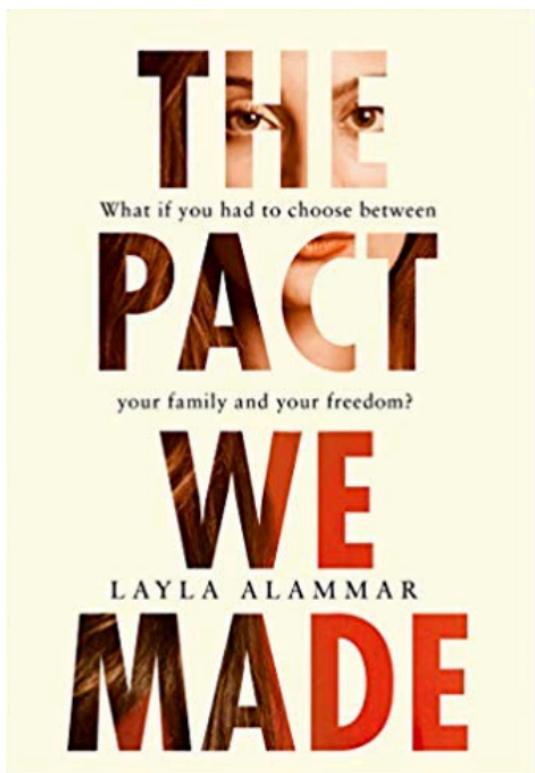


Melissa Edwards, Stonesong  
Foreign Rights Spring 2020  
Meller Agency

## Adult Fiction



Layla AlAmmar

THE PACT WE MADE

Publisher: Borough/ Harper UK (UK/BC)

Pub Date: March 7, 2019

Genre: Literary Fiction

Copy: **What if you had to choose between your family and your freedom?** 'How could I explain to her that nothing in my life felt real? That in a country like Kuwait, where everyone knew everything about each other, the most monumental thing to ever happen to me was buried and covered over? For the sake of my reputation, my future, my sister's and cousins; the family honor sat on my little shoulders, so no-one could ever know.' Dahlia has two lives. In one, she is a young woman with a good job, great friends and a busy social life. In the other, she is an unmarried daughter living at home, struggling with a burgeoning anxiety disorder and a deeply buried secret: a violent betrayal too shameful to speak of. With her thirtieth birthday fast-approaching, pressure from her mother to accept a marriage

proposal begins to strain the family. As her two lives start to collide and fracture, all Dahlia can think of is escape: something that seems impossible when she can't even leave the country without her father's consent. But what if Dahlia does have a choice? What if all she needs is the courage to make it? Set in contemporary Kuwait, *The Pact We Made* is a deeply affecting and timely debut about family, secrets and one woman's search for a different life.

### Praise and Publicity:

- We have **six amazing endorsements** including **Pandora Sykes, Hanan Al-Shaykh and Joanna Cannon**
- Layla will be interviewed on **TWO national radio arts programmes: BBC Radio 3's Free Thinking and BBC Radio 4's Open Book (in a one-to-one with Mariella Frostrup!)**
- And she will be at **Waterstones Tottenham Court Road** on 8<sup>th</sup> March, in conversation with **Yara Rodrigues Fowler and Sarah Shaffi**, to mark International Women's Day
- Interviews on The Boundless and the New Arab
- Category Spotlight on NetGalley
- Speaking at Edinburgh Book Festival
- Contributing to an article in Stylist about the book that made her want to be a writer

- Glowing review on the culture podcast The High Low: **Pandora Sykes** called it a 'Brilliant book about the pressures of being a 30 year old unmarried woman in Kuwait - the struggle for modernity amidst patriarchal tradition - and the cultural failure to acknowledge trauma. What a debut.' She also shared her review with her 35k twitter followers.
- "Billed as a Kuwaiti #MeToo novel, this fascinating debut is a lot more nuanced and understanding of contemporary Arab life than that might suggest. Dahlia's 30th birthday is fast approaching but she, much to her parents' concern, is still unmarried and living at home, beset by anxiety attacks. She has a good job and supportive friends, but dreams of escape - a bit difficult when she can't leave the country without her father's consent. **The ending might surprise western readers, but it celebrates the choices Dahlia can and does make."**

- **The Guardian**

Layla AlAmmar

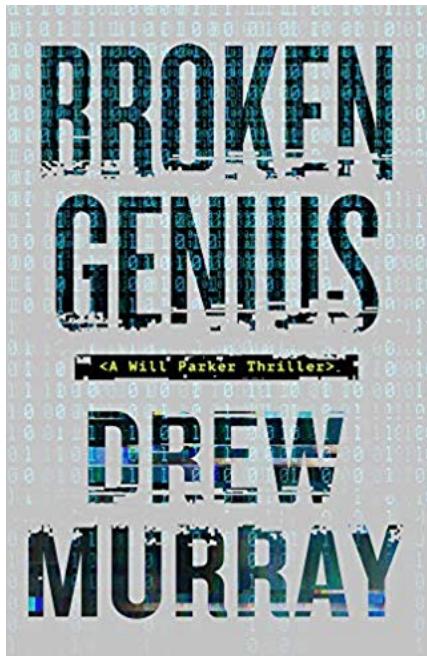
SILENCE IS A SENSE

Publisher: Algonquin (NA), Borough/ Harper UK (UK/BC)

