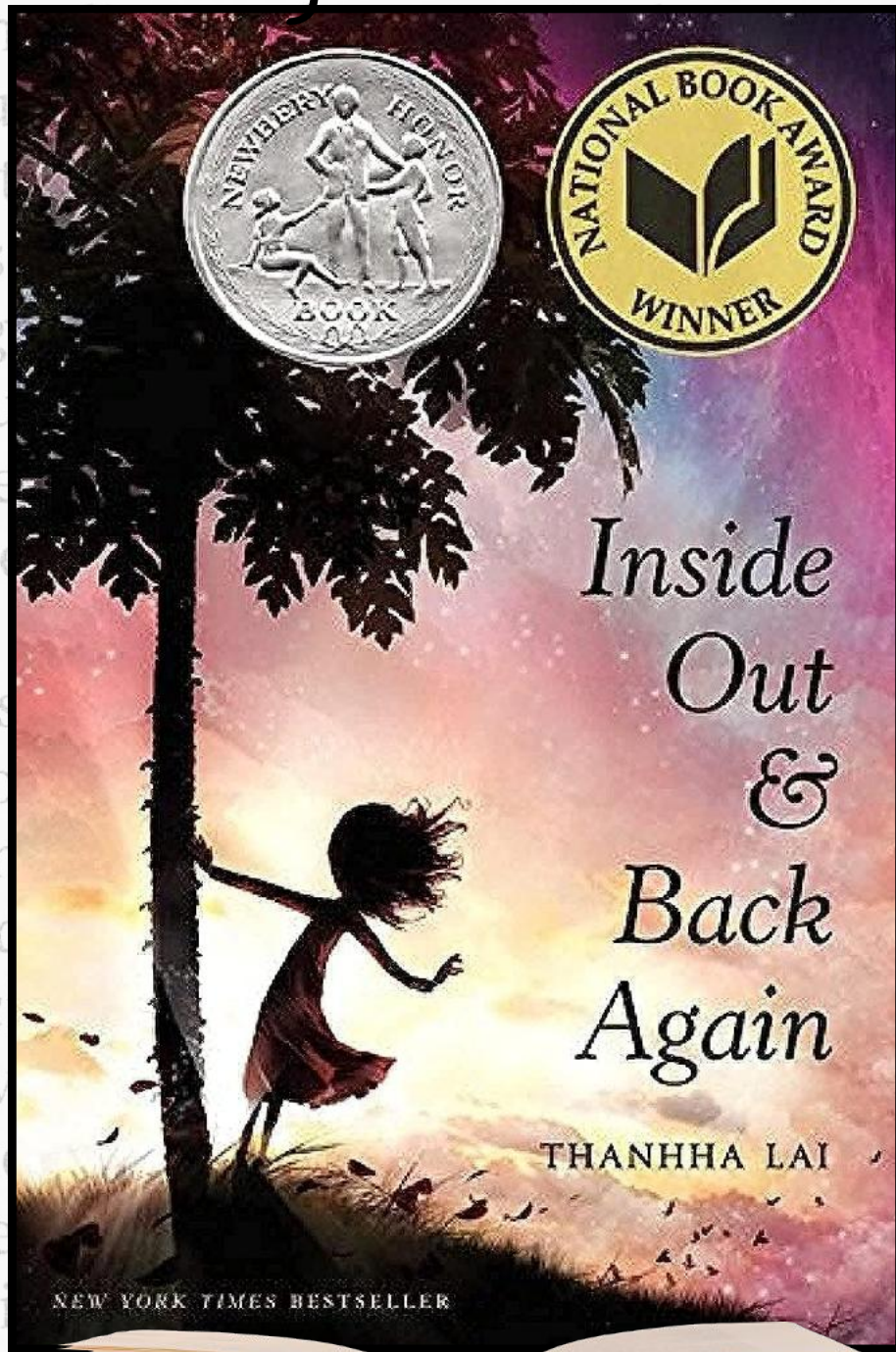
By K. A. Holt



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

INSIDE OUT & BACK AGAIN

