

W I N T E R / S P R I N G
E D I T I O N 2 0 1 5

KID WRITERS MAGAZINE

THE ONLY WRITING MAGAZINE MANAGED BY KIDS, FOR KIDS!



*Want to
become a
published
author?*

*This
magazine is dedicated to
creating opportunities
for aspiring kid writers
to become published. In
this magazine you'll find
all kinds of great info
and inspiration to
develop your writing.
And we only publish
stories by kids, so write
great stuff and then send
it to us to get*

Cover Story: The Superfly Scavengers

When Cole messed around with his parents old record player, he had no idea it would led him to an extraction mission against one of his own relatives.

Jack's Spy Club

Jack and Mary know something is up when the class slackers begin acing tests. After it starts effecting other honest kids, it's their job to bring the cheaters to justice.

PAGE 22

The Treasure Chest Trackers: Part 2

Diane and Mark are hot on the case, following the coordinates they found to a location in California. But will the hundred year-old treasure still be there?

PAGE 16



Interview with Linda Sue Park!

**Get award-winning kids'
author Linda Sue Park's top
advice for kid writers!**

Page 20

Best Books

What books do our kid writers recommend? - Page 44

The Treehouse Tussle

Whoever heard of a neighbor who calls the government to take away a kids favorite play place? - Page 38

Mission Statement

Welcome everybody to the second edition of Kid Writers Magazine! This magazine was just created for kids just like you to help enhance opportunities for kid writers all around the globe.

I've been writing since I was four years old (I'm seventeen now), so I know well what it is to be a kid writer. Perhaps the biggest probably that I have faced as a writer is that there have not really been many ways for kid writers to practice their writing and get published.

We want to change this with Kid Writers Magazine! This is your magazine; filled with stories from the best kid writers around (including you!), interviews with best-selling authors, and writing advice from top-notch professionals.

This is the only writing magazine in the world managed by kids, for kids. We've gotten so many submissions from you guys and it makes me very happy to see what great writers you all are. They are always so creative and filled with life and humor that I can't help reading them with a huge smile on my face.

What makes me even more happy is to see all you kid writers getting published. With this magazine any kid can send in their writing and get it distributed to thousands of people across the country. Aside from the ones published in this edition are many more on our website (kidwriters.org) that are also very well done.

Kid writing is great because it breaks down all barriers. The stories that you kids write are not silly ones filled with all kinds of "messages" and fancy themes that people are supposed to pretend to understand. The best stories come from asking the question, "What is the most fun thing that could possibly happen?"

As Mary says in her second spy club mission (page 23): "Dreams and justice, forever." It's the motto of the JMSC, but it can just as easily be ours, with a special emphasis on dreams. Special writing happens when you write about the things of your imagination, the things that you dream about. Not at nighttime, but your dreams for the world.

Writing is not about grammar or morals or any of that. It's about writing something awesome, writing something that you love and want to read. Not in the pattern of sad books that end in sickness or death, but in those which talk about living life. Not according to someone else's standards, not according to what someone else has told you what good writing is (not even me!), but what you think it is.

We all want a fun, exciting world full of adventure and greatness. Take us there in your writing. We'll follow you.

This magazine is for kid writers only!

Daniel Frank Johnston

Our Team

Creator:

Daniel Johnston has been writing since he was four, and always wished there were more opportunities for kid writers, so he decided to create them and started *Kid Writers Magazine*! He is currently seventeen and still writing. He writes several columns for the magazine and tries his hardest to help kids everywhere grow in their writing!



Lead Writers:

Leinad O. Lattsnai absolutely loves writing and creating pretty much anything exciting and fun. He especially loves spies and secret codes, so check out his *Spy Club Series*!

Nancy Burton values adventuresome fun more than anything, especially when it's kids taking part in it! Her rollicking stories may or may not be from experience.

Phillip Ruth adores writing, but he loves food even more. Lately he's learning that the two are not mutually exclusive; as long as he has a snack close by when he writes!

Contributing Writers:

Lisa Fitzgerald tries to be a normal girl, but things just never seem to work out that way! She's always involved in some crazy caper, so don't be surprised if her stories contain some (ok, a lot) of surprises!

Becky M. loves winter, and she loves snowball fights even more! During the other nine months of the year she can be found reading or causing mayhem around town with her friends.