Pub Date: Spring 2021

Genre: Literary Fiction

Pitch: SILENCE IS A SENSE by Layla AlAmmar is a lyrical and overwhelming piece of literary fiction depicting a young woman's experience living in the UK, after a devastating ordeal traveling across the world as a Syrian refugee. Traumatized into muteness, this young woman stares out her window into her apartment complex, seeing everything, noting everything-- the couples, the love, the fighting, the families, the sex, the drama. Even though she attempts to be solely an outsider, a voyeur, she gets sucked into their stories and becomes an active, albeit silent, part of her new community. At the same time, she shares her political and social frustrations in an OpEd column in a British newspaper under the pseudonym The Voiceless. This woman is in purgatory between two worlds: the life of her past where she endured immeasurable pain and loss and one in which she's not sure she wants to belong, as it would mean turning her back on her own history. This is a book that will hurt so good, as you fall into Layla's elegant mix of poetry and prose. Like BEHOLD THE DREAMERS and THERE THERE-- with a dash of Rear Window, it features a voice that has been silent too long.



Andrew Murray

BROKEN GENIUS

Publisher: Oceanview (World English)

Rights Sold: Czech (Euromedia), German (Blanvalet)

Pub Date: June 2020

Genre: Tech thriller

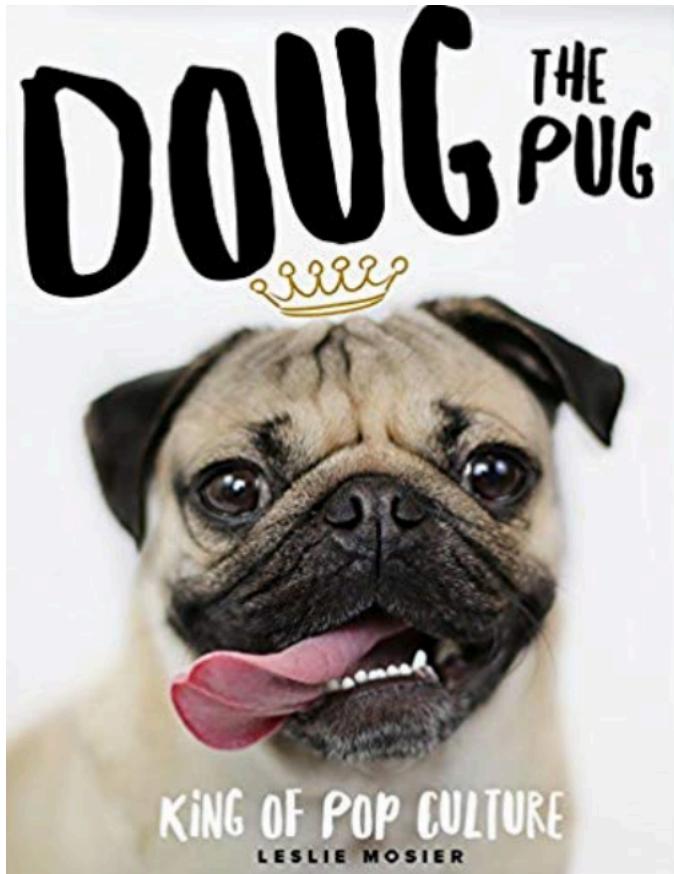
"Will Parker, a genius with considerable baggage and even more wealth, works for the FBI. There's a lot of excitement in this debut novel, and you'll be running along with Will the whole way." —Charlaine Harris, international best-selling author of the *Sookie Stackhouse* series

"A tech thriller with brains and heart. Memorable characters and sharply written action scenes make this excellent debut a standout." — **Kelley Armstrong**, *New York Times* best-selling author

**Copy:** In 2011, Will Parker, the young prodigy CEO of a big tech company, makes a coding mistake that costs a college student her life. To assuage his guilt, Will pursues a career in the FBI Cyber Division. Now, Special Agent Will Parker is called to investigate a murder scene at a Comic Con event in the Midwest, where the victim has ties to a radioactive quantum computer that Will was working on before he left his gig as CEO. Working with smart local homicide detective Dana Lopez and FBI stuffed-shirt Thomas Decker, Will discovers the victim was holding an auction for the computer on the Dark Web—and the bidding is still live. With bidders including a legendary Chinese hacker, Russian criminals sent by the Kremlin, and a corporate executive desperate to escape a scandal, Will once again finds a life in his hands when the victim's daughter is taken hostage. A trail of blood and high-tech breadcrumbs leads Will deeper into mystery, danger, and a race against time to keep unlimited power out of the wrong hands.

#### **Adult Non- Fiction**

Leslie Mosier



Doug The Pug: King of Pop Culture  
Publisher: St. Martin's (NA)—NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER!