By Thanhha Lai

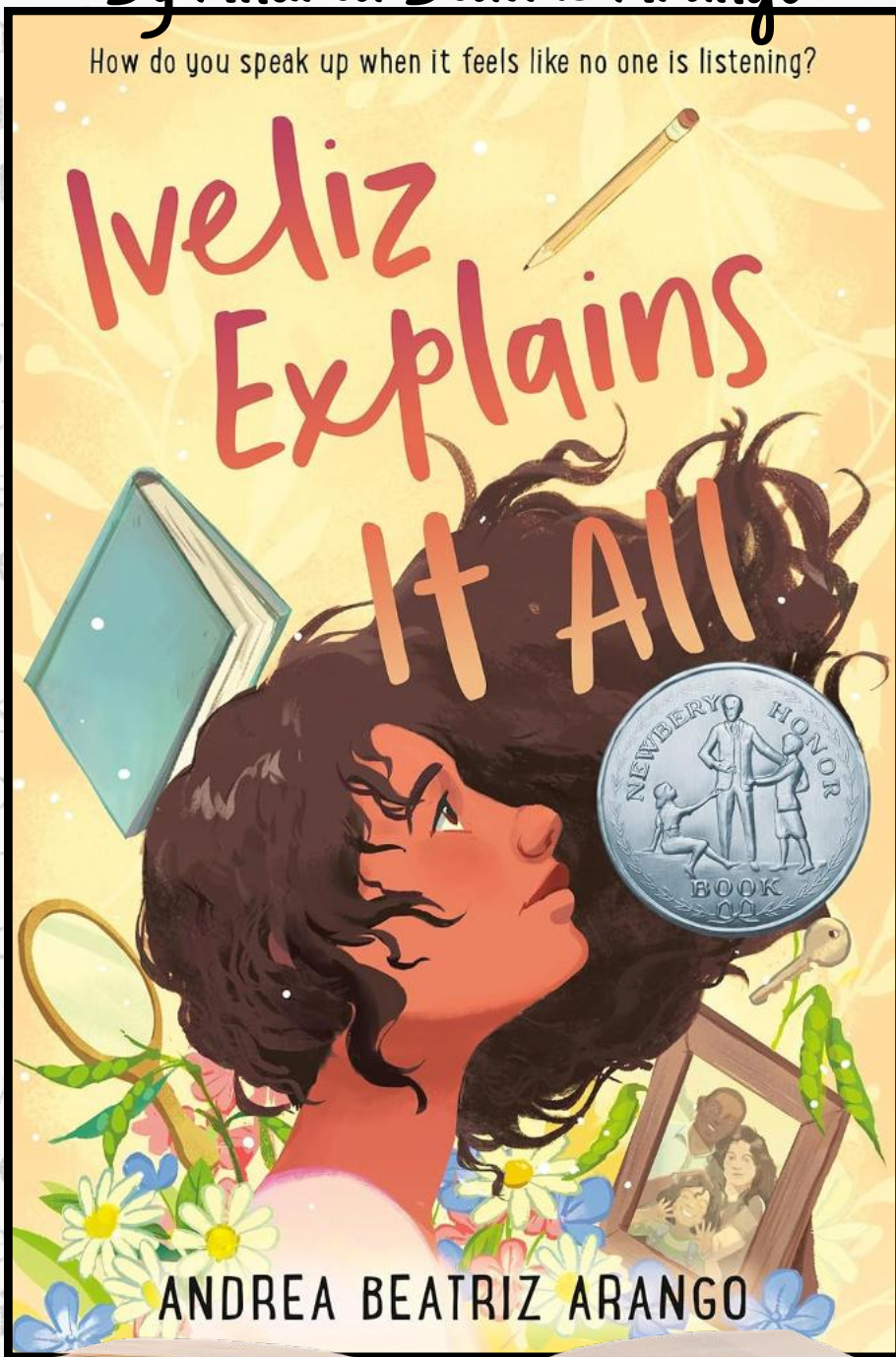


FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

IVELIZ EXPLAINS IT ALL