Reviewers:

Thirteen year old Erik Weibel knows a thing or two about books, having published one himself (*The Adventures of Tomato and Pea*)! He is one of the most influential and prolific kid writers and book reviewers around.



???????? This could be you! Send in your writing (or reviews) and become part of our team!

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A Note About Our Stories

I have included in this magazine only the best stories I could find; that is what you all deserve. The purpose of these stories is to inspire you to be the best writers that you can be. I have a worry, though, that the high quality of these stories may be intimidating to some of you. Make no mistake: To be a kid writer, or to be published in this magazine, it is in no way necessary that your stories have any comparison to the ones in this edition. They do not have to be nearly as long, either; just as long as it takes you to tell your story.

No story will be quite as good as these at first. The truth is that these have been picked out of dozens of possible stories that we could've published, and have gone through many rounds of revisions. Many of these stories were also written by people who have already spent years honing their craft.

In your writing we ask only one thing of you: That you write your stories for them to be enjoyed. The quality of your writing will come with time and practice (and it is of course very important to work on it), but ideas are what really count. Enjoy these stories, laugh with them, be inspired by them, and then follow our tips and write the best possible stories that you can yourself. And then send them to us! This whole magazine is for you, to give you an opportunity to publish your stories. We can't wait to see your names in the magazine in the very near future!

The Snow Stoppers

By Becky M.

Donovan and Katie sat inside, watching the snow go. It was hypnotizing, because it had been the same picture all day; just a steady stream of snow, snow, and more snow. Donovan's yard, populated by all kinds of trees and plants, was totally whited out to the point of non-recognition.

"When is winter going to be over?" Katie moaned, taking a sip of her hot chocolate. That felt good.

"I don't know," Donovan commiserated. "It's March already. We shouldn't be buried in snow."

They looked out for a few more minutes, slurping until their hot chocolates were gone. "This is ridiculous," Katie continued her diatribe. "This is getting real old. Snow needs to end. I just want to be able to play outside normally again."

Donovan nodded, and said in a fake voice. "Mister Snow, your time is over buster! You've got to move out, and now."

"Hey, maybe you're on to something!" Katie exclaimed.

"What?" Donovan was confused. "Making funny voices towards things that have no will of their own?"

"No, I mean actually stopping the snow!"

"And how are you going to do that?" Donovan mocked. "Drop a missile from the moon?"

"We can do something," Katie contended. "And we will."

"Alright," Donovan agreed, going along with it. "After a game of Monopoly, though."

She smiled. "You're on, Debtor Donovan."

"I think it's time to put our plan into action," Katie said after school on Monday.

"What plan?" Donovan wondered.

"Stopping the snow," Katie explained. "It's gone for now, but that doesn't mean it still might not try and rear its ugly head."

"You can't stop the weather!" Donovan told her, getting a little fed up. "And who knows, maybe that was the last storm."

"Maybe," she admitted grudgingly. "But I'm not going to leave it up to chance. I'm going to put a stop to it, once and for all."

"How?"

Katie thought for a moment. "The weather station," she decided. "Those people'll be able to stop the snow."

"Well, if you want to go the weather station, that's ok with me," Donovan agreed, who liked exploring places even if he knew the chance of being able to stop the weather was exactly zero.

Besides, maybe they'll tell her there won't be any more snow.

"What are you kids doing here?" the receptionist asked at the station building, smiling slightly and adding sarcastically, "Do you have an important news story to report?"

"We need to speak to the weatherman," Katie informed her. "It's important."

"Alright, Bob always likes talking to kids," the woman acquiesced, ushering them into a room filled with computer screens running all kinds of fancy charts.

"How are you kids doing?" Bob greeted them, looking up from his work. "Some storm this weekend, huh?"

"It better not happen again," Katie snapped, bringing the man to attention. "We came here because the snow has got to stop."

Oh boy! Donovan thought excitedly, *This is going to be good.*

The weatherman was also clearly amused. "And why does it have to stop?" he asked, hands on his hips.

"It's March!" Katie wailed, wagging her finger. "It might be over, but I don't want to take any chances. You've got to promise there won't be any more."

"Oh, I can't promise that," Bob said quietly. "In fact, according to these charts another storm might be rolling on in Wednesday."

