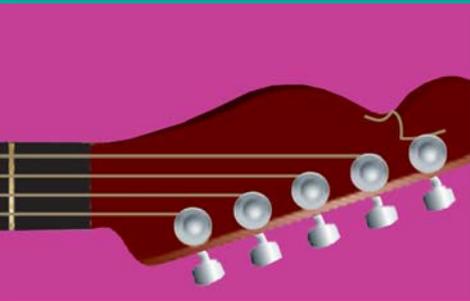




# Fresh Fiction from New Voices



Summer 2010



WHERE STRONG VOICES  
BECOME BESTSELLERS!

# Fresh Fiction from New Voices



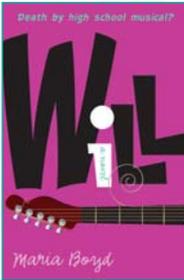
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The future of the book industry lies with new literary voices. For that reason, we are committed to growing alongside our authors by implementing unique publishing and marketing programs that enhance our lists and deliver continued success stories to you!

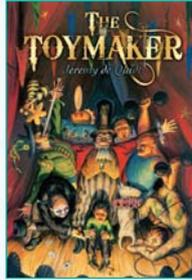




## New for Summer 2010!



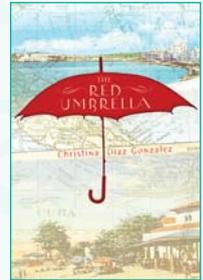
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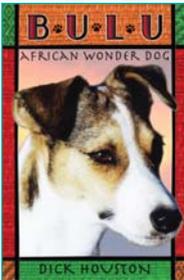
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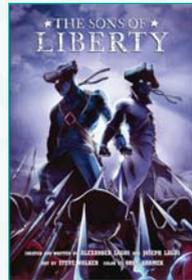
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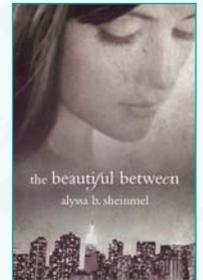
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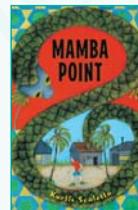
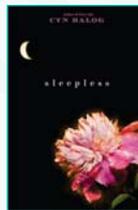
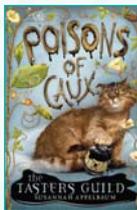


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## It's a Second!



Front cover, clockwise from top right: photo from *The Beautiful Between* by Fancy Photography/Veer; illustration from *The Toymaker* by Jim Kay; illustration from *Windblowne* © 2010 by Erwin Madrid; illustration from *Will* © 2010 by Alfred A. Knopf.

Back cover, clockwise from top right: illustration from *The Red Umbrella* © 2010 by Ericka O'Rourke; illustration from *The Sons of Liberty #1* by Steve Walker and Oren Kramek; illustration from *Sunshine Picklelime* © 2010 by Christian Slade; photos from *Bulu: African Wonder Dog* courtesy of Steve and Anna Tolan.



## Will

by Maria Boyd

Edited by Michele Burke

ISBN: 978-0-375-86209-0

\$16.99/\$21.99 Can.

Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 7/13/2010



Alfred A. Knopf

### from the editor

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*Will* is the story of a guitar-playing seventeen-year-old troublemaker who is going through a difficult time, but discovers his place in the world via a most unlikely vehicle: the high school musical.

*Will* has always been something of a clown at his all-boys' high school. Lately he's been taking his pranks a little too far, though, and that's why the school comes up with the character-building idea to put him in the school band, playing for the St. Andrews' school musical. Poor *Will* is in misery. His friends think he's a laughingstock, and on the very first day of rehearsals, a trombone-playing seventh grader proclaims himself *Will*'s new best friend and refuses to leave his side. But things are about to change for *Will*, with the help of his new friend, an attractive leading lady, and a football player singing sensation.

Full of sharp dialogue, strong supporting characters, and a touch of romance, *Will* is irresistibly funny and poignant all at once.

— Michele Burke

from



**N**ow, we are well aware you find yourself in a difficult phase at present. But you cannot use what has happened as some sort of excuse. God knows, life will always throw difficult things our way, but it is how we choose to deal with them that shows the real character of a man. However, we will not have it said that St. Andrew's deserts its troubled students. We have always prided ourselves on having an educational institution that caters to the whole child. As such, we see last week's act as a clear cry for help.

What the . . . ? All of a sudden I could see myself being carted off to some sort of loony bin.

We have decided to proceed in a somewhat unconventional manner. Actually, you have Mr. Andrews to thank for this suggestion. Yet another member of staff who has gone in to bat for you, William.

I knew Andrews was acting strange in English.

He tells us you're quite a gifted musician.

What?

William?

Traitor!

Is this true?

I couldn't tell where the hell this was going and it worried me.

I wouldn't say gifted, sir. Not like the next Jimi Hendrix, maybe more like . . .

He started clicking again. I quickly shut up.

As you are no doubt aware, William, the annual combined musical with

**But you cannot use what has  
happened as some sort of excuse.**

Lakeside Girls is coming up and there is always a desperate need for volunteers. It is one of the highlights of St. Andrew’s school calendar and an excellent public relations exercise. You, Mr. Armstrong, are to offer your services over the coming months as musician and general dogsbody . . . whatever role is deemed necessary. But not only that, young man, you will present yourself as an exemplary role model for the junior boys who, unlike you seniors, take the musical very seriously indeed.

He paused and rubbed his chin. Eyeballing me the whole time.