Pub Date: November 2016

Genre: Pop Culture NF

Rights Sold: UK, Italy

Copy: **A New York Times Bestseller**

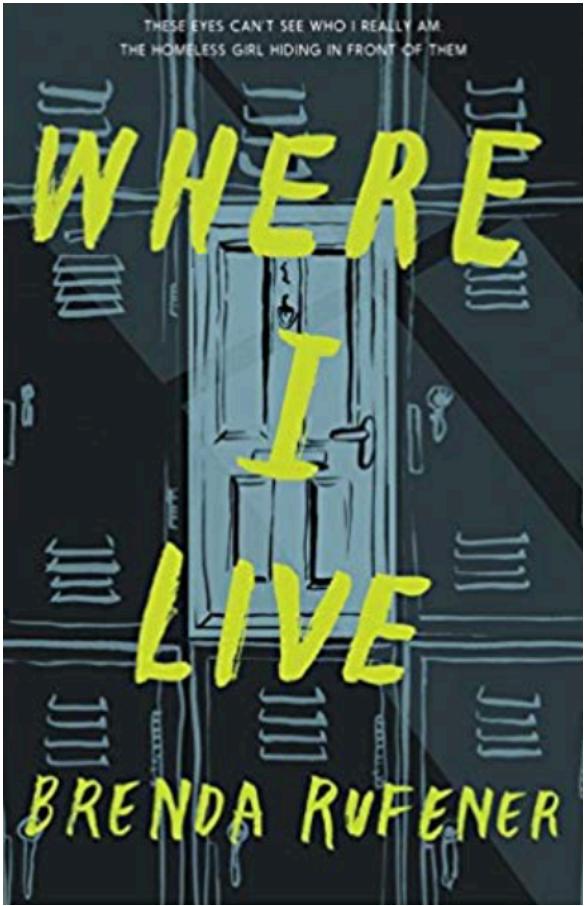
Doug the Pug is the king of pop culture. More than seven million adoring fans on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat can't get enough of him. Doug spreads love everywhere he goes, and now with his literary debut, he's coming to living rooms around the world.

It's hard to find a more well-connected pup than Doug. He's homies with the hottest stars out there: Justin Bieber, Steven Tyler, Ed Sheeran, John Legend, and Chrissy Teigen, to name just a few. Did you catch him in Fall Out Boy's latest music video? Doug can ball with the best of them. He's a rising star and everyone's favorite squishy face. Doug has made

appearances at music festivals including Lollapalooza and the Billboard Hot 100 Music Fest, but he doesn't let fame go to his head. Doug is a humble pug, but the people have asked for more, so he's obliged with this awesome New York Times bestselling collection of photos. Doug is a fashion icon, a culinary gourmand, a music enthusiast, and an all-around happenin' guy. This book is just a sneak peek at some of his greatest adventures so far. From his furry heart to yours, enjoy!

#### **Young Adult Fiction and Non-Fiction**

Brenda Rufener



#### WHERE I LIVE

Publisher: HarperTeen

Pub Date: 2/2018

Genre: Contemporary YA

Rights Sold: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia

Copy: Included on Bustle's list of the "27 Most Anticipated YA Contemporary Books Hitting Shelves in 2018"!

"Fans of Jennifer Niven and Nicola Yoon will enjoy this realistic debut novel, which brings to light heavy topics of homelessness and abuse."

—School Library Journal

"Where I Live is hard-hitting and real and filled with hope. It makes you want to find your voice, find your people, and tell your story." —Jennifer Niven, New York Times bestselling author of All the Bright Places and Holding Up the Universe

From debut author Brenda Rufener comes a heart-wrenching and evocative story perfect for fans of Thirteen Reasons Why, Girl in Pieces, and All the Bright Places. Linden Rose has a big secret—she is homeless and living in the halls of her small-town high school. Her position as school blog editor, her best friends, Ham and

Seung, and the promise of a future far away are what keep Linden under the radar and moving forward. But when cool-girl Bea comes to school with a bloody lip, the damage hits too close to home. Linden begins looking at Bea's life, and soon her investigation prompts people to pay more attention. And attention is the last thing she needs. Linden knows the only way to put a stop to the violence is to tell Bea's story and come to terms with her own painful past. Even if that means breaking her rules for survival and jeopardizing the secrets she's worked so hard to keep.

#### Praise:

"A touching and timely look at a girl on the brink of disappearing. Rufener writes compassionately about homelessness, teen dating abuse, and the search for home."

--Kathleen Glasgow, New York Times bestselling author of Girl in Pieces

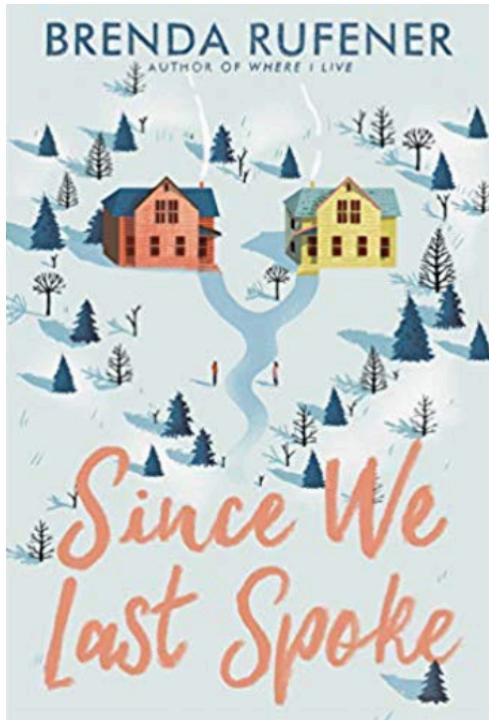
"A powerful, stirring debut, WHERE I LIVE takes us on a journey into a hidden world that exists all around us—exploring homelessness, poverty, love, and grief with insight, sensitivity, and most of all, hope."