By Andrea Beatriz Arango

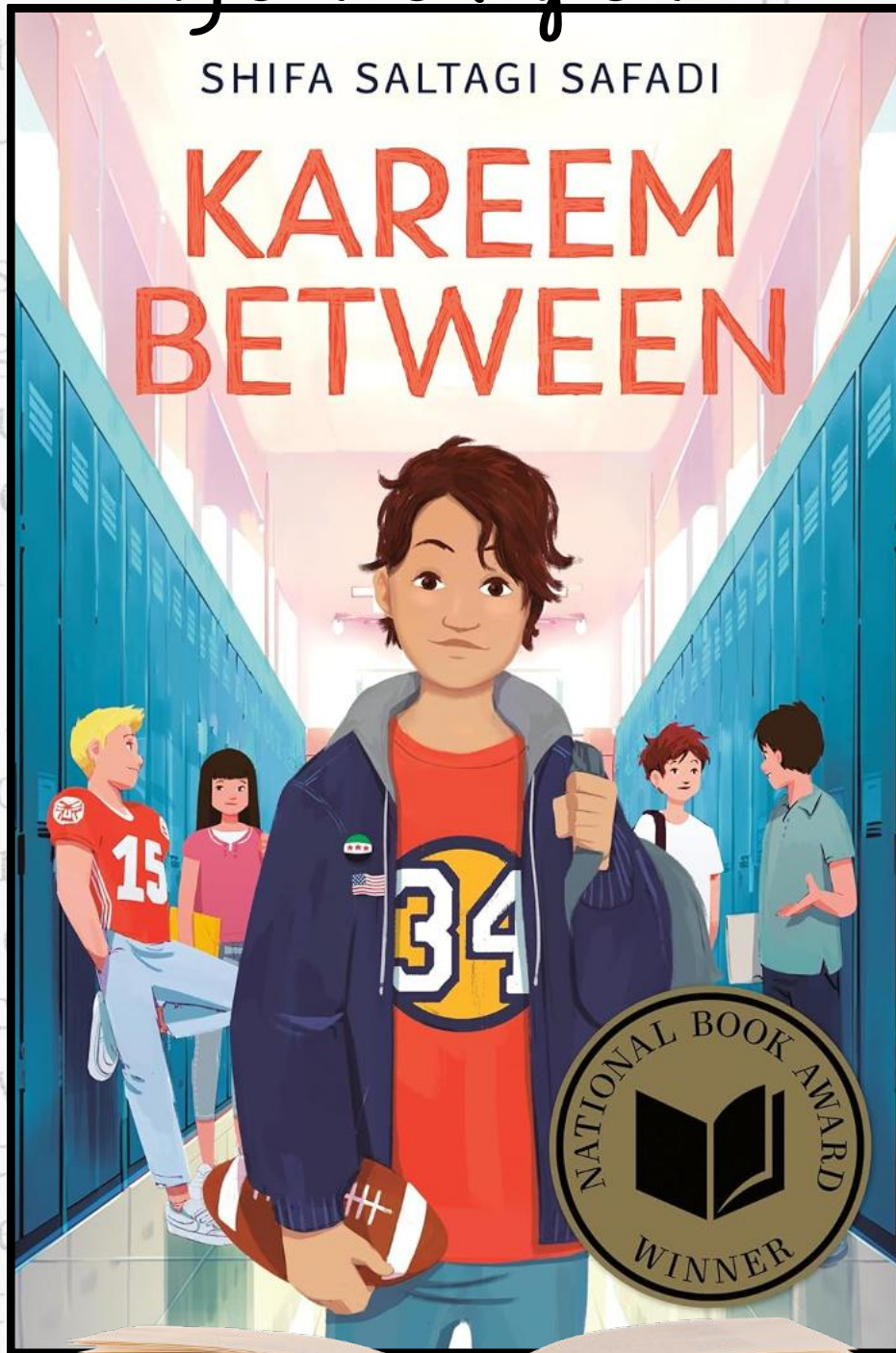
How do you speak up when it feels like no one is listening?