Make sure you thank Mr. Andrews for such a creative solution. This means you can give back to the college in a positive and productive manner—very progressive, very progressive.

A creepy grin filled his face. It was pretty clear that Waddlehead was very pleased with himself.

Well, what do you say?

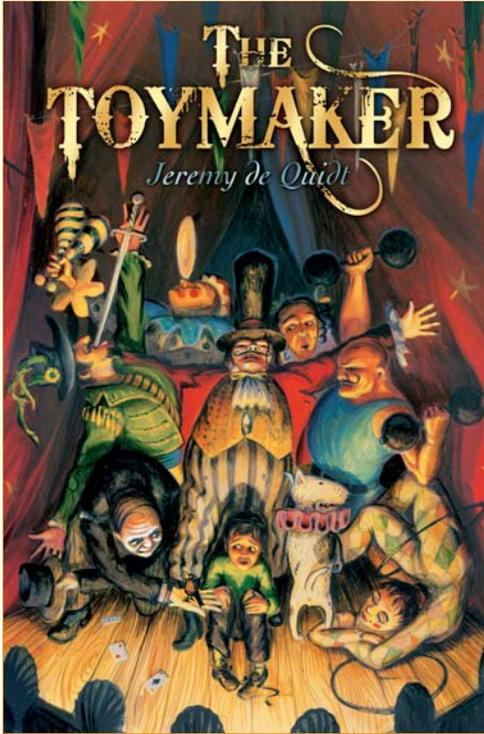
NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Years of cultivating my ranking at St. Andrew’s instantly shattered. The school musical was always on the fringes of geeksville, but to be involved with the band was the lowest. At least when you were acting in the musical you got to hang out with the girls. The band was full of losers.

You, Mr. Armstrong, are to offer your services over the coming months as musician and general dogsbody . . .

**Maria Boyd** has spent the better part of the past seven years teaching at two boys’ high schools in Sydney, Australia, a job that has guaranteed her, among other things, at least four belly laughs a day.



Photo © Colleen McFadden



## The Toymaker

by Jeremy de Quidt

Edited by Bella Pearson

ISBN: 978-0-385-75180-3

\$16.99

Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 8/10/2010



## from the editor

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If you have ever sat up reading all night and scaring yourself witless in the process, then this is the book for you. It is spine-chilling and page-turning, and makes reading a truly physical process as you hold your breath, calm your beating heart, and turn the pages with shaking hands. Even Jeremy de Quidt's name conjures up a slight frisson of the unusual—so very apt for *The Toymaker*.

This is the story of a circus boy, Mathias, whose fate is sealed when he finds the key to a terrifying secret, and there are those who will kill him rather than have it told. The book is peopled by extraordinary characters; my favourite being a malevolent immortal dwarf who chases Mathias from one end of the world to the other.

Jeremy started out by reading out loud a chapter a week in a local school—and the children could barely wait from one week to the next. It is gripping and a roller coaster to read, and if it doesn't send shivers down your spine you might as well be . . . well . . . a wind-up toy. . . .

—Bella Pearson

from

# THE TOYMAKER

**L**eiter shaved the last of the soap from his face. Mathias could hear the hard bristles against the edge of the razor. Then Leiter patted his skin dry with a towel. Mathias stood waiting with his hands in his pockets, the small roll of paper held tightly in one fist. He had no doubt about it at all: this was what Leiter was looking for. He felt certain too that, if he once let that show upon his face, Leiter would see it. He tried hard to think of nothing at all.

‘Your grandfather,’ said Leiter. ‘Did he ever give you anything to look after for him. Or tell you something very special or secret that you had to remember?’

‘No,’ said Mathias.

‘No little keepsake or letter?’

Mathias shook his head dumbly.

‘Perhaps we should just see,’ said Leiter.

He reached down to the floor beside him and lifted a small, battered, green leather box onto the table. It was not very big, like a shoe box, about a foot high. He took a key from his pocket and opened it. The front folded out in two hinged doors. Inside, snug in the rich blue velvet lining, was a doll. She wore a fine court dress with the smallest flowers and birds woven into it.

‘This is Marguerite,’ said Leiter, carefully lifting the doll onto the table.

Mathias found himself leaning forward. The doll was quite perfect, like a very small, living person but with her eyes shut, as though fast asleep. He had never seen a toy like it before.

‘Marguerite always travels with me,’ said Leiter. ‘I find her so helpful if people try to lie to me. You see, she can do something wholly remarkable.’ He looked steadily at Mathias with his hard dark eyes. ‘She can tell the difference between the truth and a lie. It is extraordinary. But she is never wrong. I will show you.’

**Mathias stood waiting with his hands in his pockets, the small roll of paper held tightly in one fist.**

Leiter took from the box two small cards, a blue one and a red one. He laid them on the tabletop in front of the doll, then, with his fingernail, tapped on the table in front of her. For a moment she did not move, then, to Mathias's astonishment, as though she had been deep in other thoughts, she shook her head daintily and looked up at Leiter.

'Marguerite,' he said, and the little doll gave a curtsey and looked intently at him with her hands folded across her lap.

'This boy is called Ludovic.' He pointed to Mathias and the doll turned her head to look. Then she bent forward and very lightly laid her hand on the red card. Her face showed no expression as she did so.

'Ah,' said Leiter. 'Marguerite knows that is not true. Tell her your real name, boy.'  
'Mathias.'

Marguerite bent forward and this time touched the blue card.

