

## THE LONELY HEART OF MAYBELLE LANE

**The best kind of family is the kind you choose for yourself.**

On a road trip to a Nashville singing competition to win the love of her absent father, Maybelle learns about courage and the best kind of family—the kind you choose for yourself.

**Themes** Friendship, Self-Discovery, Family, Parent Relationships, Social Emotional Learning

### After Reading

Ask students to identify the elements of the road trip that Maybelle takes and how these elements frame the way the story is told. What is the motivation for the road trip? What makes her decide to take it? What happens along the way? Do her motives or feelings change? Why or why not?

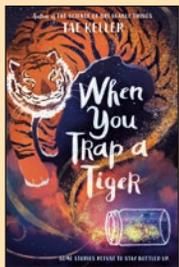
### Praise for *The Lonely Heart of Maybelle Lane*

★ **“A rich and rewarding debut.”** —*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

★ “Lyrical and full of heart, this road trip story **gets to the core of what it means to create family, to be brave, and to accept the flaws of being human.**”

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

★ “This novel layers themes of resilience and finding love in unexpected places [and] will be welcomed into the hearts of many readers.” —*School Library Journal*, starred review



## WHEN YOU TRAP A TIGER

**Some stories refuse to stay bottled up.**

The uplifting story of a girl discovering a secret family history when she makes a deal with a magical tiger from her grandmother's stories.

**Themes** Family, Folklore, Multigenerational Stories, Death, Grief and Bereavement

### After Reading

Ask students to share or write a story they were told when they were little, particularly one that was told to them many times. What is the importance of the story and what emotional connections do they have to it?

### Praise for *When You Trap a Tiger*

★ “Roars to life with just a touch of magic.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

★ “Every chapter is filled with a richness and magic that demands every word be treasured.” —*Booklist*, starred review

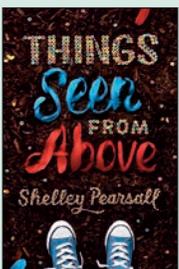
★ “Deeply moving. . . . Vulnerable and mythic storytelling in the vein of Erin Entrada Kelly and Kacen Callender.”

—*School Library Journal*, starred review

★ “Seamlessly transitions from the mundane to the magical.” —*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

★ “It's **a complex, satisfying story**, one that foregrounds family and healing alongside a love for Korean folklore.”

—*The Bulletin*, starred review



## THINGS SEEN FROM ABOVE

**A shift in perspective can change everything.**

**Themes** Bullying, Art, Disabilities & Special Needs

### After Reading

Have students create a piece of art in Joey's style. Discuss how creating something to be viewed from above changes the way they see the subject.

### Praise for *Things Seen from Above*

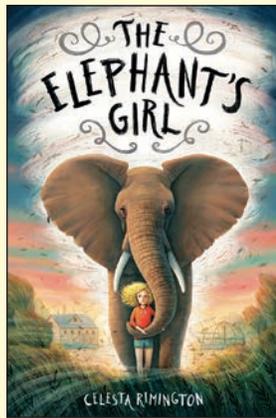
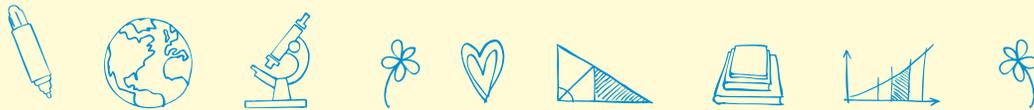
“An **uplifting story** of friendship, kindness, and new ways of seeing.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“Readers will think about this novel after they've closed the book. It's **full of heart** and is sure to encourage looking at the world through a new lens.” —*School Library Journal*

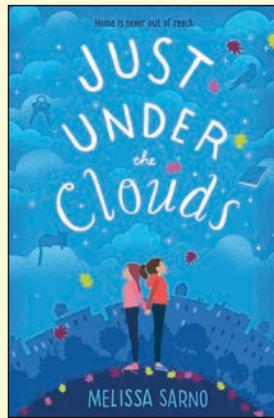
“**A warm and gentle embrace** of exceptional children, the recognition they deserve, and the sweet children who feel called to protect them.” —*Booklist*

# MORE MAGICAL MIDDLE-GRADE

from Random House Children's Books



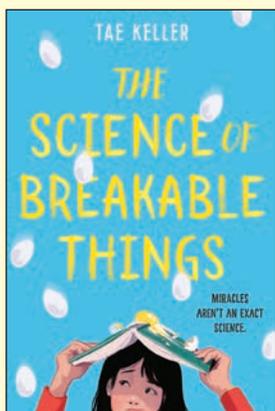
Celesta Rimington  
HC: 978-0-593-12122-1