"On Wednesday?!" Katie howled. "Well you just tell it to go somewhere else."

"No can do," the weatherman shook his head. "That storm's coming, whether we like it or not. There might be some chance the drift skips over and it misses us, but that's only a slight chance."

Donovan thanked the weatherman and led a frustrated Katie out onto the street, sunny for now. "What did you expect?" he soothed. "It might not be a big storm."

"Oh, it'll be a big storm," Katie predicted. "It'll be gigantic." A diabolic grin spread across her face. "Except it won't be. Not if I have anything to say about it."

"What are we doing here?" Donovan asked the next afternoon, not a little fearfully. He had followed Katie out to a small satellite near a river on the outskirts of town.

Katie smirked. "They think they're so cool with their fancy weather equipment. Well I'm going to show them who's boss!"

"Are you crazy?!" Donovan rasped, grabbing her arm. "Look, this is all fun and everything, trying to stop the weather, but if you go around destroying equipment, there could be big trouble!"

She laughed. "Oh, I know that. I'm not going to destroy it. Just shake it up a little bit."

With that she grabbed the satellite and started shaking it, tilting all the parts every which way, just anything to set it off kilter. "What're you trying to do?" Donovan demanded. "Give 'em false readings?"

"Exactly," Katie confirmed. "I'm confused about how to stop the weather, so let them be a little confused."

"No way," Donovan tried to bodily remove her from the satellite, but she wasn't having any of it. She just kept on banging it all around, even with him trying to pull her away.

Why do I even hang out with her? She was a menace, and a crazy one at that. But he had to admit that even now he was having a lot of fun. She definitely made things exciting.

Seeing that pure physical force was futile, Donovan started tickling her, targeting the back of her neck. She collapsed to the ground in a fit of giggles, but quickly recovered and attacked him back. He ran, Katie chasing him in hot pursuit, all the way back to his house.

“Hey guys,” Donovan’s mom greeted them when they got home. “They just said on TV something really weird is going on with the weather. Winter may not be over yet”

“Oh, really?” Donovan asked, cutting Katie off before she had a chance to say anything. Bob the weatherman came onto the TV screen.

“Hi, everyone,” he greeted. “For the last couple of days we’ve been tracking a monster storm due to arrive tomorrow. Now, this isn’t going to be as big as the one this weekend, but it’ll be close.”

“However,” he said, pointing to his map, which was going haywire. “We have just been getting contradictory readings from our satellite making it look like the storm could be one of the century. It has gone back to normal and we’re still trying to find out what happened. We believe there’s a small chance the storm might drift and pass over us, but most likely we’ll be heading for a couple of more days cooped inside.”

Katie put her head in her hands. “All that only made them think the storm was going to be worse,” she lamented. “I’m a failure. I set myself up against the snow, and I lost. Big time.”

Donovan wanted to laugh at that comment, but then he was struck by a sudden idea. “Maybe not...”

“Are you sure we’re early enough?” Katie jabbed, making her way up the mountain.

“Hey, it’s you who wanted to control the weather, not me,” Donovan reminded her. “It’s not my fault that the storm happens to be starting at 4:00 am.”

“Well, I really hope this works,” Katie grumbled. Finally they made it to the top of the mountain, only a couple thousand feet above sea level but the highest thing they could find in their area.

“The weatherman said for the storm to miss us the air has to travel west.” Donovan checked his compass and pointed. “Here goes!”

He activated the bellows he had brought, a high-powered air blower, and Katie did the same. Katie’s dad had happened to have some laying around in the garage, so they had snagged them. Not that their parents knew where they were right now.

The sound from the blowers was deafening, and it yet seemed as though they were barely making a dent in the vast atmosphere. Donovan suddenly got a picture of himself; standing up on a mountain at 3:30 in the morning, trying to stop a massive storm with an air blowing device. What could be more crazy?

Still, they continued because they didn’t know what else to do. They could see the angry snow clouds in the sky, ready to unleash a torrent on them, but so far they were still quiet. “Is it working?” Katie bellowed, but her voice was swept into the noisy machinery.

Lugging such big machine in the air could never be comfortable, but after just fifteen minutes it was agonizing, arms feeling like they were about to fall off and then not feeling at all. They could've just set the blowers on the ground and laid there, but then they feared the current might get caught in the mountain. They had decided to go all out, and that's what they were doing.

