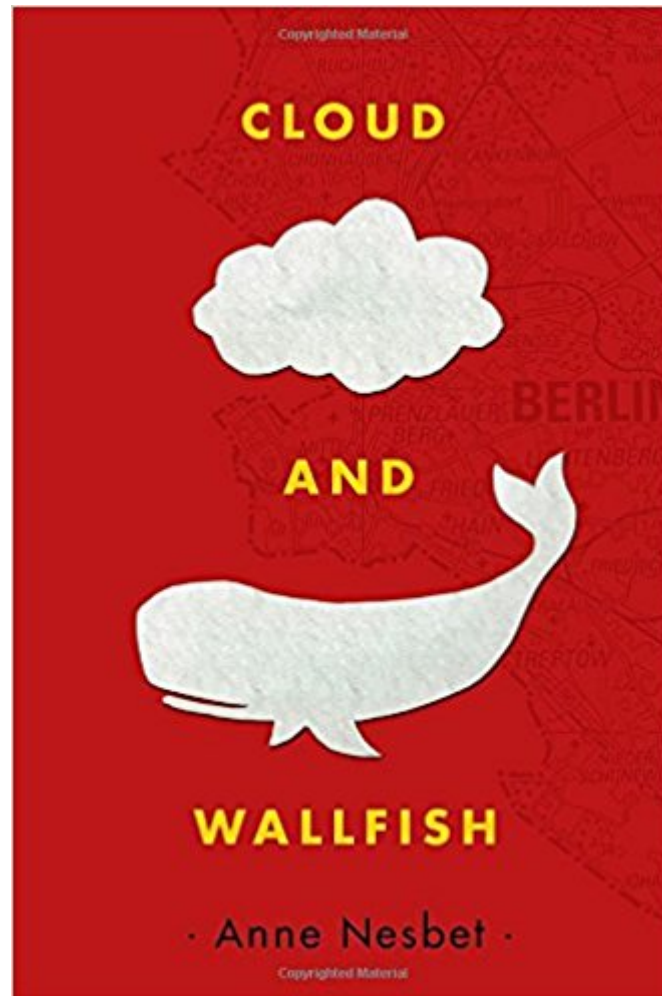




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Cloud And Wallfish



Synopsis

Slip behind the Iron Curtain into a world of smoke, secrets, and lies in this stunning novel where someone is always listening and nothing is as it seems. Noah Keller has a pretty normal life, until one wild afternoon when his parents pick him up from school and head straight for the airport, telling him on the ride that his name isn't really Noah and he didn't really just turn eleven in March. And he can't even ask them why • not because of his Astonishing Stutter, but because asking questions is against the newly instated rules. (Rule Number Two: Don't talk about serious things indoors, because Rule Number One: They will always be listening). As Noah • now "Jonah Brown" • and his parents head behind the Iron Curtain into East Berlin, the rules and secrets begin to pile up so quickly that he can hardly keep track of the questions bubbling up inside him: Who, exactly, is listening • and why? When did his mother become fluent in so many languages? And what really happened to the parents of his only friend, Cloud-Claudia, the lonely girl who lives downstairs? In an intricately plotted novel full of espionage and intrigue, friendship and family, Anne Nesbet cracks history wide open and gets right to the heart of what it feels like to be an outsider in a world that's impossible to understand.

Book Information

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Mysteries & Thrillers > Historical #75 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Parents

Customer Reviews

Gr 5 • Fifth grader Noah Keller is surprised when both his parents pick him up from school and astonished when they tell him that his mother has been granted permission to do

"dissertation research" in East Germany for six months – and that they're leaving immediately and temporarily changing their names. After learning "The Rules, as Explained by Noah's Mother," which include statements such as "they will always be listening and often be watching" and "don't ever talk about serious things indoors; in particular, never refer to people by name," Noah (now called Jonah) arrives in East Berlin with his family. A new friend, tragedy, and burgeoning suspicion about Noah's parents play out in a subtle and well-paced story about the months leading up to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Tension mounts as Noah continues to gain an understanding of the fear and desperation people feel, while readers are privy to "Secret Files" that provide historical context. Multidimensional characters are developed piece by piece to keep mystery and curiosity alive. Noah and his parents share a loving bond that grounds the plot and provides a shelter from the uncertainty and confusion Noah often feels in light of unfamiliar surroundings and jarring situations. Nesbet writes an interesting and nuanced narrative that weaves history, mystery, and friendship with enough action to keep readers engaged. VERDICT A great choice for those looking for a thrilling historical fiction or coming-of-age tale. – Kelsey Johnson-Kaiser, St. Paul Public Library.

In this atmospheric page-turner set just as the Iron Curtain begins to lift, Nesbet deftly ratchets up the tension, using a close third-person omniscient narration to keep readers experiencing one unnerving event after another, just as Noah does...This is edgy, dramatic, and emotionally rich historical fiction that provides a vivid look into an extraordinary moment in history. – Horn Book (starred review)[Nesbet's] author's note reveals the personal history behind the novel, suggesting a labor of love that does show in the carefully crafted details and effective scene-setting...Nesbet's detail-rich novel offers tenacious readers an interesting window into the fall of the Iron Curtain. – Kirkus ReviewsNesbet writes an interesting and nuanced narrative that weaves history, mystery, and friendship with enough action to keep readers engaged. A great choice for those looking for a thrilling historical fiction or coming-of-age tale. – School Library JournalNesbet gives readers a glimpse into life behind the Iron Curtain...Noah's friendship with his neighbor Claudia is genuinely touching, and some truly tense scenes unfold as secrets are revealed and readers witness events leading to the fall of the Berlin Wall. – BooklistThrough Noah's innocent but perceptive eyes, readers receive a first-hand look at this secretive and highly controlled world. Post-chapter "Secret Files" provide fascinating historical context, but the story's heart lies in the friendship between Claudia and Noah, and in the lengths loved ones will go to in order to break down even the most formidable walls. – Publishers

