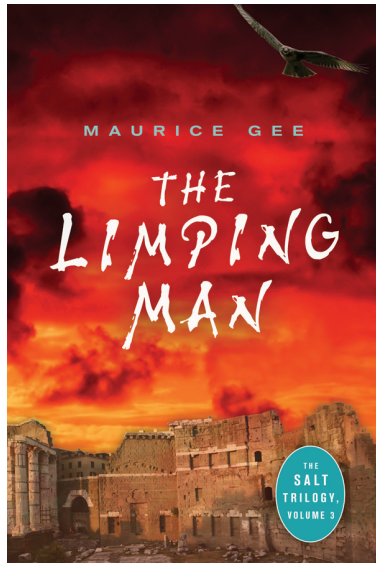


## THE SALT TRILOGY



## **The Limping Man**

Maurice Gee

Ages 12+

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AR Quiz # 143276

### **In a Nutshell...**

After watching her mother poison herself to avoid being burned as a witch, Hana escapes Blood Burrow. The burrows and the city have been taken over by the Limping Man—a little lame man with an astonishingly strong mind, capable of commanding all other minds to bow down before him.

Hana escapes with only her life. She has nothing to her name except her wits and Mam's teachings. On her travels, Hana befriends a hawk. The two of them, while not close, share the ability to see the world through one another's eyes. It's a trick that proves helpful to Hana on more than one occasion.

During her flight from City, Hana meets Danatok, an old Dweller first introduced in *Gool*. Danatok asks her to carry a message to the people in the north, telling them that the Limping Man is readying his armies—and that they're going to wipe out all the Dwellers, humans and forest people who choose not to follow him. Hana sets out to carry Danatok's message to Hari, Pearl and Tealeaf.

Shortly after Hana delivers her message, Lo's son, Ben, sets out to kill the Limping Man. He finds his father in the forest, and together they travel south, toward City. As they go, Lo and Ben save Hana from the bounty hunters who have been sent into the hills to announce the Limping Man's coming. The three join forces with Blossom and Hubert, who are also headed for City. But each part of the group wants to deal with the Limping Man in their own way. Blossom and Hubert part ways with the others and continue on toward the city, singleminded, bent on wresting control from the Limping Man. Lo heads back to the forest, to speak with the people there and gain their wisdom. Ben and Hana travel on alone, through the swamps leading to the city.

There, they find Queenie, the Limping Man's exiled mother. She gives them information that helps Hana unravel the mystery of where his power comes from. But when their conversation with Queenie results in her death, Ben and Hana know that they've just become the hunted. They must be more careful than ever to keep their minds safe from the Limping Man's grasping reach.



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When Blossom and Hubert prove unable to overcome the Limping Man's power, Hana and Ben realize it's up to them. When Ben is seized by guards, Hana is infuriated and tries to kill the Limping Man outright. She, too, is caught—and will be burned at the stake. Lo arrives—another limping man, perhaps with the strength to overturn the evildoer—but he, too, falls under the evil man's power.

At the eleventh hour, Hana and Hawk, working their minds and senses together, figure out the Limping Man's secret. Hawk swoops down, swipes the man's headdress, and reveals the source of his power. The Limping Man crumbles, everyone is freed from his spell...and Hana and Ben are left to wonder whether it's really over.

## About the Author

**Maurice Gee** is one of New Zealand's finest writers, with more than forty books for adults and young adults to his credit. He has received several literary awards, including the New Zealand Children's Book of the Year and the *New Zealand Post* Book Award for Young Adult Fiction for *Salt*. *The Limping Man* is the final volume of The Salt Trilogy.

## Before You Read

1. Do humans always accomplish more when they team up?
2. Is it only “bad guys” who crave total domination/power/control?
3. What do people tend to fear the most?
4. What can be gained from working with people who are different from yourself?

## Consider the following questions as you read *The Limping Man*:

Why is companionship so important to us?

How far would you go to honor the memory of someone you love?

Why does evil persist?