'You see,' said Leiter. 'Marguerite can hear what is true. The two things must sound very different to her, and she can tell. It matters not how you try to say it. She can always tell.'

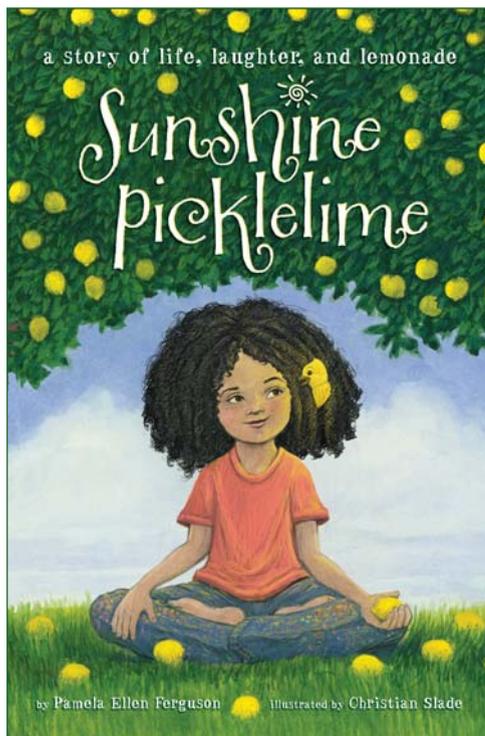
He looked at Mathias and suddenly Mathias understood what was about to happen. Leiter was going to ask him the questions again, only this time the doll would hear too.

**The little doll gave a curtsey and looked intently at him with her hands folded across her lap.**

**Jeremy de Quidt** lives in Somerset, England, with his wife and their three children. He has a large black dog that sits on the floor beside him while he writes.



Photo courtesy of the author.



## Sunshine Picklelime

by Pamela Ellen Ferguson

Edited by Jennifer Arena

ISBN: 978-0-375-86175-8

\$16.99/\$21.99 Can.

Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 6/22/2010



### from the editor

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Every time I read *Sunshine Picklelime*, I hear Pam Ferguson's voice, with her charming British accent, in my head. I wish you could hear it, too. Pam is a natural storyteller, and during phone conversations, she'll switch into storytelling mode, entertaining me with anecdotes from her recent travels to Europe and South America, or of growing up in Cornwall or Cape Town, or of where she lives now, in Texas, in a house surrounded by cacti as tall as trees.

Pam's wide-ranging experiences enrich this book about a girl named PJ Picklelime, who, with her funky style, her unusual friends, and her rare ability to talk with birds, is a cross between Pippi Longstocking and Dr. Dolittle. Her story is magical . . . and quirky . . . and joyful.

"Splendid!" Pam says at the end of every phone call. That's exactly the right word to describe *Sunshine Picklelime*.

—Jennifer Arena

from *Sunshine picklelime*

**B**lindfolded, PJ could easily have found her way through the streets to Ms. Lenz, not just because she loved the route, but because wafts of chocolate got stronger and stronger as she approached, especially when the air was warm.

Ms. Evi Lenz was in the Dream's window, adjusting the chocolate fountains. She wore a green apron patterned with dancing goats and milk buckets. She also wore a matching green bandanna around her forehead to keep her cluster of bell-like copper curls from bouncing around her face. Every time she nodded or laughed, PJ heard a tinkling sound from the curls. She waved cheerfully as PJ parked her bike outside, and met her at the door.

"Hi, Ms. Lenz."

"*Grüezi*, PJ," she replied. Ms. Lenz always used a friendly Swiss German greeting when she saw PJ. She dropped her eyes and stared at the owl's ears brushing PJ's throat and said, "I don't believe this. You brought Oohoo to see me?"

Ms. Lenz placed both hands on her knees and leaned over to stare into Oohoo's eyes. "Wise Oohoo," she said, "I miss hearing you at night. Come to think of it, I don't hear any owls at night." Ms. Lenz rose, turned to PJ, and frowned. "PJ, why are the owls so quiet?"

PJ was equally puzzled. "I hadn't noticed. But I'll stay up late and listen tonight!" she offered.

Oohoo blinked and then closed her eyes.

Evi Lenz said, "Hmmm, *she* knows why. She will let you know in her special way." Ms. Lenz turned toward a glass-front display cabinet and opened it up at the back. The top shelves were lined with her handmade assorted truffles in dark, milk, and white chocolate. Pralines and the boxed varieties were below. Framed pictures of all her truffle and praline varieties hung on the wall behind her.

**"Hmmm, SHE knows why.  
She will let you know in  
her special way."**

“Oohoo, look what you’re missing!” said PJ, patting the front of her shirt.

“Oh, wait for the best!” said Ms. Lenz. She reached into the cabinet and removed a small tray of white chocolate truffles lightly sprinkled with tiny slivers of lemon peel.

“*Alllllllso*,” she said proudly. “Lemon Nectar . . . inspired by Mrs. Shanti Patel and PJ Picklelime! Go on, PJ, help yourself. Tell me what you think.”

PJ hesitated. “Shouldn’t Mrs. Patel be here to try it with me?”

Evi Lenz smiled. “She will come later. Don’t worry, PJ. Best you try them separately so you don’t influence one another. Trust me. I know!”

PJ reached out and popped a round lemon truffle into her mouth.

“Let it melt slowly,” Ms. Lenz advised. “Don’t chew.”