— Amber Smith, New York Times bestselling author of The Way I Used to Be

Where I Live is hard-hitting and real and filled with hope. It makes you want to find your voice, find your people, and tell your story.

— Jennifer Niven, NY Times bestselling author of All the Bright Places and Holding Up the Universe

Brenda Rufener



SINCE WE LAST SPOKE

Publisher: HarperTeen

Pub Date: April 2, 2019

Rights Sold: Germany

Copy: Perfect for fans of Jennifer Niven and Nicola Yoon, this heartbreakingly beautiful and uplifting novel captures the ups and downs of teen love in the face of unimaginable grief and the rocky journey to healing, peace, and forgiveness. From breakout author Brenda Rufener (*Where I Live*). When Aggi Frank and Max Granger finally admitted their feelings for each other last December, it felt like love was beautiful and endless . . . until it wasn't.

A fatal car accident involving their older siblings throws their lives into sudden chaos. And with a restraining order now in place between the two bitter households, Aggi and Max's love runs cold. Being together again seems like a distant fantasy, even though they share the same driveway. Still, Plum Lake is a small town, and

staying apart can't last forever. Aggi and Max eventually reunite at a lake-house party and break the ice after a year of silence.

But just as they begin to rebuild their relationship, the unthinkable happens, leading them to confront each other and their families in the hope of mending the broken pieces.

Praise: "A compelling story about grief told through the voices of two expertly drawn protagonists." **Kirkus Reviews**

"Rufener handles topics such as love, loss, and grief with a deft and steady hand, intermingling moments of humor and warmth as two families learn to navigate the tragedy that's intertwined them forever."

— Miranda Asebedo, author of *The Deepest Roots*

Christine Suggs, author/illustrator

AY MIJA (not final) (plus 1 additional title)

Publisher: S&S BFYR (North American)

Pub Date: June 2022

Genre: YA Graphic Memoir

Pitch: Perfect for fans of THIS ONE SUMMER and HONOR GIRL, this graphic memoir stirs up feelings about home, family, and self, all depicted with humor and a self-deprecation that will resonate with teens. High school Christine is off to spend two weeks with her family in Mexico—before her mom joins her for the second half of the vacation. Christine can

understand enough Spanish, but speak it on her own to her grandparents and aunt? It's going to be a long trip. Along the way, Christine learns family secrets, finds her voice, connects with a country her aunt in America can no longer go home to, and questions her place in the world. Will her traditional Catholic family accept her if she is bisexual, if she pursues a career as an artist? AY, MIJA is a deep dive into one girl's state of mind as she questions her own multi-faceted identity.

Status: script being finished by summer 2020, then Christine will work on art

### **Middle Grade Fiction + Non-Fiction**

Leslie Mosier

I AM DOUG THE PUG

Publisher: Scholastic (NA, French in Canada, Spanish in US)

Pub Date: Fall 2019

Genre: Activity Book

**Copy: Say hello to Doug the Pug, the most famous pup on your feed! This super cute guide will walk you through the daily life of this awesome celeb canine.** Try not to melt as you flip through adorable photos of Doug modeling costumes, chowing down on treats, and making celeb appearances. Complete fun activities and learn all about how Doug came to be the superstar he is today.

Leslie Mosier

DOUG THE PUG: FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Publisher: Scholastic (NA, French in Canada, Spanish in US)

Pub Date: January 2020

Genre: MG

**Copy: Who is Doug the Pug? Just the most beloved dog on the Internet! Now you can dig in with Doug and discover all his favorite foods, plus much more!** Dig in with Doug! Stuff yourself full of Doug's favorite phrases, memes, and of course food! Each page will have your mouth watering for more of Doug's clever commentary on the world of pizza, doughnuts, and ice cream around him!

Leslie Mosier

DOUG THE PUG: DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Pub Date: Fall 2020

Genre: MG

Julia Nobel



THE MYSTERY OF BLACK HOLLOW LANE and THE SECRET OF WHITE STONE GATE

Publisher: Sourcebooks

Pub Date: March 5, 2019 for BHL and March 3, 2020 for WSG

Genre: MG Mystery

Rights sold: Russian (Eksmo, both titles), Italian (BHL, Edizioni EL), Farsi (BHL, Porteghal)

Copy for BHL: **The first in an exciting new series, this suspenseful debut brings readers on a journey filled with secrets, mystery, and unforgettable characters.** With a dad who

disappeared years ago and a mother who's a bit too busy to parent, Emmy is shipped off to Wellsworth, a prestigious boarding school in England, where she's sure she won't fit in. But then she finds a box of mysterious medallions in the attic of her home—medallions that belonged to her father. Her father who may have gone to Wellsworth. When she arrives at school, she finds the strange symbols from the medallions etched into walls and books, which leads Emmy and her new friends, Jack and Lola, to Wellsworth's secret society: The Order of Black Hollow Lane. Emmy can't help but think that the society had something to do with her dad's disappearance, and that there may be more than just dark secrets in the halls of Wellsworth...