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

KAREEM BETWEEN

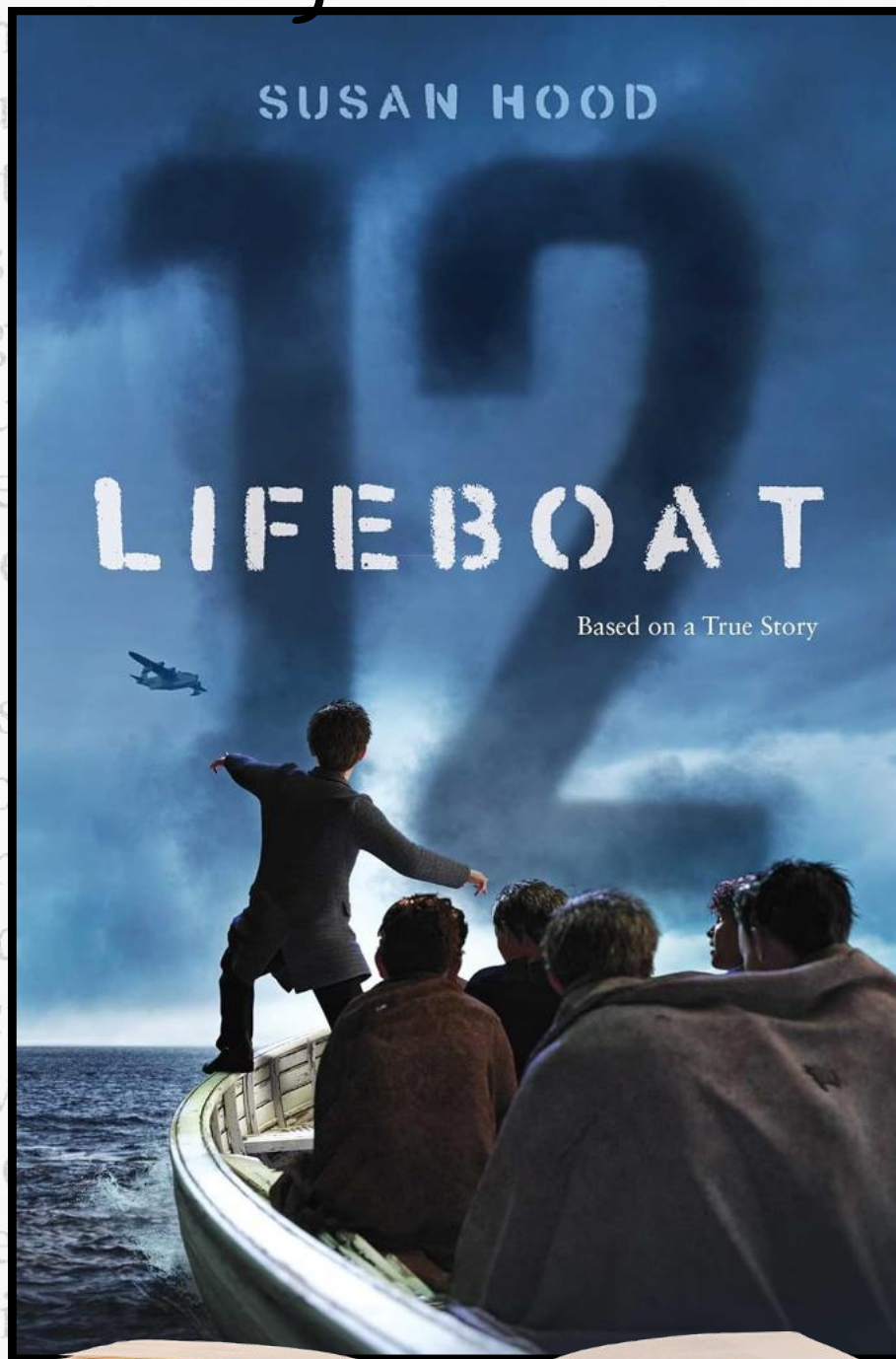
by Shifa Saltagi Safadi



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

