

## ***BETWEEN FENCES***

### **Books for Young Adults**

**Cruz, Maria Colleen. *Border Crossing: A Novel*. Pinata Books, 2003.**

**Reading Level: Ages 9-12**

When 12-year-old Cesi Alvarez overhears her grandmother accusing her father of being ashamed of his heritage, Cesi leaves home and travels to Mexico on her own. Along the way, she learns about the prejudice her parents and grandparents have had to face.

**Desimone, Shelly. *Paulo's Wall*. Perfection Learning, 2002.**

**Reading Level: Ages 9-12**

In this novel, gang members try to claim Paulo's street and his wall, but when Paulo fights back with a paint can, the territorial dispute escalates.

**Frost, Robert. *You Come Too: Favorite Poems for Readers of All Ages*. Owllet Paperbacks, 2002.**

**Reading Level: Ages 9 and older**

In this collection, easy-to-read Frost poems are compiled for intermediate readers. A forward by Noel Perrin introduces first-time readers to the poet's life and work. The collection includes the poem "Mending Wall," among others devoted to the observation of nature.

**Hermes, Patricia. *Our Strange New Land: Elizabeth's Jamestown Colony Diary*. Scholastic, 2002.**

**Reading Level: Ages 9-12**

*Elizabeth's Jamestown Colony Diary* from Scholastic's *My America* series offers a firsthand impression of the settling of Jamestown. Elizabeth's diaries continue in two additional books: *The Starving Time* (Scholastic, 2001) and *Season of Promise* (Scholastic, 2002).

**Krisher, Trudy. *Spite Fences*. Laure Leaf, 1996.**

**Reading Level: Ages 12 and older**

A realistic novel set in 1960s Georgia, *Spite Fences* is the coming of age story of a thirteen-year-old girl who struggles with the truth in a town divided by race, subdivided by class, and governed by an inviolable social code.

**Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Little, Brown and Company, 1988.**

**Reading Level: Ages 12 and older**

This Pulitzer Prize winning novel is told from the point of view of eight-year-old Scout Finch whose father, attorney Atticus Finch, defends a black man wrongfully accused of raping a white woman. As the trial progresses, Scout struggles to understand the absurdity of adult behavior guided by prejudice. Boundaries between the races in the era of Jim Crow as well as public and private spaces and points of view are examined. In the novel's most substantial subplot, Scout, her brother Jem, and their friend Dill make a game of trying to get a glimpse of a local recluse named Boo Radley. They dare each other to cross the fence into his yard and repeatedly trespass on his property. When Boo finally does come out, he is not the boogey man the children expected. Since its original publication in 1960, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been a perennial favorite with adults as well as younger readers.

**Levine, Ellen. *A Fence Away from Freedom: Japanese Americans and World War II*. Putnam Publishing Group, 1995.**

**Reading Level: Ages 12 and older**

This book is based on the oral histories of Japanese Americans who were children during World War II when thousands of innocent Japanese Americans were forced to leave their homes and live in internment camps, an excellent introduction to this episode in American history.

**MacLachlan, Patricia. *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. Harper Trophy, 2004.**

**Reading Level: Ages 9-12**

Winner of the Newberry Medal in 1986 and numerous other awards, MacLachlan's novel is about a Maine schoolteacher who travels to the Kansas prairie to become the wife of a widowed homesteader with two young children. Other books by MacLachlan in the *Sarah, Plain and Tall* series: *Skylark* (Harper Trophy, 1997) and *Caleb's Story* (Harper Trophy, 2002).

**Neufeld, John. *Gaps in Stone Walls*. Bt. Bound, 1999.**

**Reading Level: Ages 9-12**

Set in a small community in Martha's Vineyard in 1880, this is the story of a twelve-year-old deaf girl who struggles to clear her name after being accused of murder. Realistic descriptions of New England's rock-walled countryside highlight this fast-paced crime drama and help to create a vivid sense of history and place.

**Patneau, David. *Thin Wood Walls*. Houghton Mifflin, forthcoming in 2004.**

**Reading Level: Ages 10-14**

When a Japanese American boy named Joe Hanada is forced to leave his home near Seattle and move with other Japanese Americans to an internment camp, he turns to his journal to record his feelings and his struggle to survive.

**Purcell, Martha and Jason Roe. *Barbed Wires of Hate*. Perfection Learning, 2002.**

**Reading Level: Ages 9-12**

This is the story of a Japanese American boy, Hiroshi, and his family who are forced by the U.S. Government to leave their home in California and live in a detention camp with other Japanese Americans during World War II.

**Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan. *The Yearling*. Scribner, 2002.**

**Reading Level: Ages 12 and older**

Originally published in 1938, this Pulitzer Prize winning novel is about a boy's coming of age on a farm in the Florida wilderness. The struggle between man and nature is heightened when Jodie Baxter adopts a fawn as a pet. As the young deer grows, it becomes a threat to the family's livelihood since it cannot be kept from eating the crops. No matter how high or how well made the fence, the pet deer cannot be contained or controlled, and Jody is forced to drive the animal away. This American classic is equally appealing to adults as it is to young readers.

**Stanley, Jerry. *I Am an American: A True Story of Japanese Internment*. Crown Books for Young Readers, 1996.**

**Reading Level: Ages 9-12**

An American Library Association Notable Children's Book and a Horn Book Fanfare Honor Book, *I Am an American* introduces readers to the history of Japanese internment camps. Stanley uses the experiences of a Japanese American teenager, Shi Nomura, to describe the camps and place them in a larger historical and social context.

**Thorson, Kristine, Gustav Moore and Robert M. Thorson. *Stone Wall Secrets*. Tilbury House Publishers, 2001.**

**Reading Level: Ages 9-12**

Adam's grandfather receives a letter from a stonemason who wants to buy the rocks that make up the walls around his New England farm. As his grandfather considers the offer, he and Adam walk the property and talk about how the stones are part of the history of the place and their family.

**Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Gramercy Books, 2002.**

**Reading Level: Ages 12 and older**

From the Illustrated Library for Children, this classic nineteenth-century novel is the author's first book about the childhood escapades of Tom Sawyer and his friend Huckleberry Finn. The episode in which Tom tricks other children into whitewashing a fence for him is arguably the most remembered and celebrated event in American literature. In the context of the novel, whitewashing the fence is a complex social and ethical metaphor for what people can accomplish when they work together and the power of the individual to rise above the group. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* has the advantage of being appreciated and enjoyed by adults as well as younger readers.

**Wilder, Laura Ingalls. *Little House (Nine Books, Boxed Set)*. Harper Trophy, 1994.**

**Reading Level: Ages 9-12**

The nine books in the classic series by Laura Ingalls Wilder share tales of a family's joys and struggles as pioneers in the Midwest of the late 1880s. The set includes: *Little House in the Big Woods*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *Farmer Boy*, *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, *By the Shores of Silver Lake*, *The Long Winter*, *Little Town on the Prairie*, *These Happy Golden Years*, and *The First Four Years*.