PJ kept the round truffle between her tongue and palate and resisted the temptation to roll it around in her mouth like a fireball. It began to dissolve. Her eyelids fluttered. The intense lemon-flavored center was richer than the Lemon Nectar drink she had concocted with Mrs. Patel that day! She tried to talk, but it came out as a gurgle. She waited a few more minutes then said, “No way will I brush my teeth tonight. I want to taste lemon when I wake up tomorrow morning!”

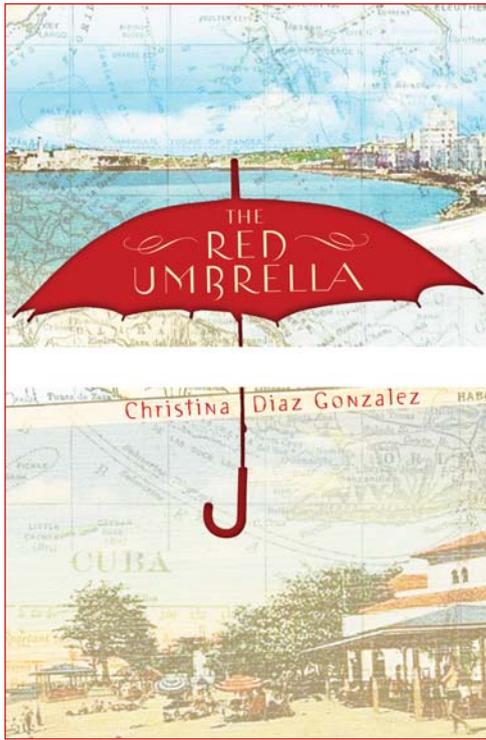
“Now, PJ, don’t go that far!” Ms. Lenz scooped a few of the truffles into a little box patterned with dancing lemons. She closed it with a pretty yellow ribbon and the Dream label. “For you and your parents to enjoy as dessert!” she said.

**“I want to taste lemon  
when I wake up  
tomorrow morning!”**

**Pamela Ellen Ferguson** was born in Mexico, grew up in Cornwall and South Africa, and traveled throughout the world for her career as a journalist. She now lives in Austin, Texas.



Photo © Bernadette Winkler



## The Red Umbrella

by Christina Diaz Gonzalez

Edited by Nancy Siscoe

ISBN: 978-0-375-86190-1

\$16.99/\$21.99 Can.

Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 5/11/2010



Alfred A. Knopf

### from the editor

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I read to be transported—to another time, another place—and from the moment I began *The Red Umbrella*, I knew I was going someplace special. It's about a girl who is literally transported: fourteen-year-old Lucia and her brother fly from Cuba to the U.S.—by themselves. It is 1961, and their parents have made the wrenching decision to send them away to protect them from Castro's regime. What an impossible choice! I was amazed to learn that Gonzalez's story was based in fact.

That her own parents had come to the U.S. in just this way. That more than 14,000 children came to the U.S. this way in a program called Operation Pedro Pan.

*The Red Umbrella* offers a look at this fascinating and little-known slice of history. But more importantly, it tells the story of a girl who loves her family, and her country, and who must find a new way to define home. Hers is a journey you won't soon forget.

—Nancy Siscoe

from **THE RED UMBRELLA**

**I** looked over at my parents standing by the window separating us from the rest of the airport. Someone had to tell them about Tío. About what he'd done.

"Stay here, Frankie," I ordered. "Don't move." I walked over to the glass partition.

"It was Tío who turned Papá in," I said in a low, quick voice.

Mamá shook her head. I could see her lips form the word "qué."

The noise in the room and the thickness of the glass wouldn't let us hear each other.

I looked at Papá. I wanted him to read my mind. Slowly I mouthed the words, "It . . . was . . . Tío."

Papá nodded. I could see the pain in his face. He stared at me and said, "I know."

An announcement was made. "Flight 190 to Miami is now boarding."

Mamá tapped on the glass. "Look for me." She grabbed Papá's hand. "We'll be outside."

"How will I know where . . ." A crowd of people pressed against the window, pushing my parents out of the way. Everyone wanted a chance to say a final good-bye.

"Lucy!" Frankie's voice pierced through the noise of all the passengers getting ready to board the plane.

"Coming!" I glanced back at the many tearful faces against the window. There were none that I recognized.

"Lucy!" Frankie shouted again.

I weaved through several people already gathered by the boarding gate. Frankie sat exactly where I left him.

"They're taking us into the plane first." Laura pointed to a pretty stewardess who stood with a group of children. "We need to go over there."

"Okay. Ready, Frankie?" I asked.

**"Stay here, Frankie,"  
I ordered. "Don't move."  
I walked over to the  
glass partition.**

Frankie's silent tears gave me my answer.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was a bright clear day outside. Not a cloud in the sky. I stared through the plane window at the palm trees in the distance. It didn't seem real. Like a painting was hung inside the plane showing us a glimpse of Cuba. I pushed my nose against the glass. Mamá and Papá were out there . . . somewhere.

"Can you see them?" Frankie unbuckled his seat belt and leaned over my shoulder.

"No."

A small crowd of people had gathered on the airport roof.

"Are they there?" he asked.

I shrugged. "I can't tell. It's too far away."

"But you told me that Mamá said to look for her."

"I know. I'm sure she's over there." A sadness washed over me. I wanted one last glimpse, one more connection, with my parents.

The plane's engines began to hum and we started to slowly roll forward.

"Look!" Frankie pointed to the rooftop.

There, in the middle of the small crowd, against the bright blue sky, a big red umbrella opened up. Mamá's umbrella.

That big stupid thing had never looked so beautiful. A smile edged its way onto my face. Mamá had found a way to say good-bye.