LIFEBOAT 12

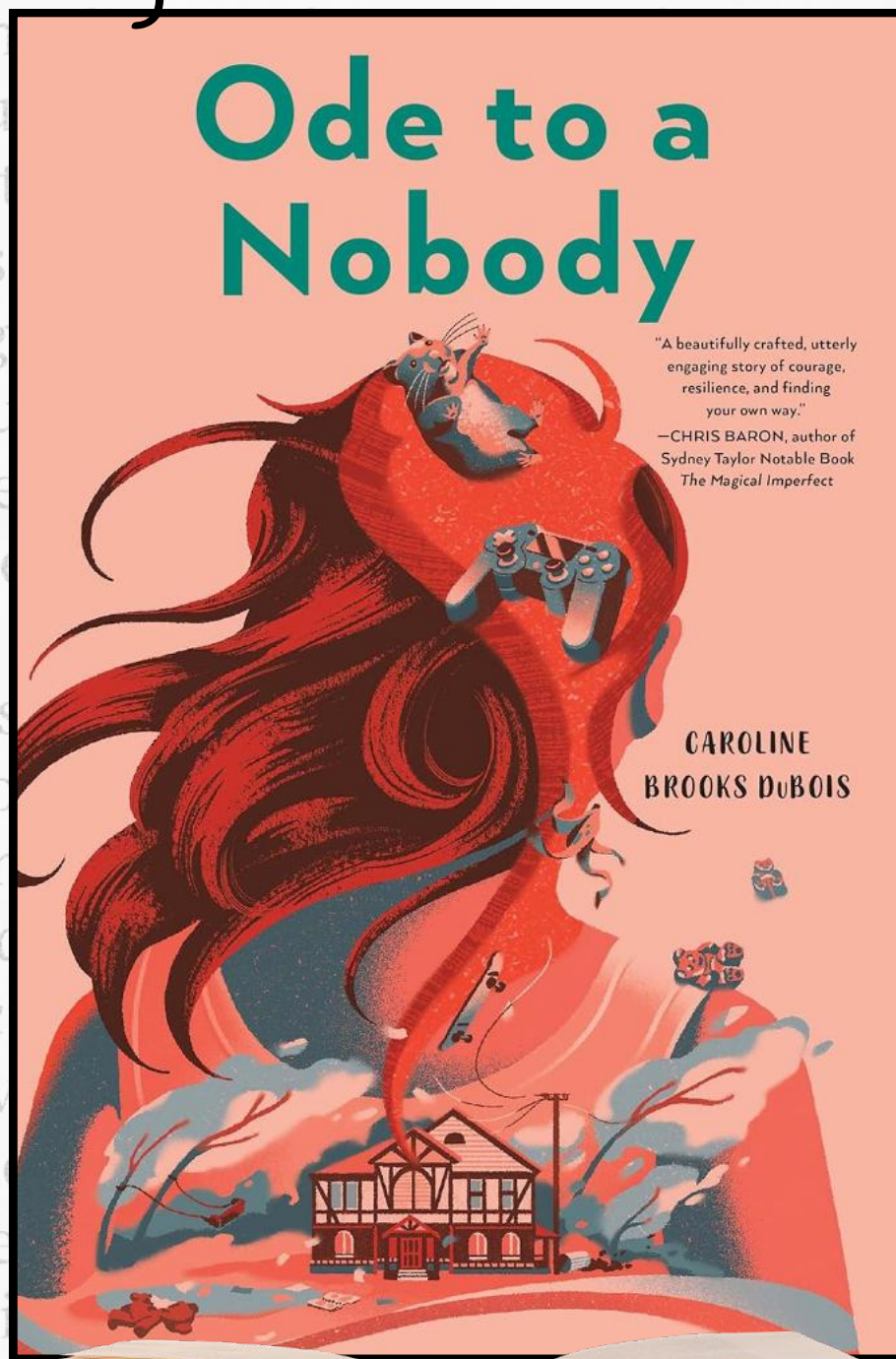
By Susan Hood



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

ODE TO A NOBODY

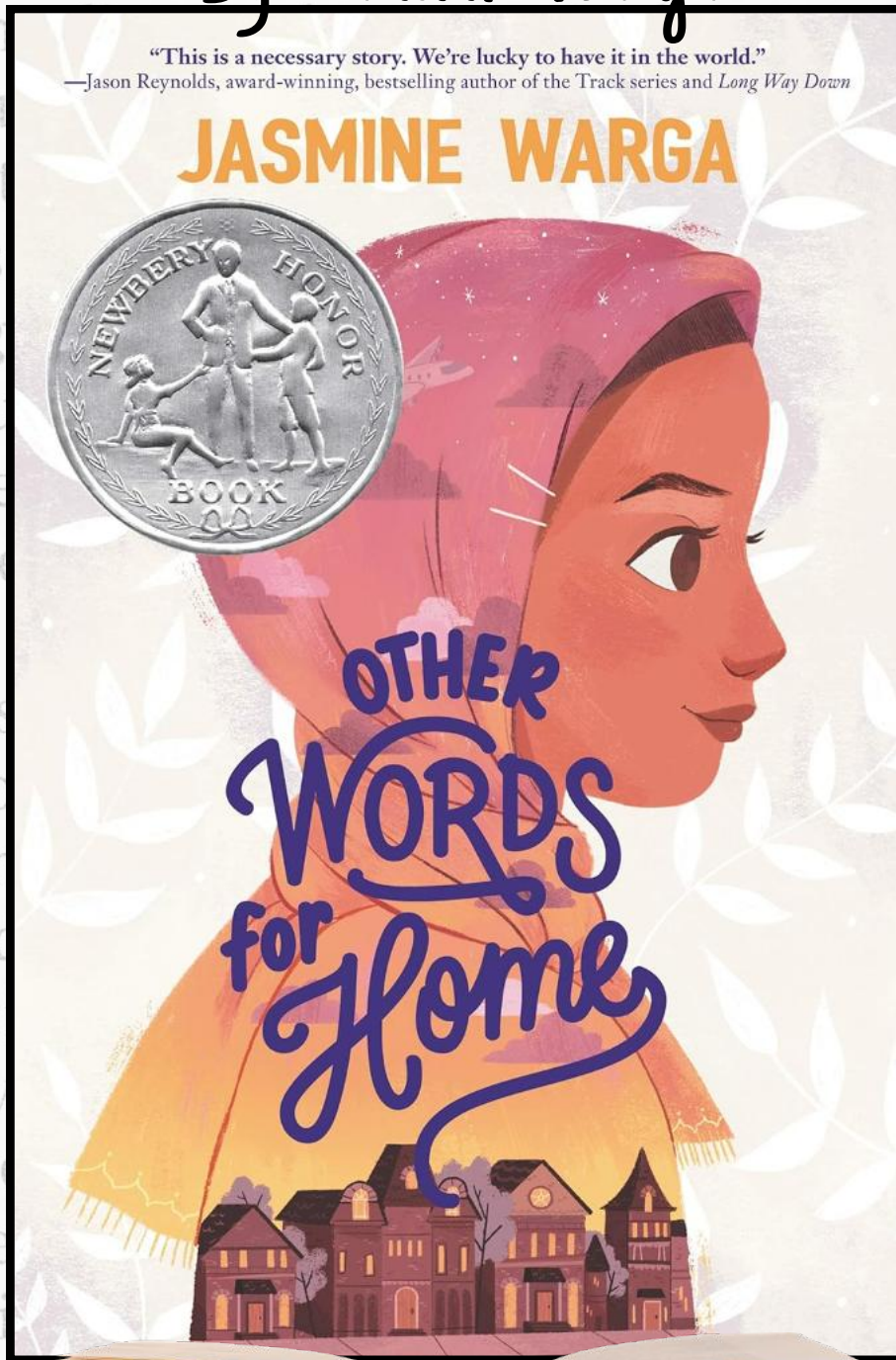