## Connecting to the Text

### *Text-to-text connections*

- The Limping Man has a hold on everyone his mind reaches. He wields power over their thinking and their behavior, making them do things they'd never dream of doing otherwise. Can you think of a book, tv or movie character who falls under somebody else's power and control? Does that character manage to break free, and if so, how?
- When Ben first spends time with Lo, he acknowledges that for a long time he had known Lo's love was there, yet he hadn't wanted it. He initially feels abandoned by his father, and loyal to the people who raised him. What other orphan characters do you know? How do they make sense of the relationship they never had with their parents?



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- Hawk is willing to sacrifice himself to keep Hana safe. Think of another book or film where one character is willing to do this for another—or others. How are these stories similar?
- Hana is a very strong character. She is stubborn, brave and loyal. What other characters have you met like this?
- What book does *The Limping Man* remind you of?

## *Text-to-self connections*

- In chapter 1, Hana reflects that Mam had taught her how to survive—and that now it was all up to her. Think about what this would mean for you—to be alone, with no caring adult to look after your needs. How easy would the task of survival be?
- As Hana flees through Sea, she thinks about Mam's teachings: Be still. Be watchful. Think about what you can do. Even though the words are intended to help Hana survive her ordeal, how can these tips help you in your day-to-day life? Explain.
- Hana has eaten rats and mice. What's the most unusual thing you've eaten? Do you think you'd ever try a rat?
- Before he leaves the village on his quest, Ben reflects that he loves being alone, without a roof over his head or in anyone else's company. Have you ever wanted to be alone like this? Explain what you like about solitude.
- When they first meet, both Hana and Ben think the other is unattractive. What is the significance of this first impression? How can first impressions be misleading?
- Think of the most difficult or horrific outdoor experience you've ever endured. On a Venn diagram, compare and contrast your experience to what Hana and Ben have to put up with as they cross the swamp.

## *Text-to-world connections*

- The Limping Man is physically different from other men, yet he wields great power. How is this unusual? Can you think of other instances—either in the human or natural world—where an individual with a physical disability holds a position of leadership? What kind of odds must that individual overcome?
- When Hana first comes upon Danatok in the forest, she finds that, because she's so hungry, she has no choice other than to trust him. What are some more ordinary signs that you can trust someone?
- Hana realizes she can't use words to speak with the hawk. Instead, she figures out the best way to get the hawk to understand her. She accommodates its needs by using images to communicate. Can you think of where this skill would be useful in the real world? Explain the importance of being able to understand the communication styles of others.



- When Hana and Ben reach the place where the Limping Man's palace is located, they find evidence of previous settlements: broken rubble from where a road used to run during Ottmar's time, the marble hand that pointed to where Company set out to seize Belong. Have you ever discovered similar relics of times past? Maybe an old railway or abandoned trapper's cabin? Why do artifacts of this kind make such an impact on us?

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## The Language of Literature

### *Descriptive Language*

*The Limping Man* opens with an incredibly vivid scene. Knowing that the Limping Man is coming, Mam hides her daughter and then commits suicide.

Reread the first two pages of *The Limping Man*. How does the language in this section make it effective? Find other descriptive passages in *The Limping Man* and explain how the author's choice of language makes them powerful.

### *Foreshadowing*

When an author hints at events or plot developments that might come later in the story, we call this *foreshadowing*. Here are two examples of foreshadowing from *The Limping Man*:

- Chapter 1, where Hana's mother shoves her into the crawl and cries, "Hana, live. Don't ever come back." (Of course, Hana does come back to the burrows to seek out the Limping Man.)
- Chapter 7, where Queenie slips up and mentions the toads to Hana and Ben: "Kill me, boy, and the toads will find out. There's no place you can hide from the toads." (By the end of the story, of course, we realize just how important those toads are.)

See whether you can find one or two more instances of foreshadowing in the story. Why do you think authors employ this technique?

### *Plot Timeline*

The plot is how the story develops over time and as events unfold. A timeline is one way to lay out how the story evolves. Here's a web interactive that will help you make a timeline for *The Limping Man*: [www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/timeline-30007.html](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/timeline-30007.html). Share your timeline with the class.