Melissa Sarno  
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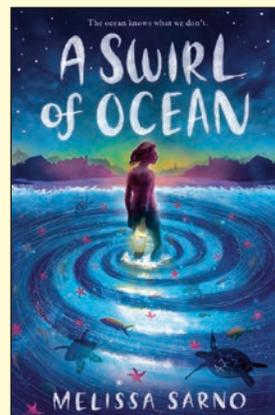
Nicole Panteleakos  
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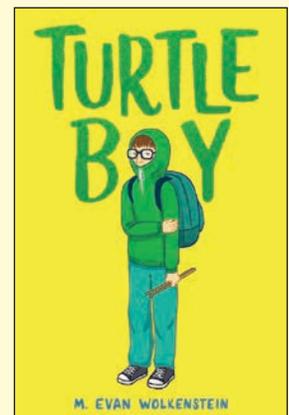
Tae Keller  
HC: 978-1-5247-1566-3



Lynne Kelly  
HC: 978-1-52477-023-5



Melissa Sarno  
HC: 978-1-5247-2012-4



M. Evan Wolkenstein  
HC: 978-0-593-12157-3

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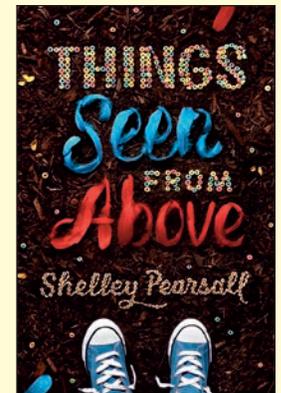
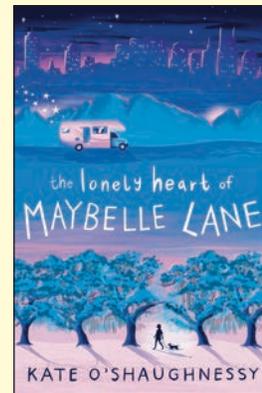
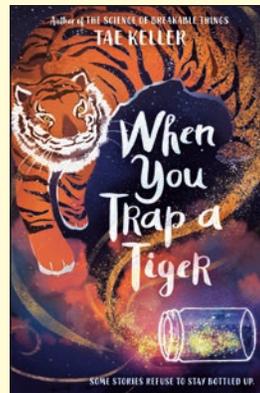
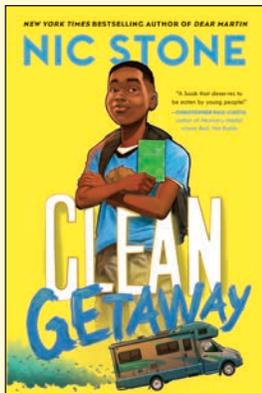


Grades  
3-7

Read a little bit of everything.

# READ IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL.

Books for the middle-grade reader who feels like **everything is changing.**

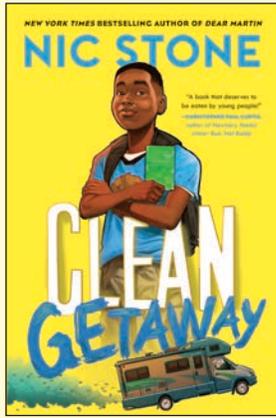


## Educators' Guide



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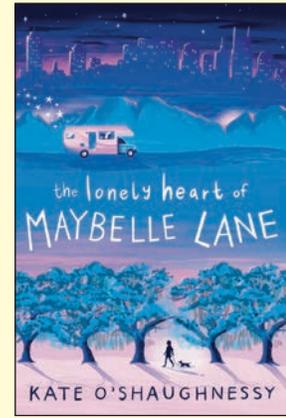
### Clean Getaway

Nic Stone  
 F&P: W · Lexile: 780L  
 HC: 978-1-9848-9297-3  
 GLB: 978-1-9848-9298-0  
 EL: 978-1-9848-9299-7



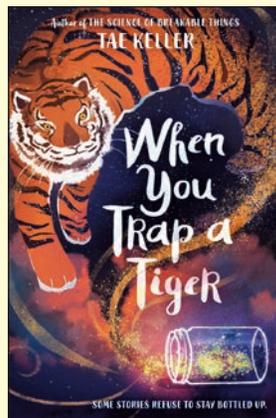
### The List of Things That Will Not Change