Praise: Junior Library Guild Selection, Silver Birch Fiction Award Nominee 2020, Texas Lone Star 2020 List

**"A fast-paced mystery with lots of humor, adventure, and surprising twists! This book has it all: mysterious artifacts, hidden doors, snotty roommates, family secrets, and a wonderful old boarding school with secrets of its own. I absolutely loved it!"**

- Jessica Day George, New York Times bestselling author of Tuesdays at the Castle and Dragon Slippers

"While there is an abundance of young adult novels that feature distant parents and English boarding school settings, **The Mystery of Black Hollow Lane is not formulaic or tired.** The **characters are fresh and appealing,** and the mediaeval history of England and its churches is incorporated into the plot in an interesting way that leaves the reader intrigued. **The Mystery of Black Hollow Lane is suspenseful and atmospherically creepy full of cryptic notes, secret doors, and suspicious characters.** This novel is an excellent choice for fans of suspenseful mysteries and will leave readers waiting impatiently for the sequels. Highly Recommended."

--Canadian Review of Materials

**"A page-turning mystery ripe with plot twists, crackling humor, and a plucky heroine. Kids will love Emmy and beg for more."**

- Michael Buckley, New York Times bestselling author of The Sisters Grim and NERDS

"Nobel creates a number of **engaging characters**, as well as several suspicious ones, and sets the story in motion, building tension and **surprising readers from time to time as the plot twists unexpectedly** and individuals reveal themselves more fully. Written in third person from Emmy's point of view, **the narrative moves quickly toward a satisfying conclusion, but some mysteries remain unsolved.** A promising first novel that leaves the door open for sequels."

--Booklist

**"Good choice for middle-schoolers who like mysteries with courageous able heroines."**

--Youth Services Book Review

**"The book is a real page-turner that would entertain any reader. The only complaint I have is that the book leaves you wanting more."**

--The Haunted Wordsmith Book Reviews

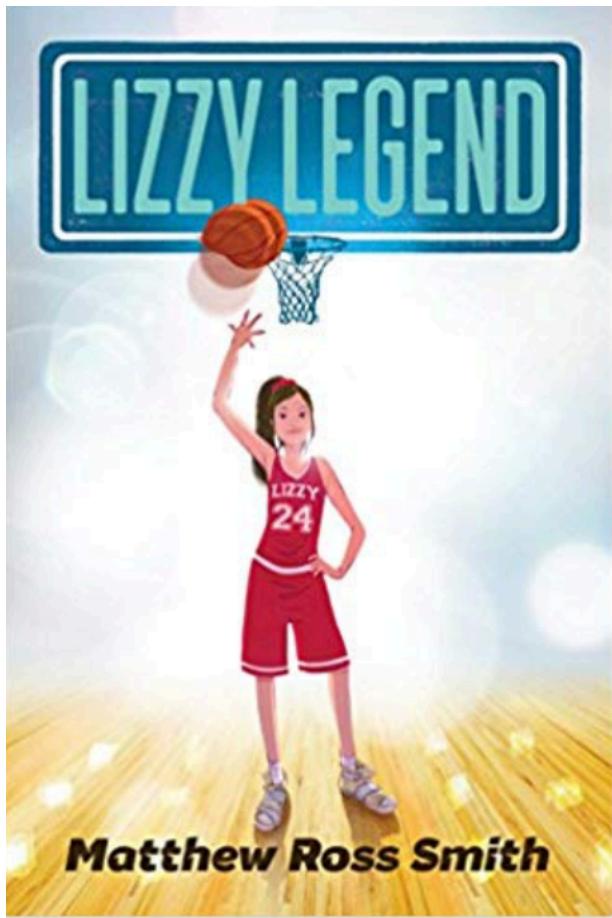
**"Overall, this is an intriguing Middle School mystery with some darker elements but ultimately, it's a story about friendship and finding a place where you belong."**

--The Baking Bookworm

**"If you're looking for an exciting and atmospheric story with believable pre-teen characters, this is definitely a good pick.** It publishes in March 2019, so get it on those wishlists..."

--A Cat, A Book and a Cup of Tea

Matthew Smith



#### LIZZY LEGEND

Publisher: Aladdin/ S&S (World English)

Pub Date: January 7, 2019

Genre: MG Contemporary Fiction

**Copy:** A basketball-loving girl makes a wish to never miss a basket in this charming middle grade novel that pushes girl power to the max! Lizzy Trudeau loves basketball. She doesn't have much by way of money, but she has access to the community court, a worn ball named Ginger, and she practices constantly. After fighting to join the boy's team at her school, Lizzy is finally given the opportunity to show off her hard-earned skills. When she answers what she believes is another bill collecting phone call, Lizzy receives a magical wish: the ability to sink every shot. Pure Swish. Now eviscerating the competition in the boy's league is small potatoes—she has the skills to dominate in the NBA. With the help of her BFF Toby and some viral video action, Lizzy goes all the way to the Philadelphia Bells' starting lineup, making history and taking names. Then, just as she's about to go face to face with her

hero, the best player on the planet, things begin to fall apart. But Lizzy isn't a quitter and she'll play her hardest for the love of the game.

