

2020-2021 Texas Bluebonnet Award  
Master List Annotations

**Sweep The Story of a Girl and Her Monster by Jonathan Auxier**

It has been five years since Nan Sparrow's guardian disappeared and she has been employed as a chimney sweep by a cruel master. After a near death experience, Nan awakens to discover that the small lump of coal she found after her guardian's disappearance has become a creature that saved her life. This Victorian era tale weaves folklore, monsters, and child labor reformation together into a story of friendship and wonder.

**What Do You Do With a Voice Like That? The Story of Extraordinary Congresswoman Barbara Jordan by Chris Barton**

Even as a child Barbara Jordan stood out for her big, booming, confident voice. What do you do with a voice like that? You share it with the world. Barbara Jordan spent her career standing up for equality and justice. Her voice has made people sit up, stand up, and take notice for generations. Now, her voice will be shared with a new generation and hopefully inspire them to use their own voices to stand up for what they believe in.

**Frankie Sparks & the Class Pet by Megan Frazer Blakemore**

Frankie Sparks and her fellow third grade classmates are so excited when their teacher announces that they will soon get a class pet. The best part? Miss Cupid is letting the class decide which pet to get- as long as it fits some parameters. Rodent loving Frankie knows that a rat will be the perfect class pet, but must do her research to convince her teacher, her classmates, and especially her best friend Maya. This is the first in a fun new series featuring Frankie and her classmates.

**Pass Go and Collect \$200 The Real Story of How MONOPOLY Was Invented by Tanya Lee Stone**

In 1903, Lizzie Magie patented a game she invented for adults to show the unjust relationship between landlords and tenants. The player with the most land and money at the end of the game was the winner while the other players usually lost everything. For more than thirty years, copies of the game were freely shared among friends and family. In 1934, Charles Darrow redesigns the game and sold it as his own invention. The popular game was purchased by Parker Brothers who wanted to patent it so that no other company could copy it, but discovered Lizzie Magie had already claimed it. Darrow convinced her to sell her rights to the game for \$500.00. Today, Monopoly is one of the world's most famous games with over one billion players.

**They Call Me Güero: A Border Kid's Poems by David Bowles**

12-year-old Güero is a Mexican American border kid with nerdy tastes, pale skin, and red hair. He struggles with growing up in American on the Mexican border but makes it through 7th grade by trusting in his family traditions and his comic-book-loving friends - Los Bobbys. Life is tough for a border kid, but Guero has figured out how to cope. He writes poetry.

### **Rocket to the Moon! by Don Brown**

On July 20, 1969 Apollo II landed on the moon. But it wasn't just the astronauts that got us there. This graphic novel explores the people and technology that made the moon landing possible. Find out which "bombs burning in air" inspired the writer of "The Star-Spangled Banner," why the Russians wanted to launch a dog into Earth's atmosphere, and how exactly astronauts are able to go to the bathroom while in a rocket far off in space!

### **Bernice Buttman, Model Citizen by Niki Lenz**

Bernice Buttman is a bully. With a name like that, it isn't surprising. She lives with a family of bullies. However Bernice wants to change. It is lonely being a bully. When her mom leaves her in the hands of her aunt (a real nun) in Halfway, Texas. Bernice has a chance to start over in a new town, along with a dream to become a stunt woman. Read the laugh-out-loud antics of Bernice with the pursuit of redemption in *Bernice Buttman, Model Citizen*.

### **New Kid by Jerry Craft**

Jordan Banks embarks upon his seventh-grade year as a new kid at the elite, cross-town, Riverdale Academy. Glimpse his world view through the comics he creates. Experience his transformation from a neighborhood kid into an academy student along his bus ride to school. Feel his frustrations with the injustices he witnesses and experiences. In graphic novel format, issues of racism, classism, identity and fitting in without losing one's self are addressed. For all of the new kids, or those that have new kids around them, this is a must read.

### **No More Poems! A Book in Verse That Just Gets Worse by Rhett Miller**

This laugh out loud book of poetry addresses the qualms of childhood and parenting. Kids will see themselves in this book and laugh along with the poems. In the tradition of Shel Silverstein's poetry and interspersed with beautiful and life-like illustrations make this book a winner with any audience both inside and outside the classroom.

### **Charlie Hernandez and the League of Shadows by Ryan Cajelo**

Charlie's abuela, a fantastic storyteller, has raised Charlie on stories centered around Hispanic folklore. Little did Charlie know that while he was enjoying a great story, she was actually preparing him for a showdown between good and evil. When Charlie's parents disappear, it's up to Charlie and a few trusting friends to face some very real mythological creatures in the fight to not only save his parents but their own lives.