It doesn't matter if we succeed or not, or even if we can, Donovan reflected, *What matters is that we tried.* Waking up long before the sun and nearly breaking your back might not be everyone's idea of fun, but Donovan had to admit it felt good to do it. After all, what could they be afraid of after contending with the weather?

It was 4:06 when Katie finally took a break, heaving her blower to the ground and collapsing in exhaustion. Donovan also longed for a rest, but knew that it would be difficult to get going again. Instead he hoisted his blower high, feeling the searing pain across him, feeling it but not allowing it to beat him.

He didn't know how long he stayed like that, straining, totally focused on what he was doing. But his watch read 5:02 when he was knocked out of reverie by somehow shaking him.

"Donovan," she screamed over the noise into his ear, "look! The clouds have passed!"

She was right. How about that? They were far off into the west now, far away from their town. "Do you think the storm avoided us?" he wondered, turning off his machine, somehow not feeling the slightest bit tired.

"It looks that way," she observed, her voice in awe, "it looks that way."

They got the full story later that morning. "Here we are again with Channel 9," the TV blared at Katie's house. "As you can see, the storm we were predicting has not materialized. It looks like the clouds got just enough air to lift over our town and keep on going. Very lucky for us."

Katie and Donovan shared a searching look. Had they really managed to stop the weather? Or was it just a freak coincidence?

Katie's dad entered the room. "No snow day, I guess," he remarked heading into the kitchen for breakfast.

The pairs' spirits dropped like a rock. "No!" Katie squealed. "We should've blown the other way!"

The Superfly Scavengers

By Daniel Johnston

Cole sat in his parent's bedroom, messing with an old technology that had not been broken out for at least a decade or two.

The disc screeched with impunity against the record player as the device battled against years of inertia. Cole was bored, and he'd never tried out a record player before. It would be fun to use one, if only for a little while.

The eleven year-old took off the present record, which seemed to be too damaged to

Interview with Linda Sue Park!



I happen to be extremely lucky because I live in a town that has a lot of great writers. Perhaps the most well known of those is Linda Sue Park.

Ms. Park became a renowned writer once she wrote the popular book *A Single Shard*, which won the Newbery Medal in 2002. She first came on my radar when she wrote the ninth book for the kid-pleasing *The 39 Clues* series, *Storm Warning*, back in 2010. It was at a book signing for that book that I first met her, and since then she has only continued churning out more books, including *Trust No One* for the second 39 clues arc and the extremely popular *A Long Walk to Water*, a book about kids in Africa based on a true story.

Ms. Park, as we mention in the interview, is very good when it comes to writing emotional scenes and developing characters. She is also a very nice woman. I caught up with her at the very well-run Rochester Children's Book Festival, and literally thousands of people must have come up to see her. She received them all kindly and with a smile and I hope you can learn from her advice. She's someone who started writing very young (getting her first poem published at the age of only nine) and has worked valiantly to share her stories with the world.

1. Tell our kids how you got started writing.

I became a writer because I was a reader, always, as a child, loved to read books. So I just read so many books and it just is like I wanted to write some too.

2. How did you go from that to being a published author?

That was hard. Um, you have to just persevere and not give up, because every writer goes through a lot of rejection. So I kept reading and reading, kept writing and rewriting, and revising. And eventually, finally, I got to the point where a publisher accepted my first book. And I worked mostly with that publisher ever since. So that was important for me, was revising a lot, working really hard and never giving up.

3. How many books did you write, then?

Well altogether I think I have something like twenty books published. I've had at least twenty books rejected. So I've had as many or more rejected than I've had accepted.

4. Were all those before you published your first book?

No, not all of them. Sometimes I've written them after and they just weren't good enough.

Jack and Mary's Spy Club

Mission 2: The Crooked Classroom Cheaters

By Leinad O. Lattsnai

"Sorry, guys, I can't come over today," Conor was apologizing, "Not with those major tests we've got tomorrow."

Mary shrugged. "Spy work is good training for tests, you know."

"That's right," Jack agreed, "We're not going to study a lick for those tests. Mary used to have to study a little, but after true mind training anything Mrs. Barnes could give out is like dog jumps to a horse."

Mary beamed. "It's true," she enthused. "Although honestly I could pretty much just let my pencil run wherever it wanted to anyway."