Praise: Junior Library Guild Selection

"The best sports book I've read in years. A must-read for every young athlete."

-Mimi Riley, Director of Women's Basketball Operations, Villanova University

Eighth-grader Lizzy Trudeau falls asleep beneath a poster of LeBron James every night, and she never dreamed in a million years that she'd ever be able to actually play against him. But when a strange phone call prompts her to make a wish, she's suddenly trading the blacktop near her home for the bright lights of a real basketball arena. She can't miss a single shot—not even if she tries. **Debut author Smith firmly roots this story of wish fulfillment in the contemporary basketball world, with all of the fast-paced excitement and chance for individual glory.**

Though tales of fame and fortune all too often pit BFFs against each other, Lizzy's best bud Toby is instead along for the ride, nearly stealing every scene he's in with his comic banter.

**Documentary-style cutaways to interviews with key players, along with short chapters and a balance of well-paced action and heart, give this sports story wide appeal. Hand to the kids who can't stop arguing over Steph versus LeBron.** — Booklist

Lizzy Trudeau is the best basketball player in middle school. Unfortunately, the boys' coach denies her the chance to play with the boys because coed teams are against the rules. Lizzy and her father live under a mountain of debt and unpaid bills, but she practices on the trash-strewn court near their home every chance she gets. Collections agents call Lizzy daily (they don't care that she's only 13), but one odd robocall changes her life: "You have been pre-selected for one free wish." Rather than hang up, Lizzy blurts out her secret fantasy: never to miss another basketball shot forever. After that, every shot is a "pure swish"-made without touching the net—even from 30 feet with her back turned. Her best friend, Toby, an enterprising "Buddha-shaped black boy," fast-talks their way into the Mack Center, home of the Philadelphia Bells, where Lizzy shows off her new skills for the coach. Before she knows it, she signs a 10-day contract (she is only 13) and becomes Lizzy Legend. The narrative, broken into four "Quarters," takes place in the not-too-distant past, with Lizzy narrating engagingly from the present. **It's ludicrous-and a whole lot of fun, with memorable secondary characters filling out the cast.**

— Kirkus

Basketball is all Lizzy Trudeau lives for, and after practicing her butt off in dawn workouts at the shabby neighborhood court, she's understandably miffed when the Ardwyn Middle School coach lets her try out for the boys' team but then redirects her to the girls' team even though she outshines the guys. However, Fate, in the guise of a mystery robocall offering her one wish, has other plans, so when Lizzy wishes to sink every basket for the rest of her life, it's done. With the help of her buddy, Toby, she skips the middle-school nonsense altogether and heads straight to the pros, landing a spot on the Philadelphia Bells. Tearing up the court, grabbing the media spotlight, inspiring hordes of little girls with hoop dreams—it's all too good to be true and readers will understandably suspect there's a bad fall and a life lesson just around the corner. Fortunately, while Lizzy's magic is undone by a text mishap (the "moral" perhaps is not to be hasty with interactive screens), her future, happily, is not. **The plot is certainly infused with silliness and sugar, but the banter is fast and sassy, and chapter inserts in which myriad voices breathlessly create her legend are funny and believable. This sports fantasy will give middle-graders something to dream about while waiting for the cell to ping.**

- Bulletin

Gr 4-6—Lizzy's worked harder than anyone else at being the best basketball player for most of her 13 years, spending hours each day practicing on the rundown court outside her apartment. All the work pays off when Lizzy makes it onto her school's eighth-grade boys basketball team and quickly proves herself to be the MVP. Meanwhile, she is also dealing with bill collectors calling constantly to get a hold of her father. At first, upon receiving a strange call from a robot, Lizzy thinks it's someone else looking for her dad, but when the robot asks her what her wish is, she blurts the first thing she can think of: to never miss another basketball shot. When the fantastical wish actually comes true, her life is shot into a completely new orbit, she's winning games, and she ultimately gets recruited for an NBA team! The story is complete fantasy and even a bit goofball, but Lizzy is a likable character. She continually works hard and stays focused on her goals, even when things get difficult. **VERDICT An entertaining story with a positive message about girls in sports.**—Terry Ann Lawler, Burton Barr Library, Phoenix

- School Library Journal

This book introduces readers to basketball superstar Lizzy Trudeau, her best friend Toby, and Lizzy's father. Lizzy is a dedicated basketball player, up at sunrise to practice her skills, and not caring about the rundown apartment she and her dad live in. All of that changes when Lizzy answers a phone call not from a collection agency, but from a wish-granting agency! All of a sudden, Lizzy finds herself being asked to play for NBA teams, that she is all over the internet, and that life is a whirlwind. Yet, is everything what it seems or is it all going to fall apart in front of her? This is a heartwarming book that shows readers more than one side of basketball.