WeeklyNesbet cleverly contextualizes events via "Secret Files" ... that follow each chapter, drawing fact and fiction together into entertaining little bundles. •Bulletin of the Center for Children's BooksTold from the perspective of an eleven-year-old, the sounds, sights, and smells of East Berlin come vividly to life...Jonah is both credible and endearing. Even when his parents are secretive, he attempts to do the right thing. Side bars list pertinent historical facts. This makes an enlightening and inspiring choice for classroom units or book discussions. •VOYAA brilliant novel of friendship that seamlessly blends history with mystery and suspense, Cloud and Wallfish is certain to expand readers' perspective on multiple levels. •Day (syndicated from Kendal Rautzhan "Books to Borrow")Nesbet somehow manages to bring East Germany in 1989 to full-blown, fascinating life. •A Fuse #8 Production (blog)

An astonishing book. I got my copy yesterday, stayed up too late reading it, and finished it today--even though I should have been doing other things. This story covers a subject rarely seen in children's fiction--life in East Berlin before the wall came down. The story is gripping and fascinating. Ten-year-old Noah's parents take him into East Berlin, changing his name to Jonah and behaving mysteriously in a world that becomes increasingly surreal. Noah brings his copy of Alice in Wonderland with him, and soon he realizes that he too has fallen down a rabbit hole of sorts. Lonely at first, he befriends an imaginative girl named Claudia (Cloud), whose parents disappear, and have died, she is told, though she fantasizes that they are still living but have just forgotten her. Her theory and magical projections turn out to be in part true. Kids will be gripped by Noah's story and will be thrilled by the novel's mysteries--trying to figure out what is really happening and who is spying on whom--even as they learn a great deal about history and life in divided Berlin. The ending is poignant and powerful--but ultimately happy, as the novel is set in 1989, when the wall came down. Teachers will be able to use parts of this book to fulfill nonfiction reading requirements, as the "Secret File" sections after each chapter fill in historical information in a unique, very kid-friendly narrative voice. The ending also invites kids to meditate on reading "nonfiction." "Whenever a book claims to be telling the truth," Nesbet writes, "it is wise (as Noah's mother says at one point) to 'keep asking questions.'" Powerful, moving, astonishing. A book that will change the way readers understand the world.

Take one boy named Noah and give him a stutter so he is an outsider. then turn his world upside down. That is what Anne Nesbet, the author has done to her character Noah Keller. Noah leaves his fifth-grade classroom and finds his mom and dad in a rental car. It is on the ride that they explain to

him that his mom has the opportunity of a lifetime. She is working on her dissertation about schools and children with problems like her son's. Noah learns that all of the German lessons he has been taking had a purpose. They will be flying into East Berlin. Noah has a new name and new rules. He is now known as Jonah Brown. He can't do anything that will bring attention to himself or his parents. He must not question anything because the walls have bugs. He isn't allowed to go to school even though he has taken their test. He meets a girl in his apartment building named Claudia. Because of his stutter, he ends up calling her Cloud-Claudia. She names him Wallfish. What happens when they are caught up in something that they were not a part of. How will the secret he knows about Claudia affect their friendship? Because I'm an adult and remember the fall of the Berlin Wall, this book was so important for me to read. I have always been fascinated by this topic. My father was stationed in Berlin when he was in the Army. This is such an important piece of history that unfortunately isn't really taught in schools. I do my best to at least introduce it to my sixth graders to the topic. I want them to start their own research on such an important topic. I am impressed with the way the author handled the topic. The reader is right there and can feel the strain the people living on the East side of the wall must have felt, especially if they didn't agree with the politics at the time. This is a book I will definitely promote to my students. I had an extra copy so I passed it along to my granddaughter who had picked it up to look at. Thank you Anne Nesbet for creating a perfect book at the perfect time.

What a wonderful book! I believe this is a classic in the making. Intended for middle schoolers, but so profound that adults will find it deeply satisfying. All the characters are so beautifully drawn, and the young characters in particular are so real that you want to cry for them. Do yourself a favour and read it; and then buy copies for all the young people you know to give as gifts.

Noah's normal life is turned upside down when his parents whisk him away to a new life, complete with a new name and birthday, in East Berlin. The year is 1989, when the cold war is finally seeing signs of a thaw, but the people of East Germany are still at the mercy of the secret police. Even an outspoken girl named Claudia, who's dealing with a mystery of her own. The atmosphere, plot, and heart of this story are woven together deftly, and would appeal to readers of *WHEN YOU REACH ME* or *THE THIEF*, in my opinion. (Bonus: Each chapter ends with a 'secret file' containing cool historical facts.) A perfect book to hunker down with on a fall day with a cup of hot cocoa!

This is an excellent piece of historical fiction. It covers a period of history that's sadly missing from

most elementary and secondary school curricula. The story, being told from the point of view of a 11 year old makes the observations and explanations real and accessible to even elementary school children. There is nothing controversial in this book .. no guns, foul language or bad habits. Just a great kid with a good heart trying to put the pieces of a complicated puzzle together in his mind.

Stunning. I cant' stop thinking about this one - great for kids who enjoyed A Night Divided.

I love all of Anne Nesbet's books!

Great book

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