By Caroline Brooks DuBois



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

OTHER WORDS FOR HOME

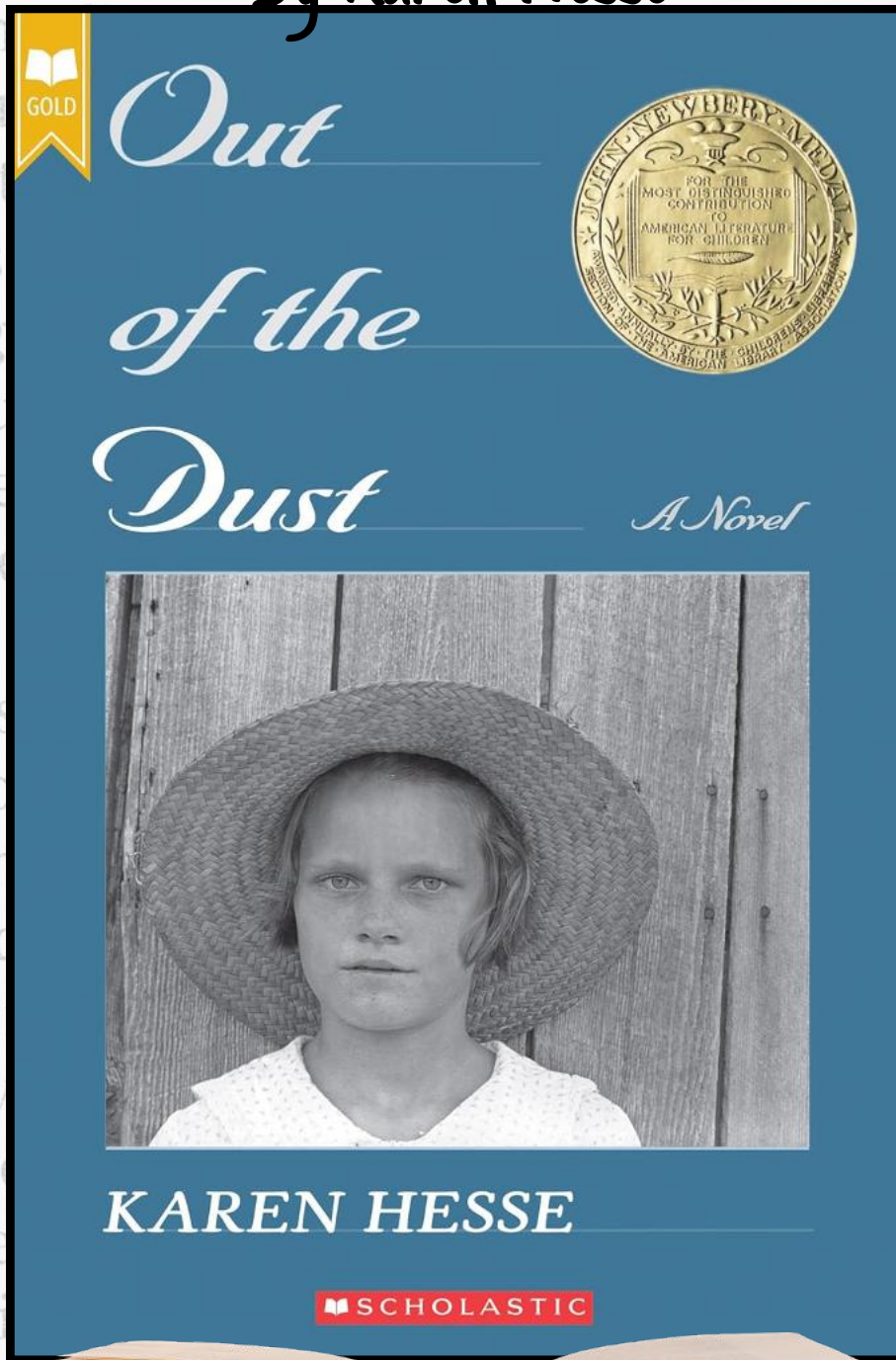
By Jasmine Warga



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