**Readers will fall in love with Lizzy's sidekick/best friend Toby and his attempts to be her "agent." A great addition to any middle school sports section!** Mary Hyson, Media Specialist, Lehigh Valley Charter Academy, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

- School Library Connection

Matthew Smith

THE MILLION DOLLAR RACE

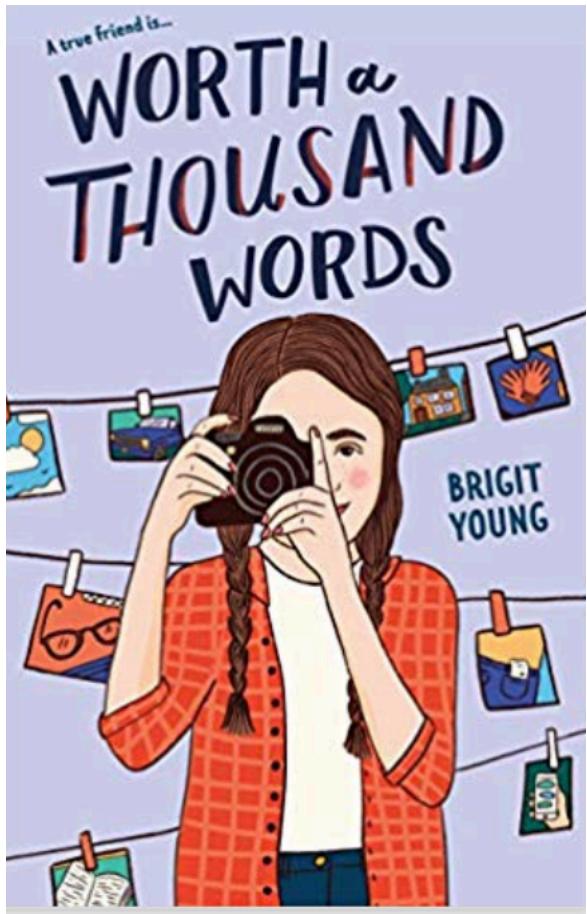
Publisher: Aladdin (World English)

Pub Date: January 2021

Genre: MG Contemporary

Copy: **A kid from an unconventional family has to find an unusual path to competing in an international track contest in this quick-paced, heartfelt, and occasionally zany novel from *Lizzy Legend* author Matthew Ross Smith—perfect for fans of Louis Sachar's humor and Jason Reynolds's Track series.** Grant Falloon has always felt out of place. Between biking instead of driving, never buying anything name-brand, and his Dad's community art projects, his family has always done things differently than everyone else. The only times Grant feels normal are when he's with his best friend, Jason Fa'atasi, and when he's running. Because Grant isn't just good at track; he's close to breaking the world-record 100-meter time for his age group. When a video of Grant falling on his face before the finish line goes viral, his world of running comes crashing down. So when the mega-rich Babblemoney sneaker company announces an international racing competition, it's not just a chance to win a million dollars and a future as a track star—it's a chance at redemption. But winning gold means knocking Jason out of the competition. And as unexpected hurdles arise, Grant will have to ask not only if winning is possible, but what he's willing to sacrifice for it.

Brigit Young



## WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Publisher: Roaring Brook (World English)

Pub Date: 8/2018

Genre: MG Contemporary

Rights Sold: Audio, Germany, Italy (bestseller!!)

Copy: Whether it's earrings, homework, or love notes, Tillie "Lost and Found" Green and her camera can find any lost thing—until a search for a missing person forces her to step out from behind the lens. Ever since a car accident left Tillie Green with lasting painful injuries, she's hidden behind her camera. She watches her family and classmates through the lens, tracking down misplaced items and spotting the small details that tell a much bigger story than people usually see. But she isn't prepared for class clown Jake Hausmann's request: to find his father. In a matter of days, Tillie goes from silent observer to one half of a detective duo, searching for clues to the mystery of Jake's dad's disappearance. When the truth isn't what Jake wants it to be, and the photographs start exposing people's secrets, Tillie has to decide what—and who—is truly important to her.

### Praise: Junior Library Guild Selection

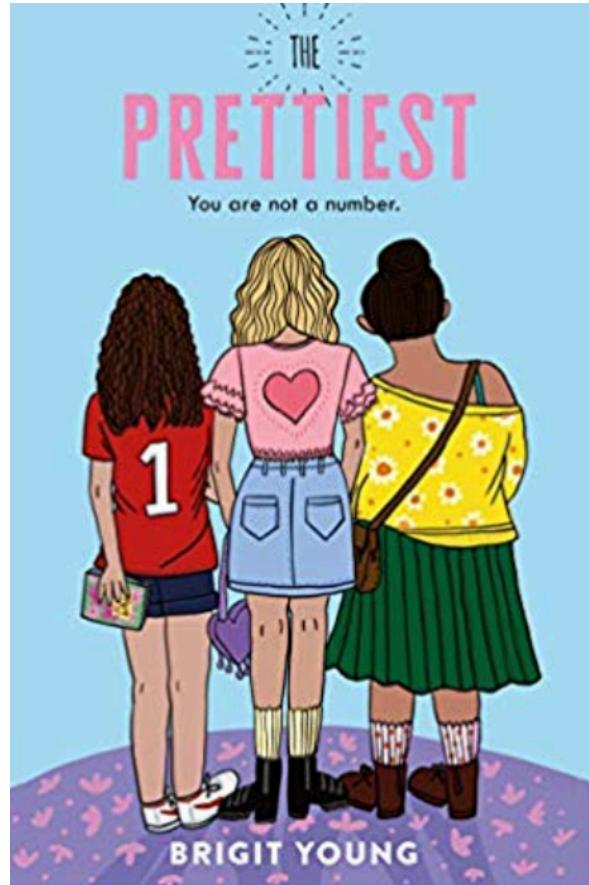
Tillie Green has isolated herself from her peers ever since a car accident in fourth grade incapacitated her for months and left her with a pronounced and painful limp that has made her an object of pity and, occasionally, ridicule. Now in seventh grade and a talented photographer, Tillie keeps the lens of her camera between her and her schoolmates, and although she has no friends, she does have an identity. She acts as the school's de facto "Lost and Found," scrutinizing the myriad photos she takes throughout the day in order to locate urgent necessities her classmates have mislaid—permission slips, homework, soccer cleats. One day popular, self-confident Jake asks for her help in solving a larger mystery: his beloved father's disappearance. From here Young rolls out a suspenseful mystery/ detective story. Why does a mysterious blue Chevy keep following Jake? Why are Jake's father's coworkers clearly lying about his whereabouts? **But more than that: the novel soon deepens into a nuanced coming-of-age story, with Tillie and Jake becoming true friends and Tillie taking physical and emotional risks that begin to free her from her limiting self-image. (And the solution to the mystery, appropriately, turns out to be equally nuanced, and very human).** Although the plot's climax is a bit over-the-top, readers by that point will be completely invested in ultra-sympathetic Tillie's life and progress. **Authentic middle-school dialogue, humor, and social dynamics and believable secondary characters (Tillie's mother is the quintessential wonderfully supportive but also overly intrusive parent) add to this affecting debut novel's appeal.**