Rebecca Stead  
 Lexile: 680L  
 HC: 978-1-101-93809-6  
 GLB: 978-1-101-93810-2  
 EL: 978-1-101-93811-9



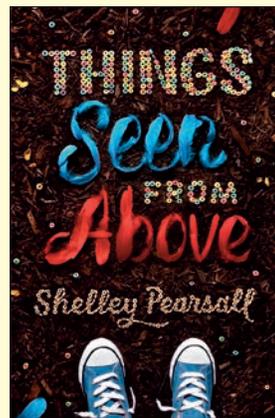
### The Lonely Heart of Maybelle Lane

Kate O'Shaughnessy  
 F&P: X · Lexile: 680L  
 HC: 978-1-9848-9383-3  
 GLB: 978-1-9848-9384-0  
 EL: 978-1-9848-9385-7



### When You Trap a Tiger

Tae Keller  
 F&P: V · Lexile: 590L  
 HC: 978-1-5247-1570-0  
 GLB: 978-1-5247-1571-7  
 EL: 978-1-5247-1572-4



### Things Seen from Above

Shelley Pearsall  
 F&P: V · Lexile: 750L  
 HC: 978-1-5247-1739-1  
 GLB: 978-1-5247-1740-7  
 EL: 978-1-5247-1741-4

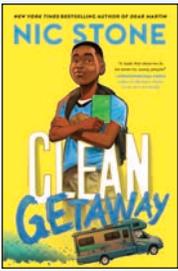
## About the Books

Middle-grade stories follow characters at the most transformative times in their lives. From navigating changes like a divorce in the family to learning about the world in which their parents or grandparents grew up to making an unlikely friend at recess, middle-grade stories can be universal, and have the ability to expand readers' perspectives, instill empathy, and promote understanding of the human experience.

## In the Classroom

This guide provides discussion questions, prompts, and activity suggestions to facilitate insightful conversations about these books and their theme of self-discovery.





# CLEAN GETAWAY

**We all make mistakes.**

**It's how you clean them up that matters.**

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Dear Martin* comes a road trip story through American race relations past and present.

## Pre-Reading Questions and Activities

1. What is your nickname? How did you get that nickname? If you do not have a nickname, imagine one for yourself, and create an origin story for it.
2. Look at the cover of *Clean Getaway*. What do you think this book is about? What questions are sparked by this cover?
3. Look at the state map of Alabama before chapter 1. Create a similar map for your state or hometown. What places, events, people, or other things do you highlight? Why did you include these items? What did you exclude?
4. What does guilt look like? Create a visual representation of guilt.
5. Have you ever tried to make amends after disappointing someone or hurting their feelings? What did you do to earn their forgiveness?

## Discussion Questions

1. Who is the narrator? What is his nickname? How did he come to be called that? (pp. 2–3)
2. Readers meet Scoob early in chapter 1. What is your initial impression of him? Why do you feel this way? What is your initial impression of G'ma? Why?
3. Scoob says that the RV gives him “the willies.” (p. 9) Why does Scoob feel this way? He misses G'ma's house. Why do we become attached to places? Is it really about the place?
4. Scoob is in trouble with his father. Why? What happened at school? What do you think Scoob's father means when he says, “the punishment is harsher and the fallout is infinitely worse”? Who are “boys like you”? (pp. 13–17)
5. Who is Shenice? Who is Drake? What is epilepsy? What do you think about how Scoob responded to Bryce bullying Drake? (pp. 11–15)
6. Research the *Travelers' Green Book*. Why was such a brochure necessary when G'ma and G'pop were young adults?
7. Why do you suppose G'ma is swapping the license plates on the RV? (pp. 43–44)

8. What is at the intersection of Sixteenth Street and Sixth Avenue in Birmingham, Alabama? What happened there? Why is it significant? (pp. 51–53)
9. G'ma keeps calling Scoob “Jimmy.” Why? Who is Jimmy? What do you think is happening to G'ma? (pp. 82–83)
10. Scoob believes that G'ma is being less than truthful with him because she starts to whistle. How do you know if someone is being dishonest with you? What can you do about it?
11. G'ma is overwhelmed with guilt. Why does she think that being pulled over with G'pop was her fault? (pp. 135–136)
12. Chapter 15 details Scoob's dream about being back at home with his dad. What do you think this dream means?
13. In Shreveport, Louisiana, Scoob and G'ma go to a gas station. While there, Scoob becomes upset. What happens to cause his distress? (pp. 163–164) Have you heard any other stories of people of color being surveilled? What are some consequences of such scrutiny?
14. Reread chapter 19. Why is G'ma overcome with guilt? How do you feel about her confession? Would you forgive her? Are her choices justified? Explain your thinking.
15. Describe the reunion of Scoob and his dad.
16. Why do you think Scoob's mom is out of his and his father's lives? Why do you think Scoob is not ready to reconnect with her? (p. 216)
17. What does Scoob find inside G'ma's treasure chest? What do its contents inspire Scoob and his dad to do?