"This isn't just any ordinary test," Conor protested. "It's a state test, and that means it's serious."

Jack just laughed. "Serious?" he repeated. "The most serious part of the test is writing your name. The rest is just a struggle to keep yourself from falling to pieces with laughter from the ridiculous questions they try to cook up."

"I know," Conor admitted. "Doing well on an elementary school test isn't really anything to be super proud of. But I'd better review just the same." He started to leave and called back over his shoulder. "Let me know if there's a case you need help with."

Jack wagged his head side-to-side in a very disapproving manner. "The biggest mistake possible: Wanting to do the missions, without doing the preparations."

Mary couldn't help but agree. In the weeks since they'd destroyed Peter, the boy who'd tried to steal her homework just to get back at her for rejecting his advances, they had grown in skill greatly, busying themselves with six official sessions and countless hours that flew by at the headquarter's of Jack and Mary's Spy Club (also known as JMSC): Jack's basement. She'd already learned more from her vociferous reading and code-practicing than she had all year at school, and she felt ready for any challenge that dared to come her.

"You know, I think something big is about to happen," she extending the dare, if only to the crisp autumn air. Mary didn't know if the air could hear her message, but she figured air had never let her down before.

"You're right," Jack confirmed. "Something big is going on, and it's going to take minds a lot bigger than those needed to foil a disgruntled kid."

"Well, what do you think it is?" Mary wondered, suspecting Jack may've picked up on something she hadn't noticed herself yet.

"I don't know," Jack shrugged, totally unconcerned about not having yet unearthed the dastardly plot that she was surely being hatched around them. "But when it comes, we'll be ready."

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Mary smiled, quickly decoding the note Jack had so casually placed in her pencil case, when or how she didn't know. A few weeks ago, before her name had been added to the club, she might've been a little stressed out at having to decode what looked to be a complicated message in the middle of her teacher's instructions about the biggest test of the

year. Now, however, she plowed through the code, fully aware of Jack's eyes on her, and smiling because of it.

Starting backwards and eliminating the first two characters, then skipping each two after that, enabled her to read it almost as fast as if it had been written plainly, and much more eagerly. She smiled on deciphering it, accepting the challenge as a test from her mentor, and not bothering to look back at him. She knew now was the time to focus, that he would do plenty of looking at her, watching her scramble through the test with pride.

"Don't rush through the test," Mrs. Barnes said pointedly, sticking her finger in the air for emphasis. "I repeat, this is not a race."

Mary could barely help but laugh out loud. She knew that advice was redundant for most of the other derelicts in the room, who looked nervous as all get out. It took a mind like Jack's to make a state test exciting, and the only thing Mary wondered would be what she would do with the next forty-eight minutes.

"Not bad," Jack approved, lounging with Mary on a secluded but sturdy tree branch while everyone took a break. "Ten minutes forty-six seconds for fifty-two problems isn't bad."

"Not bad?" Mary choked, proud of her accomplishment.

"Sure," Jack agreed. "But a result on an elementary school test is nothing to brag about."

Mary nodded. "It would be if I finished ahead of you!"

"Your reading speed would have to improve," Jack said thoughtfully, smiling at the idea of Mary trying to beat him. "That was the main thing slowing you down."

"Well, what time did you get, Mr. President?"

"Four minutes thirty-four seconds," Jack told her. "When you read higher books, this is just a joke."

"I was a little afraid of making a mistake," Mary admitted. "That probably made me go a little slower than I wanted."

Jack shook his head. "Would you think twice about the answer of two plus two?"

Mary reddened, knowing that Jack was right. She wasn't going to let anything get her down, though. She had just smashed the goal Jack had set for her, even if he had finished in less than half the time.

I shouldn't let him set my standards, she reminded herself, I need to be more confident and destroy that test.

Suddenly she hopped off the tree branch, charging inside. "It's time for that next test to begin! I'm going to rip it to shreds!"

Jack jumped down, following after her, watching the flowing auburn hair that belonged to a girl of life with a laugh so filled with happiness that most people would give a good portion of their lives to taste.

"You guys having a meeting?" Conor asked soon after school was let out and students were streaming out across the front lawn.

"Don't you have to study?" Mary teased.