### *Simile*

A simile is a comparison using the words "like" or "as." It's a literary technique that gives the reader a compelling image to help broaden his or her understanding of the text. Here's an example of a simile from the opening page, where the author describes the way Hana perceives Blood Burrow:

*The smell of burning followed, sliding into her mouth as she gulped for air. It was as damp as toads.*



And another, from where Hana moves away from Bawdhouse Burrow and deeper into Blood Burrow:

*A doorway leaning like a drunken man led into a room that seemed to have no outlet.*

As you read *The Limping Man*, look for other similes. How do these comparisons help you get a better picture of what's happening in the story? Write two similes about something that's familiar to you. (How about your feet? Or maybe the way your house looks? Be creative.)

### *Theme*

The theme is the “big idea” or message in a book. Often, books can have more than one theme.

Several themes run through *The Limping Man*. One of them is that it's worth fighting for people you love. Another is that goodness doesn't always succeed in stamping out evil completely. Working with a partner, see if you can figure out some of the other themes in the book.

### **A Closer Look**

#### *Chapter by chapter*

#### Chapter 1

1. Hana thinks about Mam as she flees Bawdhouse Burrow. She remembers that Mam was always teaching her. This is similar to how elders in many communities impart knowledge to their younger members. What is the value in this passing on of knowledge?
2. As Hana makes her way deeper into the crawl, we see her sadness when Maurice Gee writes that “tears fell on her hands as she crept.” Why is this description more powerful than simply saying “Hana was sad”?
3. Choose one of the following three tasks to complete:
  - ◆ Draw a map of where Hana travels as she departs Bawdhouse Burrow. Include such locations as the rock pool where she finds the lobster, the old stable and People's Square.
  - ◆ Illustrate one scene with Hana in it. Where is she? In her old shelter? In the chimney of the old fireplace as she spies on the Limping Man? What is she doing? Listening? Crying? Draw a detailed picture of what you see.
  - ◆ Draw the Limping Man as he is portrayed in this chapter.
4. Why do the burrows men go to witness the burnings?
5. What risks is Hana taking when she crawls up the chimney to witness Mam's burning?
6. The people fear the Limping Man—and the Limping Man fears anyone who doesn't automatically obey him (such as the witches). In real life, why do people sometimes fear others?

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## Chapter 2

1. Why can't humans drink salt water?
2. Describe the skills that Hana acquired in the burrows in order to move stealthily. How does this help her in the forest when she sees the fire?
3. In the forest, at nighttime, Hana runs into a male stranger who knows her name—and even knows that she's hungry. This comes as a shock. Write down what Hana would be feeling and thinking in this situation. Share your response with the class.
4. On a sheet of paper, begin a character web for Hana. Be sure to include her physical characteristics, emotional traits, behaviors, fears and hopes—and support these with examples from the book. Add to your character web as you read more of *The Limping Man*.
5. For what reasons does Hana not want to speak with her mind when she first meets Danatok?
6. Danatok tells Hana his story. He says that when he first looked for the Limping Man, he was careful not to engage in mind battles with him without knowing more about him. Why did he make this decision?
7. How did Mam make a living before Hana was born?
8. Contrast Hana's reluctance to look at herself with our modern obsession over appearances.
9. Danatok tells Hana that in humans, the ability to “speak” usually improves them. But what if it didn't? How would the world be different?

## Chapter 3

1. For what reason(s) did Lo want Ben to learn the ways of humans—and forget the ways of his own people until he needed them?
2. Why is Ben so determined not to be a speaker? Do you think this will benefit him or harm him?
3. Draw Lo as you see him.
4. Why does Lo experience so much emotion the first time he meets Ben?
5. Ben envies his father's ability to climb and travel like the people with no name. But why can't Lo be human anymore?
6. Even though Ben will speak with his father, he still chooses not to speak in the village. As you see it, why is this?
7. Ben thinks he will stick his knife into the Limping Man and thereby kill him. Knowing what you do about the Limping Man, write Ben a letter of advice.
8. Everybody suspects the Limping Man draws his power from something—a stone, a special place, an object. But Hari says emphatically that there is no magic. Why do you think he makes this claim?
9. Begin a character web for Ben. Add to it as the story unfolds.