I didn't know when I'd be coming back home so I studied everything about that moment. The trembling of the plane, the deafening sound of the engines as we lifted off the ground, the view of Havana's high-rises set against Cuba's rugged landscape and the ever-shrinking red dot on top of the airport roof.

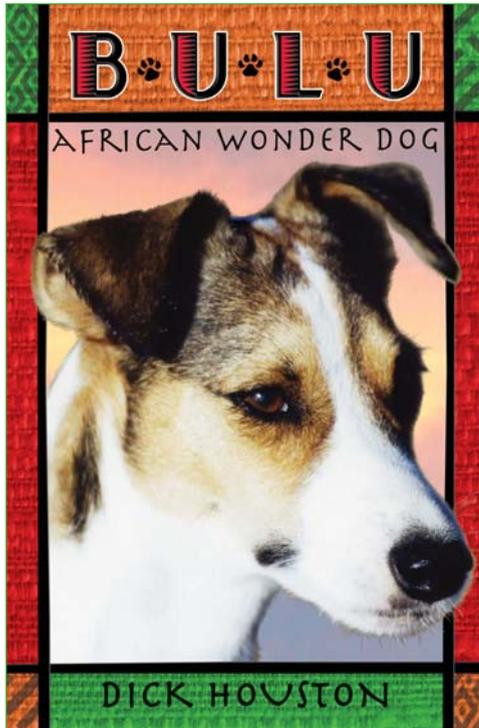
I caught my breath and simply whispered, "Adios."

**Christina Diaz Gonzalez** practiced law for several years before returning to her childhood passion for stories and writing. She lives in Miami, Florida, with her husband and two sons.

**There, in the middle of  
the small crowd, against  
the bright blue sky, a big  
red umbrella opened up.**



Photo © Shanna Nye Photography



## Bulu: African Wonder Dog

by Dick Houston  
Edited by Alice Jonaitis

ISBN: 978-0-375-84723-3  
\$15.99/\$19.99 Can.  
Middle-Grade Fiction  
On Sale: 5/25/2010



### from the editor

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Ever since I was a kid, I have been obsessed with true adventure and dog stories, so when the proposal for *Bulu: African Wonder Dog* landed on my desk, it almost seemed too good to be true. But as any fan of nonfiction can tell you, the most unexpected things sometimes do happen, and *Bulu* was just as good as I'd hoped it would be. Better, even.

*Bulu* tells two stories. One is the story of Anna and Steve Tolan, retired police officers from England who come to Africa in hope of starting a wildlife education center to combat illegal poaching. The other is the story of a strange, unwanted puppy who despite grave danger, helps the Tolans make that dream come true.

Author Dick Houston has been a safari guide for most of his adult life, and his intimate knowledge of the African bush comes across on every page. While this is Dick's first children's book, I suspect that he has more stories in him—and I hope to help flesh them out for our readers!

—Alice Jonaitis

from

# B • U • L • U

Standing on a ladder against the house, Steve inspected the roof and found the leak. He hoped to fix it before the next rain. As he began to lay new thatch over the hole, something caught his eye. It was Bulu trotting off into the woods. Steve noticed how Bulu was becoming bolder, even fiercely territorial with bigger animals that stepped on the property. Weeks before, he had chased away a large kudu antelope that had the cheek to step too close to the center.

Moments later, Steve had started to tie down the thatch when he heard a series of *thump thump thumps* on the soggy ground below. He looked down just in time to see a puku buck run past like a racehorse toward the river. It leapt from the bank in a graceful arc and hit the water with a splash. Aware that nearby crocodiles might hear the smack on the water, Steve was alarmed to see the puku heading toward midstream. Then, to his horror, Steve saw another splash at the river's edge. It was Bulu! He seemed to appear from nowhere and was now swimming fast after the puku. "BULU—NO! *BULU!*" Steve shouted as he scrambled

**Steve noticed how Bulu was becoming bolder, even fiercely territorial with bigger animals that stepped on the property.**

down the ladder and ran to the riverbank. His yells brought Anna racing out the door. Rounding the house, she saw the puku swimming midriver followed by a small white and brown head barely visible above the surface.

"*BULU!*" she screamed, running up to Steve. The puku reached the far bank, climbed up, and ran into the trees. Steve and Anna watched helplessly as Bulu fought the current, swimming toward the far embankment. As he scrambled up, the mud gave way and he fell back into the river. Finally getting his footing, he made another attempt and struggled to the top. He stood still a moment looking around as though coming to his senses. Seeming to panic, he ran to the left and then to the right trying to find a safe way back. But there was no safe way across the swollen river.

“What can we do?” Anna was frantic, clinging to Steve’s arm.

“I’m going for the boat!” he shouted, turning on his heel and racing for the storeroom at the center. But before he got fifty yards away, he heard Anna scream. He rushed back and saw Bulu was in the water again, his neck stretched forward, trying to keep his head above the current. Steve’s eyes scanned the water’s surface and he thought of the gruesome fate of Bulu’s mother. Anna was frozen, her hands covering her mouth in terror. But there was nothing they could do except watch in dread as Bulu swam back.