"No," Conor shook his head, reddening. "I was just worried about today because there were two tests in one day, but I'll be fine for tomorrow."

"I'm sorry," Jack said, "but you may need to build up your capacities a bit more."

Conor looked into Jack's eyes, and saw no malice, no worry, and no regret; just a plain look of honesty. "You're right," he agreed, finding it hard to justify his own worries face to face with a boy who would eat them for breakfast. "I'll work harder." He smiled just a little bit. "I may even do some spying myself."

"Have fun," Mary called, darting away with Jack. "What are we planning to do today?"

"First we've got to go read some real books to reset our brains," Jack mapped out, "and then we've got to return to the school by 4:30."

Mary looked at her partner quizzically. "For what reason?"

Jack stopped and turned to her, eyes radiating competence and action. "There's an emergency meeting going on, and something big is happening." His eyes twinkled, as if he viewed his next sentence as the greatest news he could possibly be delivering; which, after all, he did. "Our big case has finally arrived."

"Come on," Jack urged, "let's go."

Stealth training hadn't been part of their regimen, although Jack had certainly showed his prowess at it last mission by hiding in a trash can. Now they were scaling the edge of the building, checking for open side doors, knowing they couldn't just walk in the front door.

"Open sesame," Mary invoked, pushing open the back door to the gym, which unsurprisingly was not locked. She peeked in, and then the two of them quietly tiptoed into the empty room.

"Where do you think they are?" Mary whispered.

"Probably in the teacher's lounge," Jack guessed. "We've just got to hide out there to see what's going on."

"There could be someone right in the hallway," Jack cautioned once they got to the door. "If so, we've got to smoke 'em out."

"You mean throw something into the hallway?" Mary asked, thinking hard.

"Yes," Jack nodded approvingly. "Then, if they come, we'll just lock this door shut."

"We can't use a ball, though, because then they would come looking in here," Mary mused. "What about a pen?"

"No," Jack shook his head. "It's got to be something a little bigger." He walked across the gym and picked up a book that someone had evidently left there. "This should work."

Jack prepared to throw open the door, and Mary cautioned. "Make sure to keep it unlocked. That way we'll have a way to get back out."

Her team member nodded, twisted the lock, pushed the door open just a crack, and hurled the book right to the middle of the hallway. He and Mary put their eyes as close to the outside as they could without being seen, and moved into the hallway upon not hearing any reaction.

Big mistake.

To their left, right in the direction they needed to be going, walked an elderly teacher, Ms. Strepopolis, far enough away that she hadn't heard the noise or seen the book, but moving towards them at an alarming rate.

Mary tried to grab Jack's hand to pull them away somewhere to safety, but Jack shook her off and instead calmly made his way to a nearby water fountain.

"Hey Ms. S," he greeted her as they passed.

"Good to see you Jack," she reciprocated, somewhat absentmindedly, and continued her trek down the hall. Although she walked right in front of Mary she either didn't notice her or didn't bother to say hello.

"That was genius," Mary breathed to Jack, catching up.

Boys vs Girls

The four Hatford boys are excited when another family moves in because they hope they'll bring some new boys for them to play with, in order to replace the three boys who just moved out. Unfortunately, the Malloy's have three girls instead, and it soon turns into an all-out war!

It all starts when the girls catch the boys spying on them. One of them pretends to be dead and goes through a fake burial at sea. Does that ever scare the boys! They're furious when they find out she's still alive, and from then on they continually trade blow after blow.

The series spans twelve books in which the boys and girls will employ any level of sabotage and trickery to one up the other side. It's all very creative and we learn what's going on at the same time the characters do.

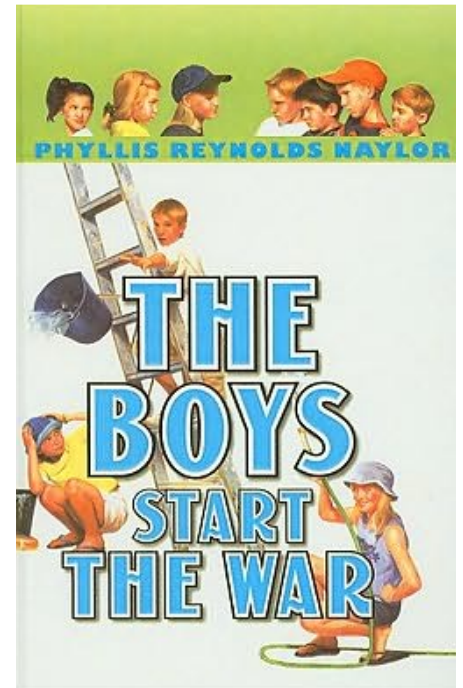
The parents are mostly not around and can't begin to comprehend the vicious battle going on, so the kids are left on their own to fight. The characters start out pretty generic because there are so many of them, but as the series goes on they each become funny and memorable in their own way.