OUT OF THE DUST

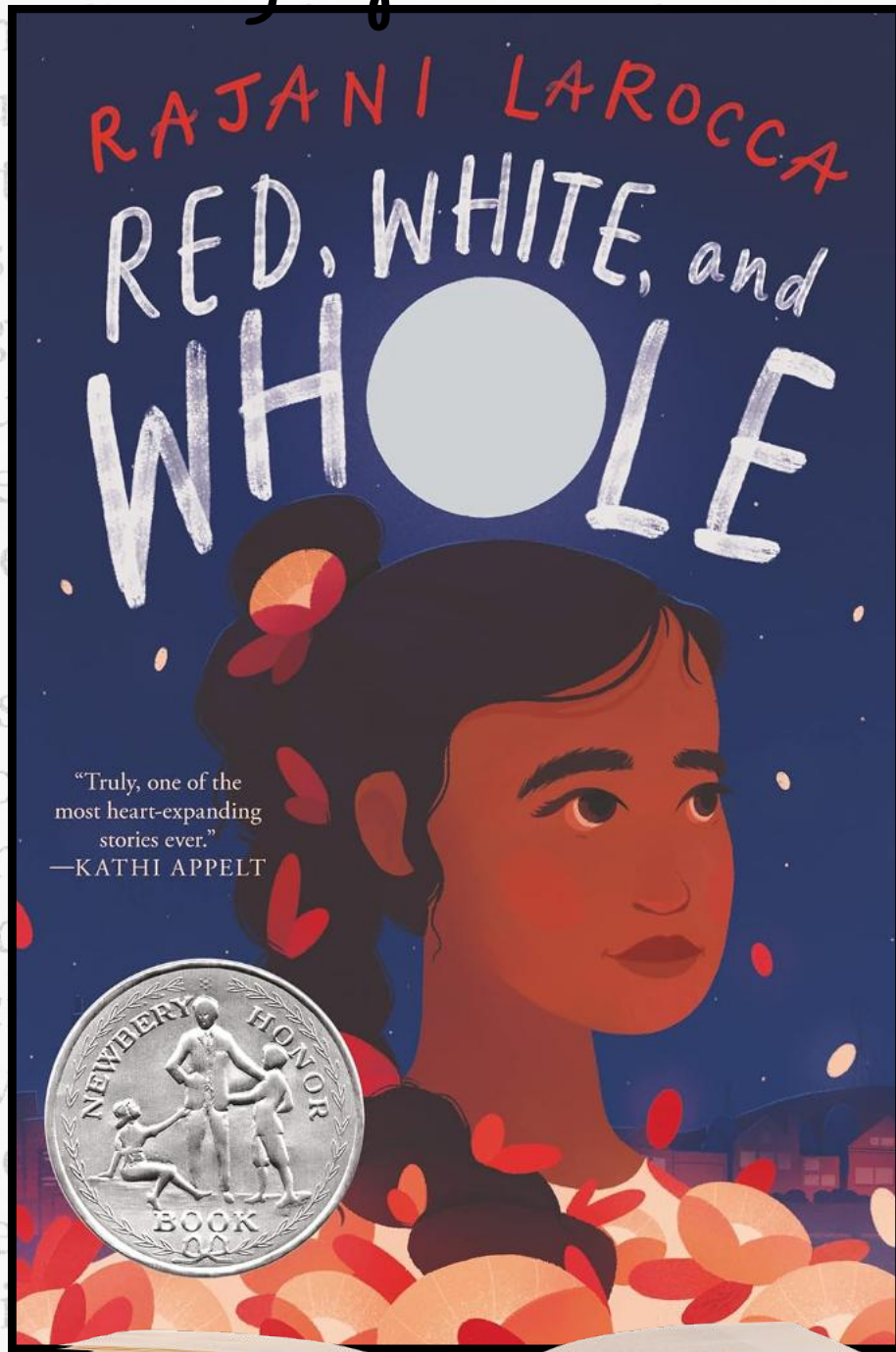
By Karen Hesse



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

RED, WHITE, AND WHOLE

