



2018

Orphan Island

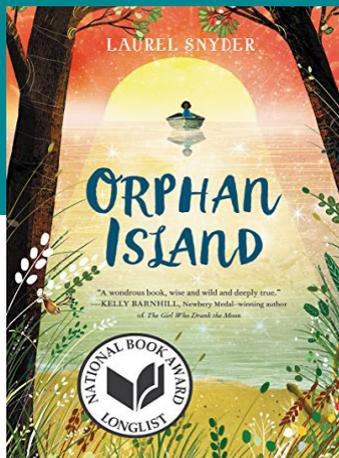
Amanda Bishop

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Book Review

Orphan Island

Author

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Illustrator

Reviewer

Amanda Bishop

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Intermediate

Pages

288

Year

2017

Publisher

Walden Pond Press

ISBN

9780062443410

Once a year a boat arrives, delivering a child and taking one away. This is the nature of life on the mysterious island inhabited only by children. Jinny is now the oldest child on the island, and the newest arrival, Ess, is in her charge. Jinny ponders what it means to be a role model and teacher to the young girl and debates what it means to leave the island and the only family she has ever known. Life progresses on the island and Jinny finds herself growing older and more different than her peers. When the boat returns a year later with a new charge and it is Jinny's turn to leave the island, she rebels and decides to stay. Things start to go awry on the island, including Jinny's own emerging adolescence. They all soon discover that Jinny must leave the island for things to regain their balance or they will all be destroyed.

Orphan Island is a wonderful story filled with adventure and shrouded in mystery. Explanations are never fully given as to the meaning of the island, but one can infer that it is an allegory for childhood and what it means to grow older. The author writes with imagination, and the island comes to life with her descriptive writing. Jinny is a complex character who wrestles with her own memories as she attempts to understand why she is on the island and why she is forced to leave. Memory is a fundamental element of the book and how it affects our lives in different ways throughout our lives. The reader is able to understand the complex and unique emotions of each of the characters, in particular the older children, as they grapple with growing up and attempting to understand their own existence and personalities. This is a fresh and unique take on a coming-of-age tale.