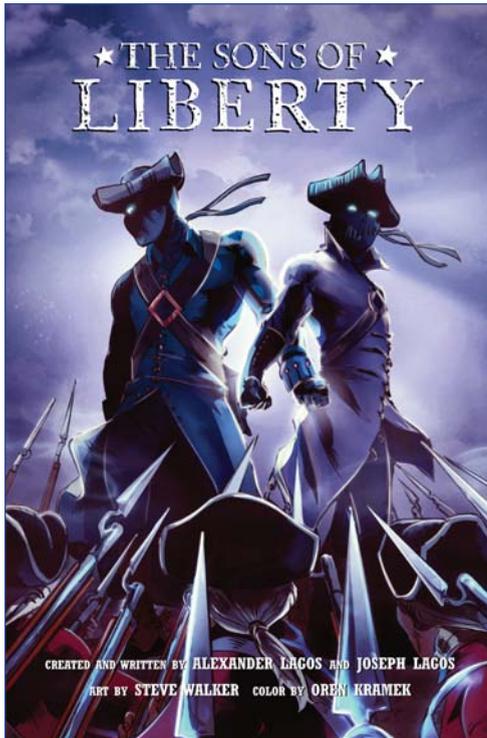
For what seemed like an eternity, he swam on and on, slowly being pulled downstream. At one point, the force of the river spun him completely around. As though giving it his last effort, he paddled harder, letting the current take him into calmer water nearer the bank. Steve ran downstream and waded into the shallows. He held out his hands as Bulu swam toward him. In one quick move he grabbed the dog around the middle and hauled him out of the water. Bulu was limp from exhaustion. Steve laid him on the bank. Anna ran up beside them. Tears streaming down her face, she put her hand on Bulu’s fast-beating heart. Steve’s and Anna’s eyes met. No words were needed. They knew that by some grace Bulu had been spared.

**Bulu was limp from exhaustion. Steve laid him on the bank. Anna ran up beside them.**

**Dick Houston** has led safaris across the Sahara Desert, through the rain forests of central Africa, and in the bush country of eastern and southern Africa. He is the co-founder of Elefence International, a nonprofit group dedicated to elephant conservation in Zambia.



Photo © Elefence International



## The Sons of Liberty #1

by Alexander and Joseph Lagos;  
illustrated by Steve Walker  
and Oren Kramek  
Edited by Nicholas Eliopoulos

ISBN: 978-0-375-85670-9  
\$18.99/\$23.99 Can.  
Middle-Grade Fiction  
On Sale: 5/25/2010



### from the editor

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Forget everything you thought you knew about America's early days—history packs a punch in this full-color graphic novel about super-powered runaway slaves.

I knew I'd found something special the moment the *Sons of Liberty* fought their way to my desk. Here was a tale every bit as dramatic and action-packed as today's best super-hero stories—yet rich with historical detail, much of which I had never learned in school.

Benjamin Franklin's son was a Loyalist? Early abolitionists were inspired by Benjamin Lay, a four-foot-tall hunchback who mercilessly harassed slave owners?

Truth sometimes is stranger than fiction.

With flair and fisticuffs, *The Sons of Liberty* forever puts the lie to the claim that history is boring. And by raising tough questions—about the minority experience in our history, and about how complicated the notion of “fighting for freedom” really is—the book invites readers to think critically about where our nation has been . . . and where it's going.

—Nicholas Eliopoulos

from

# ★ THE SONS OF LIBERTY ★





Alexander Lagos and Joseph Lagos are brothers who grew up in Texas. As a young man, Alexander toured the country with his alternative-music group, FEEL. He now lives with his family in Brooklyn, New York. Joseph is a master craftsman, upholding the family tradition of fine furniture and wood carving. He lives with his family in Houston.



Photo courtesy Laura L. Lagos



## Windblowne

by Stephen Messer  
Edited Jim Thomas

ISBN: 978-0-375-86195-6

\$16.99/\$19.99 Can.

Middle-Grade Fiction

On Sale: 5/25/2010



### from **the editor**

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As a boy, Stephen Messer loved kites and kite-flying. His house was situated atop a wooded hill, and he remembers many an afternoon staring up into the sky, connected by string to a winged shape soaring high above the trees. He would often imagine—and what girl or boy wouldn't—being born aloft by the kite and traveling unknown distances. What might the world look like when he returned to Earth?

This dream stayed with him and found its way into his first novel for children, a fantasy adventure set in a mountaintop town where ancient oaks protect the town from fierce winds and where twin moons cross the sky at night. Stephen's young protagonist takes the trip that Stephen always imagined, and the world does indeed look different upon its conclusion. The mystery that follows is fast, fun, and extremely imaginative. . . . A terrific debut!

—*Jim Thomas*

from *windblowne*

**T**he kite shook proudly, sails snapping, and flew into the storm.

Oliver lunged for the tail, but he was too late. It flickered just ahead of his hand, and was gone.

As Oliver stumbled across the oakline, the night winds knocked him flat, driving the breath from his body. Ahead he could see the kite, somehow resisting utter destruction, flying defiantly towards the peak.

The winds picked up Oliver and threw him as though he were a scrap of silk. He slammed into a nearby oak, then crawled to the lee side of the trunk, away from the full force of the winds. The crimson kite, illuminated by moonlight at the peak, turned in circles as though searching for something. It spied Oliver, and flew at him.

**Oliver lunged for the tail, but he was too late.**

The kite came to an abrupt halt only a few feet away. Oliver did not understand how the kite could fly in the night winds, but he didn't care, for the kite's tail was now dangling tantalizingly in front of him. He leapt and found a fistful of silk. He whooped in triumph as the tail lashed itself around his forearm like a striking whip.

The whoop died as the kite began to drag him, powered by the irresistible force of the night winds, onto the crest.