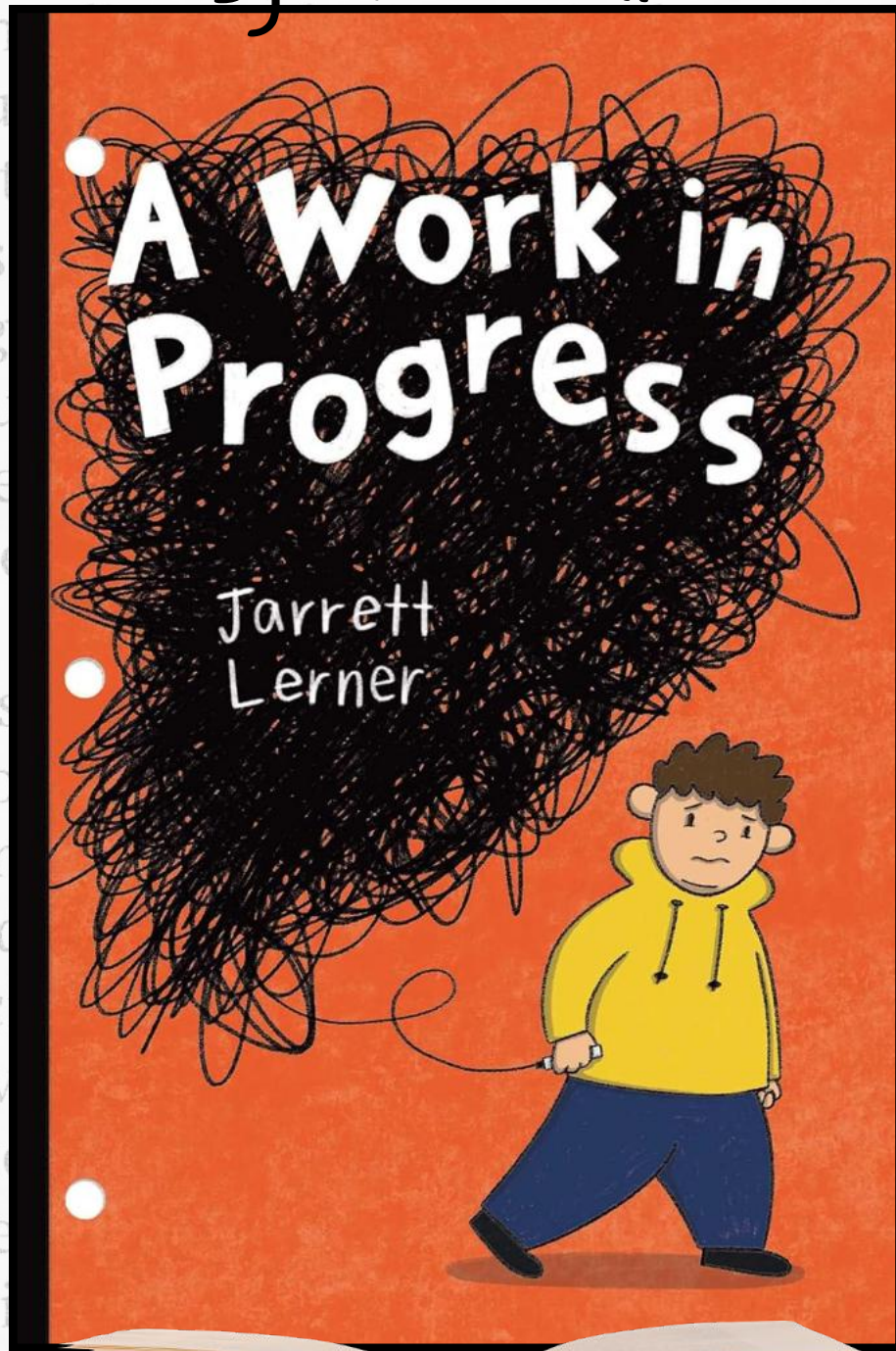
By Rajani LaRocca



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

A WORK IN PROGRESS

By Jarrett Lerner



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY