

Juvenile Fiction Set in Foreign Countries

The Bear Makers

In post-World War II Budapest, a young girl and her family struggle against the oppressive Hungarian Worker's Party policies and try to find a way to a better life.

Before We Were Free Alvarez, Julia

In the early 1960s in the Dominican Republic, twelve-year-old Anita learns that her family is involved in the underground movement to end the bloody rule of the dictator, General Trujillo.

The Breadwinner Ellis, Deborah

Because the Taliban rulers of Kabul, Afghanistan, impose strict limitations on women's freedom and behavior, eleven-year-old Parvana must disguise herself as a boy so that her family can survive after her father's arrest.

Benno's Bear Zucker, Naomi Flink

After he and his father are arrested as pickpockets, Benno is separated from the bear he had raised and come to love when the bear is sent to a zoo and Benno is taken in by a kindly policeman and his wife.

Bound Napoli, Donna Jo

In a novel based on Chinese Cinderella tales, fourteen-year-old stepchild Xing-Xing endures a life of neglect and servitude, as her stepmother cruelly mutilates her own child's feet so that she alone might marry well.

Camel Rider Mason, Prue

Two expatriates living in a Middle Eastern country, twelve-year-old Adam from Australia and Walid from Bangladesh, must rely on one another when war breaks out and they find themselves in the desert, both trying to reach the same city with no water, little food, and no common language.

The Color of My Words Lynn, Joseph

When life gets difficult for Ana Rosa, a twelve-year-old would-be writer living in a small village in the Dominican Republic, she can depend on her older brother to make her feel better--until the life-changing events on her thirteenth birthday.

Daniel Half Human and the Good Nazi Chotjewitz, David

In 1933, best friends Daniel and Armin admire Hitler, but as anti-Semitism buoys Hitler to power, Daniel learns he is half Jewish, threatening the friendship even as life in their beloved Hamburg, Germany, is becoming nightmarish. Also details Daniel and Armin's reunion in 1945 in interspersed chapters.

The Devil's Arithmetic Yolen, Jane

Hannah resents the traditions of her Jewish heritage until time travel places her in the middle of a small Jewish village in Nazi-occupied Poland.

Esperanza Rising Ryan, Pam Munoz

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression.

The Ghost in the Tokaido Inn Hoobler, Dorothy

While attempting to solve the mystery of a stolen jewel, Seikei, a merchant's son who longs to be a samurai, joins a group of kabuki actors in eighteenth-century Japan.

Homeless Bird Whelan, Gloria

When thirteen-year-old Koly enters into an ill-fated arranged marriage, she must either suffer a destiny dictated by India's tradition or find the courage to oppose it.

In the Eye of War Chang, Margaret Scrogin

During the final days of the Japanese occupation of China, Shao-shao celebrates his tenth birthday, observes traditional holidays with his family, and befriends the daughter of a traitor.

Listening for Lions Whelan, Gloria

Left an orphan after the influenza epidemic in British East Africa in 1918, thirteen-year-old Rachel is tricked into assuming a deceased neighbor's identity to travel to England, where her only dream is to return to Africa and rebuild her parents' mission hospital.

A Long Walk to Water Park, Linda Sue

When the Sudanese civil war reaches his village in 1985, eleven-year-old Salva becomes separated from his family and must walk with other Dinka tribe members through southern Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya in search of safe haven. Based on the life of Salva Dut, who, after immigrating to America in 1996, began a project to dig water wells in Sudan.

Naming Maya Krishnaswami, Uma

When Maya accompanies her mother to India to sell her grandfather's house, she uncovers family history relating to her parents divorce and learns more about herself and her relationship with her mother.

Number the Stars Lowry, Lois

In 1943, during the German occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie learns how to be brave and courageous when she helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis.

Parvana's Journey Ellis, Deborah

Thirteen year-old Parvana and other Afghan children search the countryside for missing parents.

Radiant Girl White, Andrea

In the aftermath of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster, a Ukrainian girl comes to understand the things most important about her homeland, and in combining the mythological strength of her ancestors with a newly acquired comprehension of the scientific truth of the event, fulfills a promise she made to herself many years before.

Raining Sardines Flores-Galbis, Enrique

The artistic Ernestina and the analytical Enriquito use their ingenuity to save a herd of wild horses and stop an evil landowner from spoiling their Cuban village.

Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party Compestine, Ying Chang

Starting in 1972 when she is nine years old, Ling, the daughter of two doctors, struggles to make sense of the communists' Cultural Revolution, which empties stores of food, homes of appliances deemed "bourgeois," and people of laughter.

Samir and Yonatan Carmi, Daniella

Samir, a Palestinian boy, is sent for surgery to an Israeli hospital where he has two otherworldly experiences, making friends with an Israeli boy, Yonatan, and traveling with him to Mars where Samir finds peace about his brother's death in the war.

The Serpent's Children Yep, Laurence

In nineteenth-century China, a young girl struggles to protect her family from the threat of bandits, famine, and an ideological conflict between her father and brother.

Silk Umbrellas Marsden, Carolyn

Eleven-year-old Noi worries that she will have to stop painting the silk umbrellas her family sells at the market near their Thai village and be forced to join her older sister in difficult work at a local factory instead.

Song of the Buffalo Boy Garland, Sherry

Shunned and mistreated because of her mixed heritage and determined to avoid an arranged marriage, seventeen-year-old Loi runs away to Ho Chi Minh City with the hope that she and the boy she loves will be able to go to the United States to find her American father.

Spying on Miss Muller Bunting, Eve

At Alveara boarding school in Belfast at the start of World War II, thirteen-year-old Jessie must deal with her suspicions about a teacher whose father was German and with her worries about her own father's drinking problem.

Under the Sun Dorros, Arthur

Chronicles the harrowing journey of Ehmet, a thirteen-year-old boy from Sarajevo who gets caught up in the ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

Younguncle Comes to Town Singh, Vandana

In a small town in northern India, three siblings await their father's youngest brother, Younguncle, who is said to be somewhat eccentric.