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## Chapter 4

1. Imagine you are Ben, and that you're being told your mother wanted to die—that she died because she was sad she couldn't share you with someone else she loved. Write a letter from Ben to Sal. What kinds of questions will you ask? What information will you share?
2. Ben dreams of the people with no name as he and his father make their journey. Why is it important for Ben to have this kind of understanding of the jungle?
3. Hana senses Blossom's power, and she doesn't like it. Why do we fear people who seem to have extraordinary abilities?
4. Hana witnesses the battle between the ants, the scorpions and the mites. She thinks about the world she came from, and the one she now finds herself in. Why does Hana have the sudden feeling she belongs nowhere?
5. Hawk saves Hana from the bounty hunters, and in doing so, endangers his own life. Draw this scene as you see it.
6. When Hana is told by the hunters to say she loves the Limping Man, she says no. What does this say about the type of person she is?

## Chapter 5

1. Lo offers to fix Hawk's wing. Why does Hana trust Lo?
2. Why does Hawk snap at Hana when she tries to soothe him?
3. Ben feels somewhat threatened by Hana. He resents how his father seems to have welcomed her so easily. As you see it, is this a reasonable feeling for Ben to have? Why do we feel threatened when those we love show an interest in other people?
4. Lo is able to heal the hawk with weed and some juice from a berry. If he didn't have this knowledge, the bird would never fly again. Write a paragraph about why it's important for humans to have—and pass on—medicinal knowledge like this.

## Chapter 6

1. Ben and Hana both share a disdain for Blossom. As you see it, what's the reason?
2. Do you think Hawk will return to Hana?
3. Lo and Blossom have the ability to sense people and keep the traveling party safe. How might things be different if they couldn't do this?
4. "Everything gets taken away," says Hana to Blossom when they're sitting near Danatok's camp one evening on their journey. What does she mean by this?
5. How does Hana's thinking about Ben's limb difference begin to change in this chapter?
6. As you see it, does Hana feel guilty that she chose to live after Mam died? Explain.
7. Why does Ben not want his father to leave?



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## Chapter 7

1. The first paragraph of this chapter is full of vivid, sensory descriptions. Write a similar paragraph about a place you know well. Use the five senses to help you create a clear picture in your reader's mind.
2. When the pair first encounters Queenie, why does Ben have to pretend Hana is his servant? What is Hana's reaction to this?
3. What can you tell about the way girls and women are treated? Is it any different than the way boys and men are treated under the Limping Man's regime?
4. Queenie tells Hana and Ben how her son, Vosper, was injured. What is your opinion of the way the boy was raised?
5. How does the author make Queenie distasteful to the reader? Provide examples to support your thinking.
6. Why does Queenie want Ben to whip Hana until she cries? What does this say about Queenie's nature?
7. Mam once told Hana that everything is natural—that there is no magic. Do you agree? Explain.
8. Describe how the relationship between Ben and Hana has changed since they met.
9. Ben takes a huge risk in approaching Queenie's cottage. Make a list of the skills he uses to do this without being discovered.
10. When Ben is spotted by guards trying to get to Queenie's island, he is forced to take shelter quickly. He begins to think like Lo. How does this help him?

## Chapter 8

1. When Hana is waiting for Ben to find her after his failed attempt to reach Queenie, she reflects that speaking with him would be like letting him put his hand on her body—and she's not ready for that. What is the significance of this?
2. Explain how Danatok's teachings help Hana in this section of the book.
3. Is Blossom and Hubert's plan of burning the ships smarter than simply attacking the Limping Man at his palace?
4. What might have happened if Hana had allowed Ben to go out and help Blossom and Hubert?
5. When the Limping Man arrives, Hana thinks that he'll defeat Blossom and Hubert. The dark always swallowed the light, she thinks. Night came in the end, night always came. Do you agree? Explain.





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## Chapter 9

1. Hana doesn't believe Ben can kill the Limping Man. What makes Hana think she is the only one who can find and break down the Limping Man's defenses?
2. Do you think, as Ben does, that Lo has deserted them?
3. How does imagining Pearl and Hari's struggle give Hana strength when she and Ben come close to the Limping Man's palace?
4. As you see it, why is the Limping Man's palace so plain, so...un-palacelike?
5. When Ben and Hana say goodbye, Hana reaches out and puts her hand on Ben's stump. What is the significance of this gesture?