"I can't!" screamed Oliver over the roar of the winds. Bits of leaf and twig blistered his cheeks. He dug in his heels and fought back, knocked from one side to the other as the winds beat at him. He pulled as hard as he could. But with the night winds powering the kite, Oliver couldn't win.

The kite held firm, pulling him higher. He passed the jumping marker, hardly noticing it. His mind was full of cautionary tales told to Windblowne's children, stories of how the night winds could take a piece of straw and drive it into the trunk of an oak like an arrow—or into the body of a foolish child who defied the night winds.

The kite had nearly reached the peak, dragging Oliver just behind. He felt nearly

at the end of his strength. The kite loomed over him. The two moons gleamed beyond.

For one instant, the night winds slackened, just enough for Oliver to gather himself for one last pull.

Then the winds blasted back in all of their fury. The tail snapped taut and pain tore through Oliver's shoulder. The kite shot into the sky, and Oliver went with it.

Terror flooded him. He had never learned to kite jump, and yet here he was, leaping out from the crest, legs kicking. Already he was too high to let go of the kite, even if he could. His only chance was to hang on and attempt a safe landing.

The kite and Oliver rose rapidly, the barren ground racing below. Oliver saw moonlight glinting off the granite marker.

A new thought replaced the terror: *I'm going to come close to the record.*

Now he was flying faster, still rising.

*I'm going to BREAK the record!*

The granite marker sped by in a blur. Oliver would have yelled in triumph if certain death had not been seconds away. A hundred feet off the ground, he was hurtling straight towards the oaks. The kite continued to rise. The oaks came near, then passed beneath them, the tips of their highest branches brushing Oliver's legs.

Looking down, he saw the treehouses of Windblowne, now far below, and a light escaping through the trees where someone, woken by the winds, moved restlessly, unable to sleep.

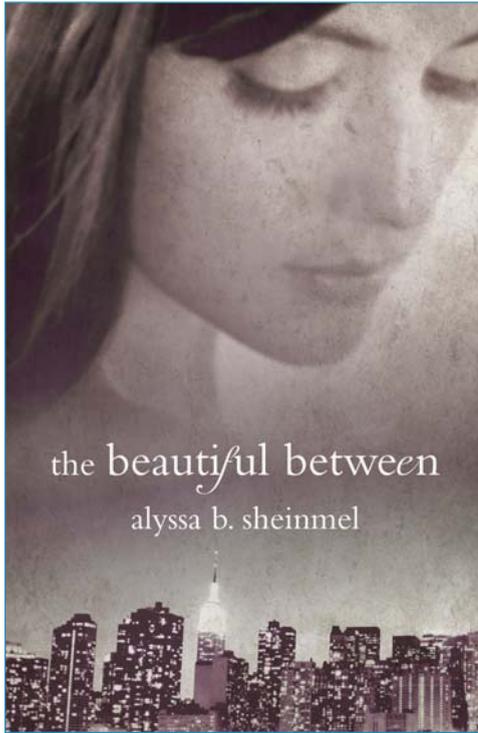
Then they passed upward into a chilling mist, and Oliver could see no more.

**A hundred feet off the ground, he was hurtling straight towards the oaks.**

Blown into this world as a baby, **Stephen Messer** spent his childhood flying kites on windswept hilltops in Maine and Arizona. Nowadays he lives with his wife in an old house surrounded by oak trees in Durham, North Carolina.



Photo courtesy of the author.



## The Beautiful Between

by Alyssa B. Sheinmel  
Edited by Erin Clarke

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Young Adult Fiction  
On Sale: 5/11/2010



### from the editor

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The antidote to Upper East Side gossip-fest fare, Alyssa Sheinmel's *The Beautiful Between* is the evocative story of a New York City teen locked in her high-rise apartment building by college applications, the SATs, and the secret she holds.

This novel has many of the hallmark themes found in novels for teens—friendship, coming-of-age, finding a place to belong, and coming to terms with the death of someone you love. The thing that sets *The Beautiful Between* apart, however, is the exquisite, contemplative, thought-provoking, and emotional writing. It's one of the most realistic portrayals of dealing with the death of a loved one that I've ever read.

*The Beautiful Between* is a book I am honored to have worked on and I can't wait to see what Alyssa writes next.

—Erin Clarke

# from the beautiful between

If you think of high school as a kingdom—and I don't mean the regular kind of kingdom we have today, like England or Monaco. I mean those small ones in fairy tales that probably weren't kingdoms at all so much as they were nobledoms where the nobles considered themselves kings and granted themselves the right of *prima nocte*, that kind of thing—if you think of my high school like one of those, then Jeremy Cole would be the crown prince. The crown prince who could choose from all the women in his father's domain—and not only choose them, but have them parade in front of him at, say, a dance, trying to catch his eye, hoping to be chosen.

I don't know where I'd fall in the fairy tale kingdom hierarchy. I'm hardly Cinderella. I'm not beautiful and not poor, and we have a cleaning lady who comes once a week, so I'm not stuck with the housework. Not Snow White either—the dwarves always struck me as stranger than they were endearing and wild animals don't look so much cute and cuddly to me as rabid and flea-ridden. Sleeping Beauty—not a chance. I'd be happy if I could just sleep through the night, let alone one hundred years. But I guess I could be Rapunzel; I do have long hair and I'm locked not so much in a tower by a wicked queen as in an upper eastside apartment building by the SATs and college applications. Which are wicked enough for a hundred wicked queens and then some. Just my luck: Rapunzel who wasn't a princess at all; Rapunzel who didn't have a happy ending.