## Praise for *Clean Getaway*

★ **“An absolute firecracker of a book.”**

—*Booklist*, starred review

★ **“A heartwarming, family-centered adventure that will leave readers guessing until the end.”**

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review



# THE LIST OF THINGS THAT WILL NOT CHANGE

## There's no right way to be a family.

New from Rebecca Stead, the Newbery Medal-winning author of *When you Reach Me*, comes a masterful and important middle grade novel that explores what it means to be a part of a family that's changing.

### Pre-Reading Activity

Define *family*. Then discuss how family means different things to different people. Instruct students to write an essay about the basic characteristics of a family.

### Discussion Questions

1. Explain the purpose of the prologue. What does "The Sound of Corn" reveal about Bea's father's relationship with Uncle Frank? Bea says that she will tell a story about "a different me." Explain how this foreshadows her growth as a person.
2. Discuss how time spent at the lake cabin changes after Bea's parents' divorce. What makes Bea miss her mom? Her relationship with her cousin Angelica is changing. Debate whether this is simply because the girls are growing up. How is their relationship different at the end of the novel?
3. How does Bea describe her relationship with her parents? Discuss how Bea has a different set of rules in each home. What might Bea say are the pros and cons of living in two places? Why is it sometimes confusing? Discuss whether this arrangement is to accommodate Bea or her parents.
4. Love is a central theme in the novel. Bea says that her mom and dad still love each other. How is their love different from when they were married? Explain how their love for each other makes their divorce easier for Bea. Describe the love between Bea's dad and Jesse. How does Bea accept their love? Bea's dad and Jesse both tried to suppress their sexual orientation when they were growing up. Compare how their families feel about their homosexuality. What does their relationship say about the importance of being who you are?
5. Bea thought she was doing the right thing when she secretly sent a wedding invitation to Mission, Jesse's brother. At what point does she realize she made a mistake? Mission does show up, and causes a scene at the wedding. How do Bea's dad and Jesse manage to make the day a joyful time, despite Mission's behavior?
6. Why do Bea's parents send her to a counselor? She is a little uncomfortable with Miriam, the counselor, in the beginning. At what point does Bea begin to trust her? Bea is a worrier. What does she worry about? How does Miriam help Bea cope with her worrying? What other important things does Bea learn from Miriam?
7. Bea tells us, "Dad says I wear my heart on my sleeve." (p. 32) Explain what he means. Cite examples from the novel that support his assessment. Miriam tells Bea, "Feelings are sometimes like big dogs. . . . Sometimes they drag you around a little." (p. 36) What feelings drag Bea around? How does she learn to manage her feelings?
8. Bea is very excited that Jesse has a daughter her age. Discuss why Miriam encourages Bea to think about how it might feel for Sonia when she comes to New York for the first time. Sonia is homesick while in New York. Why does this make Bea feel like a failure as a sister? Describe the moment when Bea is homesick for her mom, who is in the same city. (p. 72) Discuss whether this helps her understand Sonia. Discuss why her father wants to share with Bea the tapes of his father reading books aloud. There is one tape where Bea's dad sings "You Are My Sunshine." How is this scene significant to the overarching theme of the book? Why was Bea unwilling to share this tape with Sonia?
9. Bea asks Angus what it's like having a sister. He answers, "It's like there's someone else in my boat. Someone I don't have to explain things to." (p. 136) What is Angus referring to when he says "my boat"? Bea desperately wants to be a sister to Sonia. How are their boats different? What do they have in common? Angus says, "[My sister] doesn't know what it's like to be me, but she knows a lot of reasons why I *am* me." (p. 137) How does this statement help Bea understand the role of siblings?

### Praise for *The List of Things That Will Not Change*

★ "Must-read." —*School Library Journal*, starred review

★ "We are fully present with Bea, in the **rich, crisply rendered details** and in her distinctive voice."

—*The Horn Book*, starred review

★ "**Insightful moments layer into an affecting story** of significant middle grade change."

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

★ "An emotional character journey from a **middle-grade master.**" —*Booklist*, starred review

★ "Uplifting without sentimentality, timely not trendy, and **utterly engaging.**" —*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review