

CYRM Resource Book
Young Adult Nominees
(Grades 9-12)
2011-2012

Graceling

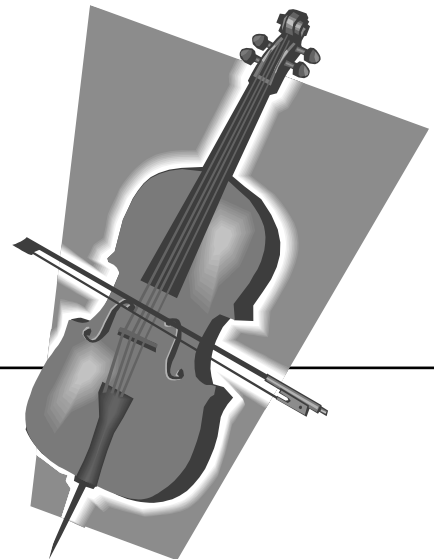
by Kristin Cashore
Harcourt, 2008

Beastly

by Alex Flinn
Harper Teen, 2010, 2007

If I Stay

by Gayle Forman
Dutton Children's Books, 2009



California Young Reader Medal
**Young Adult
Ballot
2011-2012**

_____ *Graceling*

_____ *Beastly*

_____ *If I Stay*

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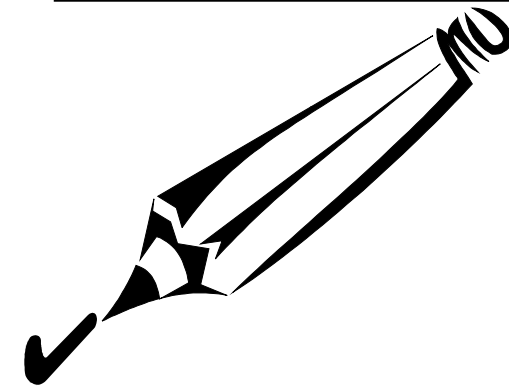
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Graceling

by Kristin Cashore



Synopsis

In a medieval world of castles and knights, evil kings, and handsome princes, there are people who are called gracelings. Gracelings are people who have eyes that are two different colors. All gracelings are graced with some special power. Some may be graced with the art of cooking, others with menial tasks like cleaning. Katsa, niece to King Randa, King of all the seven Midlunds regions, is a graceling who is graced with the power of fighting. She can beat any man who attacks her. But when she discovers that her uncle wants to use her as an assassin, she escapes, and goes on an adventure to save the young princess of a faraway kingdom, saving the entire Midlunds in the process.



Hooks

- Have you ever wished you had special powers? Write a short narrative about what power you have, and an adventure that you go on to use it.
- Would you go against your family if it meant saving lives? Write a persuasive letter to Katsa explaining why she should choose to go against her uncle and go save the little princess.
- Katsa does what is right, even though it is very difficult. Write an essay explaining what she does in the story to show this.

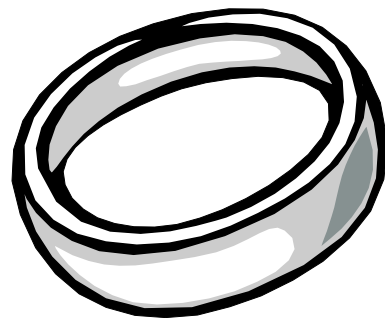
Meet the Author—Kristin Cashore



Kristin Cashore grew up in the hills of Northeastern Pennsylvania, “in a village with cows and barns and beautiful views from the top of the hill and all that good stuff,” where she spent her time reading books and daydreaming – “perfect preparation for writing.” She received her undergraduate degree from Williams College, and her M.A. from the Center for the Study of Children’s Literature at Simmons College.

Her travels have brought her to various places around the world, including Italy, Australia, England, New York City, and Boston. She recently moved from Jacksonville, Florida to Cambridge, Massachusetts.

For more information on Kristin Cashore, visit her website at;
<http://kristincashore.blogspot.com>





Cashore, Kristin. *Fire*. Firebird, 2011.

Chima, Cinda Williams. *The Demon King*. Hyperion, 2009.