## Chapter 10

1. Ben thinks about how much he likes Hana. He reflects that she wants nothing—that she is enough for herself. What does this mean? How does this part of Hana's personality differ from other people?
2. For what reason do you think the Limping Man is so drawn to fire?
3. Draw the Limping Man in his litter.
4. What is it inside Ben's character that makes him so certain he'll be able to kill the Limping Man? Is this characteristic a good thing (an asset) or a bad thing (a liability)?

## Chapter 11

1. In this chapter, both Ben and Hana think the other has died at the hands of the Limping Man. Why does the author shape the story in this way?
2. How does Hana's understanding that she can't command Hawk—that he isn't hers—differ from our society's treatment of animals? Of each other?
3. When the Limping Man casts his mind over the palace, searching for spies, he can't find Hana because she's up with Hawk. How might things have turned out differently if she hadn't been "away"?
4. Choose your own way to creatively portray Hana's disappointment when she learns Ben is under the Limping Man's spell. Write a poem, draw or paint a picture, write a journal entry as Hana, create a sculpture or team up and put together a tableau or interpretive dance.

## Chapter 12

1. When Hana returns to her and Mam's shelter, she finds the frogweed has died. She is overcome by despair and hopelessness, but then she realizes she can't allow these feelings to take hold. Why is despair a dangerous thing in a situation like Hana's?
2. Explain how Lo takes inspiration from the colored pictures inside the ruins.



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3. When Hana attacks the Limping Man—and fails to kill him—she is forced to confront her worst fear: being burned. Get inside Hana's head at this crucial moment, and compose a message from her to someone who's significant in her life. Perhaps Ben, Mam, or Danatok? Or Lo or Hawk? What would Hana want to say—to pass along—at this time?

## Chapter 13

1. As you see it, why does Hawk fly lower when all Hana wants him to do is get away from People's Square?
2. Hana will be burned alive unless she agrees to worship the Limping Man of her own free will. But she refuses. What makes her so unwilling to give in?
3. Draw Lo as you imagine him in this chapter.
4. Who are the people from whom Lo draws his strength? What do they represent?
5. Numerous groups and individuals have found themselves unable to defeat the Limping Man. What makes the Limping Man such a strong adversary?
6. How is Vosper different than the Limping Man?
7. What is your reaction to the discovery of how the Limping Man gets his power? Was it what you expected?
8. How does Hana find compassion for Vosper when others want to kill him?
9. Lo tells the people to leave the burrows, to leave Ceebeedee and go out into the plains to start farms. Why is this wise counsel?
10. Provide evidence for how Lo's perception of women differs from the way burrows women were treated under the Limping Man's regime.

## Chapter 14

1. As they leave the city, Hana realizes that some of the burrows people don't want to be free. Make an inference about what this means.
2. How strange would it feel for Hana to suddenly be part of a family, whereas before there had only been her and Mam?

### *Extension activities*

- Learn more about witch burning. Witches weren't just burned in the time of the Limping Man. It's a part of our own human history, too. Using text and digital resources, investigate witch burning throughout history. Start with Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Witch-hunt>, and follow the links at the bottom of the page for more information. Use the following questions to guide your mini-research project:
  - ◆ How recently were people suspected of witchcraft burned?
  - ◆ For what reason(s) were they burned?
  - ◆ Where did some of the most significant witch-hunts occur?



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Summarize your findings, and include a few paragraphs with your own opinions: is it forgivable to execute others based on their beliefs? Was (or is) witchcraft harmful, and if so, to whom? As you see it, what have witch-burnings accomplished throughout history?