### **The Rhino in the Right Field by Stacy Dekeyser**

It's 1948, and baseball loving Nick Spirakis enjoys playing pick-up games with the neighborhood boys. Their baseball field borders the city zoo and just beyond the right field fence lives Tank, a 2,580-pound rhino. Nick admits he is not a great outfielder and has a run in with Tank when a ball gets past him and he must jump the fence to recover it from Tank's yard. When a local minor league baseball team announces a batboy-for-a-day contest, all the boys enter, and Nick is determined to win. But in order to win the contest, he must get out of helping at his father's shop the day of the contest and improve his baseball skills. A funny story with a focus on family, friends, and what to do when life throws you curveballs.

### **Strangers by Margaret Petersen Haddix**

Siblings Chess, Emma and Finn Greystone live with their mom and seem to be a happy normal family. However, when three other siblings, who look just like them and have their same names and birthdays go missing, their normal lives are called into question. After this, their mother disappears and things quickly fall into a puzzling turmoil. In their quest to find her they encounter secret codes, hidden passages and unexpected allies all while mysteries about their past start to grow and grow.

### **A Place to Land: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Speech that Inspired a Nation by Barry Wittenstein and illustrated by Jerry Pinkney**

The night before the famed "I Have a Dream" speech, Martin Luther King, Jr. consulted with a group of trusted advisors and activists at the Willard Hotel. Amazing illustrations bring to life the little known story of this historical speech that sealed MLK's place in history.

### **A Wolf Called Wander by Rosanne Parry**

Swift, a young wolf cub, lives with his pack in the mountains learning to hunt, playing with his brothers and sisters, and watching over a new litter of cubs. When a rival pack attacks, Swift's family scatters and he is left alone to fend and fight for himself. The book follows Swift's journey as he treks a thousand miles across the Pacific Northwest dodging forest fires, hunters, highways, and loneliness before he finds a new home. Based on a true story of a wolf named OR-7, this novel is about courage, bravery, perseverance, and family.

### **From an Idea to Disney by Lowey Bundy Sichol**

A long time ago, brothers, Walt and Roy Disney had an idea. That idea became the Walt Disney Company which is the biggest entertainment company in the world boasting theme parks, popular TV shows, movie studios, and merchandise. Find out more about the history of one of the most recognizable brands in the world through this illustrated, nonfiction book.

### **Stay by Bobbie Pyron**

Piper's family was not always homeless, but one thing led to another and now they live at a shelter. While her mom and dad try to find a stable place to live, she finds a community of homeless people and their pets in a local park. A very special dog, Baby, and her owner Jewel, stand out to Piper. Then, when Jewel disappears, the homeless community and Piper worry and search for her and Baby. Piper works together with her new friends from the Firefly Girls troop at the shelter to reunite Baby and Jewel.

### **If I Built a School by Chris Van Dusen**

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to build your own school? One day while Jack is at the playground he does just that. Jack's school would have hover desks and rooms with roofs that open up, teachers that write in the air and robo-chefs that cook with flair. Jack's vivid imagination soars as he describes various aspects of school life. Fun and adventure abound in this rhyming picture book with illustrations that are a feast for the eyes. Join Jack as he dreams of a school that is out of this world.

### **The Bridge Home by Padma Venkatraman**

Viji and Rukku run away from home in an attempt to escape their abusive father. But having no family or friends who can help them, they find themselves on their own on the streets of India. Fortunately, they befriend Muthu and Arul, two homeless boys who are also trying to survive on the streets. The four help each other find ways to earn money to feed themselves and try to improve their lives. In a dangerous, often cruel world, Viji learns the value of friendship and that family comes in many forms. Written as a letter from Viji to her mentally disabled sister, Rukku, this heartfelt narrative will capture readers' hearts. *The Bridge Home* is an exquisite story of love, hope, and resilience.

### **Nightbooks by J. A. White**

Natacha is a witch who has tricked children into coming to her apartment and keeping them there for centuries. Alex is the newest child who has fallen for Natacha's trickery. Alex is determined to find a way out. When Natacha hears Alex reading from his book of terrifying tales she is hooked but Alex's tales are running out. What will he do? How will he get out of Natacha's grasp before his time runs up? This creepy tale that is intertwined with elements from the Brothers Grimm stories is sure to keep readers hooked and reading with their lights on.

### **Caterpillar Summer by Gillian McDunn**

Fifth grade has ended, and Cat is looking forward to reconnecting with her best friend while vacationing in Atlanta. After an emergency leads to a change of plans, Cat and her special needs brother, Chicken, are sent to stay with grandparents they have never met on a small North Carolina island for three weeks. Cat spends time redefining her roles and responsibilities within the family, making friends, mending relationships, and learning to fish. This heartwarming text is interspersed with illustrated pages from Cat's mother's picture books to tell a story of family and friendship.