– Horn Book

Four years ago, Tillie was in a car accident that damaged her hip and spine, leaving her in nearly constant pain and with a leg that doesn't "work properly." Ever since, Tillie has retreated behind her camera, viewing the world at a distance, until her pictures help a classmate find a missing earring and earn her the affectionate nickname "Lost and Found." Now Tillie is in demand as a detective, tracking down lost items—though not lost people, as she clarifies to Jake, a classmate whose dad has gone missing. But Jake is persistent, and soon the pair visits his father's office and last whereabouts. All the while, Jake insists that his dad is in danger, often in scenarios taken from his favorite old movies. Meanwhile, Tillie's relationship with her own father is fraught: he was driving the car when she was injured and has been distant ever since. Working with Jake challenges Tillie to step out from behind her camera and into the world, and Young handles both her injury and its aftermath with realism and sensitivity. The mystery of Jake's dad will keep readers turning pages in this touching debut coming-of-age novel. Ages 8–12. (Aug.)

-- PW

Brigit Young



#### THE PRETTIEST

Publisher: Roaring Brook (World English)

Pub Date: April 14, 2020

Genre: MG Contemporary

Rights Sold: Audio (Recorded Books), Japanese (Hopl Shuppan)

Pitch: Poetic and dreamy Eve is happy hanging out with Nessa, her dramatic best friend, and flying under the radar. Then a list of the top 50 prettiest girls in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade comes is published online and she's somehow on top. Sophie, the queen bee of their class, is #2 and can't understand why—especially since she's constantly trying to live up to expectations of perfection. Nessa doesn't make the list at all. Though the list threatens to drag the girls into a massive fight, the three join up to get to the bottom of who wrote this list, since it's really not OK. This is a story about appearance and beauty and what it means to be comfortable in your own skin.

Praise: Selected for B&N YOUNG READER NEW RELEASE Theme Tower for three weeks around publication

I loved this true and tender story about young girls finding their voices and finding true friendship with each other, no matter what barriers school and society tries to put up to block

their way. Brigit Young has crafted a book with so much heart and with well-crafted characters that feel so real and relevant. This is an important book that isn't afraid of tackling tough problems. I absolutely loved it!

- Jennifer Mathieu, author of MOXIE

I cheered for these three 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls as they learned that nobody is just one thing. Standing up for yourself and others can be hard, but with friends at your side, it can be done. An empowering read!

-- Debbi Michiko Florence

Three eighth-graders manage the fallout after someone publishes a ranked list of the prettiest girls in their class. Being ranked No. 1 throws young poet Eve Hoffman's life into chaos. A second-place ranking knocks Sophie Kane for a loop, too; she's desperate never to be seen as "less than" or "white trash" like her single mom. Nessa Flores-Brady never expected to make the list (not because she's Latina, but because she's fat), and she's determined not to let it affect her. Still, the rankings put Eve and Nessa's best friendship at risk, threaten Sophie's status as the most popular, and galvanize the eighth grade into targeted bullying. The rude, disgusting, and occasionally anti-Semitic messages that flood Eve's phone are all too familiar for anyone who's attended a majority-white middle-class American school—even their principal, an Asian American woman, recalls a time a boy snapped her bra so hard she bled, and no adults did anything. To the girls' credit, they communicate about the effects of normative beauty standards and band together against the people (mostly boys) who enforce them, but of course the perpetrator isn't whom they think. Eve's older brother, Abe, and classmate Winston (who seems to be white) offer windows into the pressures of toxic masculinity. Endearingly nerdy references permeate the narrative. Their school is a diverse one, with difference mostly conveyed through naming convention. **A sensitive story about sexual harassment and bullying, with a feel-good ending.** (Fiction. 8-12)

-- Kirkus