- Create a one- or two-minute podcast about the book. Your end goal should be to persuade people to buy the book. Consider “inviting” characters from the book to the podcast, to add interest and a different perspective to your discussion.
- Dig into the constellations. Hana sees stars overhead during one of her first nights out of the burrows. Though she’s never learned about the constellations, just seeing the stars at night gives her a measure of comfort. For this exercise, complete the following:
  - ◆ Explore the constellations and the myths behind them at [www.wartgames.com/themes/science/constellations.html](http://www.wartgames.com/themes/science/constellations.html).
  - ◆ Select a constellation myth and practice retelling it.
  - ◆ Create a small poster of your chosen constellations.
  - ◆ Show your poster and retell the myth to the class.
- Make your map. You may choose to do this assignment with a computer or by hand. Create an illustrated map of the burrows or of the swamp. Your map should include obstacles, landmarks, the path navigated and a legend.
- Design a book jacket or promotional poster. Choose one—or several—of the most arresting scenes from *The Limping Man* and create an attention-grabbing book jacket or promotional poster for the book. Include the title, author and summary of the book. Make your work clear, colorful and enticing.
- Write a critical review of *The Limping Man*. Not sure how to write a review? Here’s a link to get you started: [www.infoplease.com/homework/wsbookreporths.html](http://www.infoplease.com/homework/wsbookreporths.html).
- Create a diorama. Choose one of the settings in the book to model. Use wood, clay, plaster, paper, paint or a combination of these and other items to recreate a scene or place in *The Limping Man*. Be sure to label the different parts of your diorama.
- Design an app for *The Limping Man*. Check out the interactive app for *Alice in Wonderland* here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RM\\_gwtbQXM&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RM_gwtbQXM&feature=related). Discuss with your class or in a group: how does reading in print compare to reading in a digital format? [Note to teachers: a full lesson plan can be found here: <http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/28/print-vs-digital-analyzing-and-designing-book-apps-for-works-of-literature/>]
- Quiz your classmates! Think of ten questions based on *The Limping Man*. Now put those questions into a multiple-choice format. Don’t make them too easy! (See the example below.) Exchange your quiz with a friend.



- ◆ At the end of the novel, Hana finally discovers the Limping Man gets his power from:
  - his robes
  - his headdress
  - his staff
  - one of his toads

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## *Vocabulary activities*

- Choose all or some of the following vocabulary words from *The Limping Man*. Consult a print or online dictionary to help you create full definitions for each word you choose. Record these in your notebook. Be sure to include multiple definitions where applicable.
- Create a matching test with ten of the vocabulary words. Write the words on one side of the page and the definitions on the other side. Make sure you mix them up a bit! Exchange your quiz with a partner to see who can match the most words correctly.
- Make a crossword puzzle using ten of the words from the vocabulary list. You may wish to add other words from *The Limping Man* to your puzzle too. Make your crossword by hand on graph paper, or with an online puzzle-generating tool. Here's one to get you started: <http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com>.

*anguish*  
*compulsion*  
*dinghy*  
*jerkin*  
*quota*  
*stolid*

*anticipation*  
*consort*  
*emblem*  
*parapet*  
*ransacked*  
*stoic*

*auseway*  
*contagion*  
*flourish*  
*phalanx*  
*scabbard*  
*tiller*

*avarice*  
*cumulus*  
*gully*  
*plunder*  
*seaward*  
*tread*

*barracks*  
*deferentially*  
*indifference*  
*prohibition*  
*squadron*  
*writhe*



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## Related Reading

- Anderson, M.T. *Feed*
- Carman, Patrick. *The House of Power*  
— *Rivers of Fire*  
— *The Dark Planet*
- Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*  
— *Catching Fire*  
— *Mockingjay*
- Dashner, James. *The Maze Runner*  
— *The Scorch Trials*  
— *The Death Cure*
- Duprau, Jeanne. *City of Ember*  
— *The People of Sparks*  
— *The Prophet of Yonwood*  
— *The Diamond of Darkhold*
- Fisher, Catherine. *Incarceron*  
— *Sapphique*
- Grant, Michael. *Gone*  
— *Hunger*  
— *Lies*
- LeGuin, Ursula. *A Wizard of Earthsea*
- Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*  
— *Gathering Blue*  
— *Messenger*
- Ness, Patrick. *The Knife of Never Letting Go*  
— *The Ask and the Answer*  
— *Monsters of Men*
- Sedgwick, Marcus. *Floodland*

