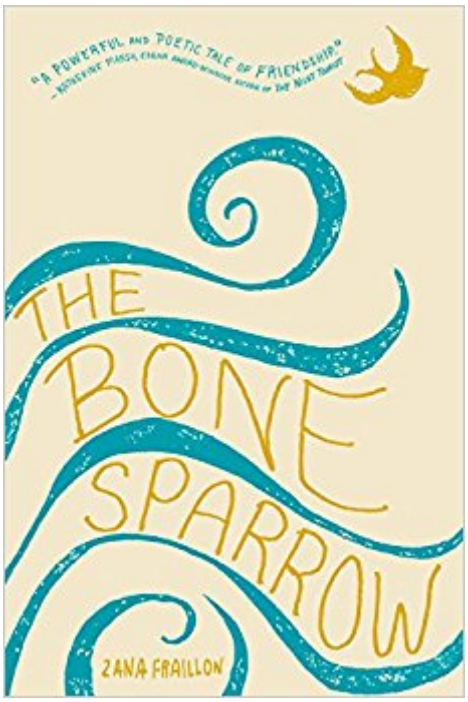
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The Bone Sparrow



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Synopsis

"Indispensable."-Booklist (starred review) CARNEGIE MEDAL 2017 FINALISTSubhi is a refugee. He was born in an Australian permanent detention center after his mother and sister fled the violence of a distant homeland, and the center is the only world he knows. But every night, the faraway whales sing to him, the birds tell him their stories, and the magical Night Sea from his mother's stories brings him gifts. As Subhi grows, his imagination threatens to burst beyond the limits of the fences that contain him. Until one night, it seems to do just that. Subhi sees a scruffy girl on the other side of the wire mesh, a girl named Jimmie, who appears with a notebook written by the mother she lost. Unable to read it herself, Jimmie asks Subhi to unravel her family's love songs and tragedies that are penned there. Subhi and Jimmie might both find comfort-and maybe even freedom-as their tales unfold. But not until each has been braver than ever before and made choices that could change everything.

Customer Reviews

Gr 5 UpÃ¢â ¬â •Subhi knows only life in the Australian refugee detention center where he was born, and lately, things are getting worse. His mother is increasingly lethargic, older sister Queeny is bossy and angry, and his best friend Eli has been transferred to the single men's compound. The Jackets (guards) are unfriendly, except for Harvey, who occasionally brings presents and diversions. It's at this low point that Subhi meets Jimmie, a local child who finds her way into the camp. Jimmie's mother has died, and between her father's grief and his erratic work schedule, she is alone for long periods. Jimmie can't read, so she asks Subhi to read aloud her mother's notebooks, which contain stories from her mother's past. The unrelenting conditions of the camp result in a tragic situation that impacts both children. Fraillon creates a complex narrative, weaving tales from Subhi, Jimmie, and the notebooks. The characters and situations are portrayed realisticallyÃ¢â ¬â •once Eli has gone, Subhi cannot withstand the bullying of some of the older boys and is pressured into an act of animal cruelty. Kind guard Harvey is also shown to be unable to deal with peer pressure. While the book is fictional, the author based it on research and reports of life in Australian detention centers, where conditions are grim. Readers will come away with a raised awareness of life in such centers, but why these facilities exist is not discussed. Students may be inspired to do their own research on organizations working to better the lives of refugees. VERDICT A thought-provoking and affecting selection that highlights a current situation in many countries. Hand to readers who appreciated Linda Sue Park's A Long Walk to Water.Ã¢â ¬â •Michelle Anderson, Tauranga City Libraries, New Zealand

"Outstanding... This is an important, heartbreaking book with frequent, unexpected humor that everyone...should read."Ã¢â ¬â ¢The Guardian* "The pivoting story line, with chapters alternating among Subhi, Jimmie, and sparkling slivers of family lore, allows Fraillon to explore the many faces of otherness, bravery, and solidarity. But Subhi's narrative, whether he's squabbling with a rubber duck or searching the stars, remains the standout of the three: wide-eyed, heartfelt, and infectiously imaginative... This tale is breathtaking and indispensable. As Subhi might say, 'there is a fierce' inside of it."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Booklist (starred review)

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