**I guess high school cafeterias are kind of like royal court; your chance to show off the latest fashions, to make an entrance, . . .**

It's pretty easy, sitting in the cafeteria, to imagine I'm in a fairy tale kingdom, to transform the girls one by one from trendy students into stately-attired ladies. Just take the prettiest girl in the room, the most popular, whose clothes hang on her so lightly that you know she could pull off a gown as easily as she can those tight jeans with that black tank top. Give the boys swords hanging from their belts, and turn their baseball caps into crowns. I guess high school cafeterias are kind

of like royal court; your chance to show off the latest fashions, to make an entrance, and, if you're lucky, to be invited to have an audience before the royals—you know, sitting at the cool table.

I never sit at the cool table. I'm not at the nerds' table either, though I admit to having had a few dangerous weeks there in middle school.

Sometimes I just grab a bagel and run off to the library to work on my SAT words, but mostly I just sit at the table right smack in the middle of the room, the biggest table, the one where almost anyone could sit and fit in just fine. So it's not that Jeremy's choosing me was a total shock because I was a dork—I mean, I am a dork, in my own “Hey, have you read this amazing novel?” kind of way—

but not in any of the ways that gets you kicked out of the kingdom. I speak up in class, but not too much, I come to school with my skirt too short and a black coffee in hand (even though I add so much sugar that you can barely taste the coffee), I even sneak out of the building between classes from time to time and stand on the corner with the smokers, complaining about the latest history substitute. The popular girls tolerate me just fine; the cool boys never take note.

**I never sit at the cool table.  
I'm not at the nerds' table  
either, though I admit to  
having had a few dangerous  
weeks there in middle school.**

**Alyssa B. Sheinmel** was born in Stanford, California. She is a graduate of New York City's Spence School and Barnard College. Alyssa lives in New York, and works in children's book publishing.



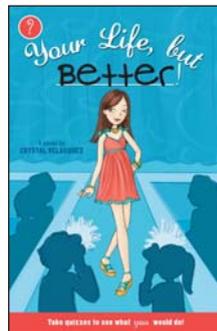
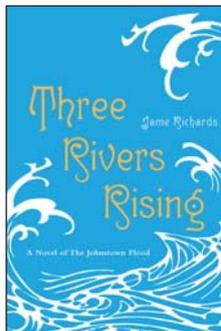
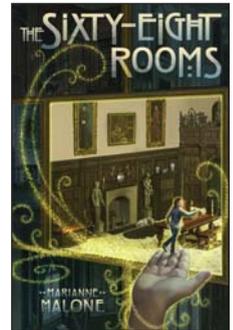
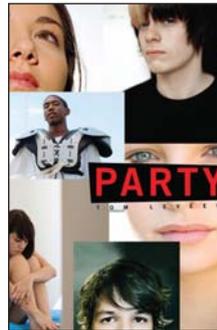
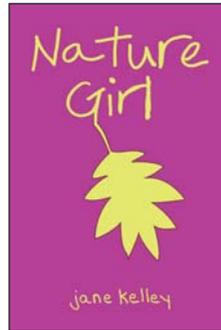
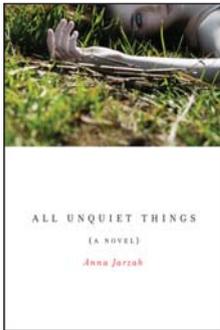
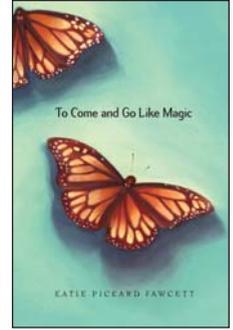
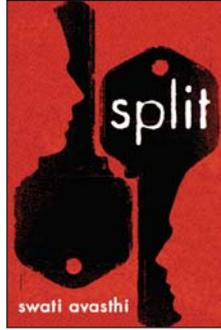
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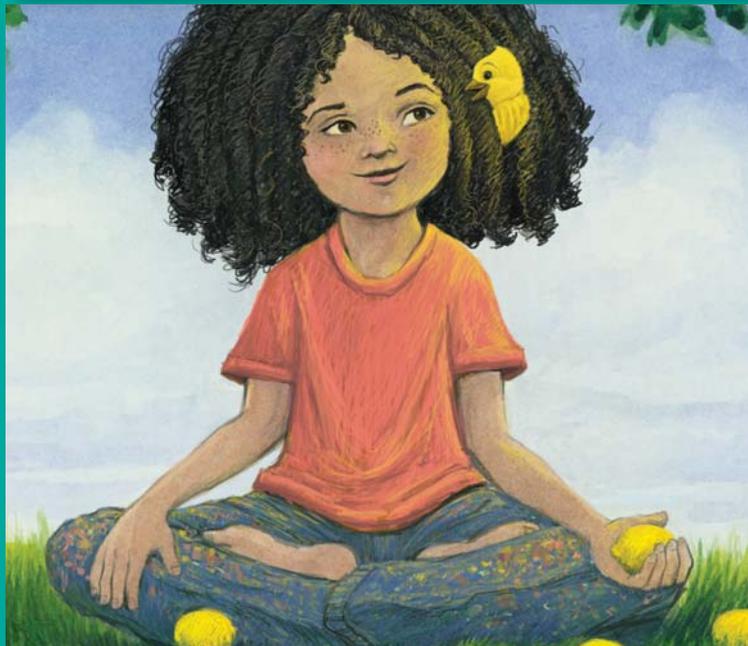


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