I like the setting because it feels like it could happen today and yet has a lot of traditional values that make you think it was older. Some more fleshing out, however, might have made us feel closer to the action. Either way, I like that the author sticks mainly to the pranks the boys and girls play on each other, which is the really great thing about the series.

This series was very popular in the 1990s, when it was originally published, but I haven't heard about it much lately, which is surprising because it's so much fun. These are quick reads so they're good for younger children and older kids should order a whole bunch of them at once because you'll probably fly through them.

In the end, the series becomes less about who actually wins the war (there are so many blows back and forth it's impossible to say) and more about just having fun getting at each other and thinking up fun tricks. Either side could easily stop at any time but they don't want to because they're having so much fun fighting.

I wouldn't recommend trying any of the things the characters do in these books, but you'll certainly have fun reading about it. They're good books for writers to read because again it's just about kids being kids, and having a wonderfully entertaining time of it.



Nancy Burton:

Twenty-One Balloons

This book contains the kind of writing this magazine was founded on. A man named Professor Sherman, tired of being a teacher, decides to set off on a balloon ride for a whole year. He builds a massive balloon (the second biggest in the world) and sets off, ready to read and relax and have a wonderful time.

His balloon gets struck down, however, and he crash lands on the island of Krakatoa. It's a real volcanic island, but Professor Sherman is shocked to discover that there is a society of people living on Krakatoa. It turns out that the inhabitants of that island are rich, extremely rich, because the island has mines full of diamonds and more diamonds!

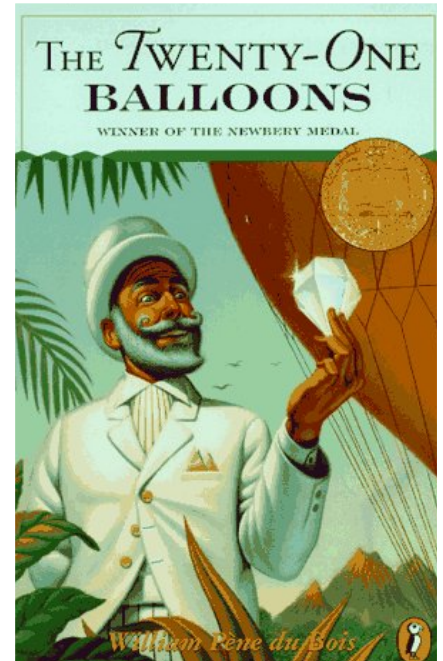
It all started when Mr. M discovered the island and its richness. He went back to his home in San Francisco and carefully selected nineteen families to join him in making a community there. Each family has a man, a woman, and two children, so there are eighty inhabitants of the island.

Of course they can't sell all their diamonds at once, because no longer would there be such a shortage and the price of diamonds would plummet. So they bring a few diamonds over each year, more than enough for them to be awash in wealth. Their economy is run by a restaurant system in which each family owns a restaurant that everyone eats at on rotating days.

Professor Sherman fits well into this society, even happily playing with the children, but it's still a volcanic island, and those can always make trouble.

Although this book was written in the 1940s, it's still relevant to read today, and is not overwhelmingly well known despite having won the coveted Newbery Medal. It's great inspiration for writers because the author literally builds a whole fun new world, which makes the book exciting despite having adult characters. I wish the main character of the story had been a kid who had somehow ended up on the island and survived (that would be really super!) but it's still an awesome and imaginative book.

Ballooning is probably foreign to a lot kids today, making the idea of floating around the world in one even more exciting. It's also great because it demonstrates another principle of writing: Try to make your stories possible, but improbable. The idea of a diamond island like this is very unlikely, but the fact that it can happen is what makes it so intriguing.



Age range: 7-12