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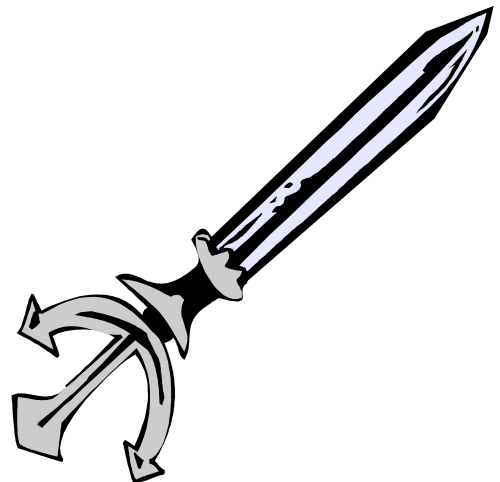
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Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *Graceling*



- If you could possess a “grace,” what would you hope it would be?
- Is Katsa’s grace a blessing or a curse? What are the advantages and disadvantages of her grace?
- If you could envision a future for Po and Katsa, what would it look like? What would you have happen in a sequel?
- Write about a time when you tried to correct an injustice. What was the best thing about getting involved? What was the most difficult aspect about it?
- Can you imagine someone not wanting to be blessed with a grace? Why would this be?



Beastly

by Alex Flinn



Synopsis

Kyle Kingsbury has everything. He is rich, drop-dead gorgeous, and tremendously popular. His girlfriend, Sloane, is the same way. Together, they are the envy of every other person at school. Or so they think. At school one day, Kyle meets Kendra, a witch in disguise, and he invites her to go to a dance with him. Never intending to actually go to the dance with her, he stands her up. Kendra is furious. At that same dance, Kyle gives a single white rose to a girl named Lindy—his single saving grace. Later that night, Kendra visits Kyle’s house, where she turns him into a hideous beast. She tells him that she wants his inside to match what is showing on the outside. Because of the flower, however, she gives him two years to find a girl who will love him, and therefore save his life. If he does not, he will remain a beast forever.



Hooks

- In the movie, Kyle is made to look more like an extremely disfigured human instead of a hairy beast. Do you think that this decision changes the spirit of the story? What changes if Kyle is more human-like?
- *Beastly* is a retelling of *Beauty and the Beast*, an old French tale. What is different about this new version? Does it change the lesson the story attempts to teach? What is that lesson?
- At one time or another, everyone has felt out of place. Discuss (or write about) a time when you felt like everyone was staring at you—and not for a good reason. What did it feel like to be on an outsider?
- Kendra turns Kyle into a Beast to teach him to love other people. She does this because Kyle is a bully, and she wants him to learn from his mistakes. Have you ever been bullied? If you could help a bully learn how it feels, would you try?

Meet the Author—Alex Flinn



Alex Flinn was born on Long Island, and grew up first in Syosset, New York, and later in Miami, Florida, where she spent much of her time reading, writing, and involving herself in the performing arts. She studied opera in college, and then attended law school. After practicing law for 10 years, she decided to devote herself full time to writing young adult literature. She has written several books for young adults, including *Breathing Underwater* (2001), *Breaking Point* (2002), *Nothing to Lose* (2004), *Fade to Black* (2005), *A Kiss in Time* (2009), and her newest book, *Cloaked* (2011). Like *Beastly*, *A Kiss in Time* and *Cloaked* revisit traditional fairytales in modern settings.

For more information about Alex Flinn, visit her website at;
www.alexflinn.com



Cartwright, Sarah Blakely. *Red Riding Hood*. Poppy, 2011.

Flinn, Alex. *Cloaked*. Harper Teen, 2011.

Flinn, Alex. *A Kiss in Time*. Harper Teen, 2010.

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Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *Beastly*

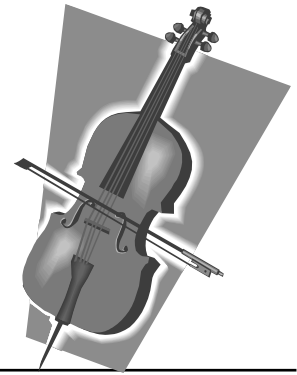


- Do you believe that it's realistic to expect people to look beyond appearances? Is it merely human nature to notice one's beauty or lack thereof?
- After some time as a beast, Kyle changes his name to Adrian because he feels it suits him better. Have you ever considered changing your name? What would you change it to and why? If you would keep your name, why do you feel that it suits you?
- Kyle starts out materially blessed but morally hollow. After his transformation, he is wiser but isolated from society. Is the lesson worth the price he pays? Explain your answer.
- In your opinion, has the author successfully adapted this children's fairytale to make it appealing to contemporary, teenaged readers? Why or why not?



If I Stay

by Gayle Forman



Synopsis

Mia is a very talented seventeen year old cello player. She has a rock and roll boyfriend, adoring parents, and a kid brother that she actually gets along with. They all live in Oregon state. One morning, Mia's family gets up, and it is snowing. Hard. Mia's parents decide that since school is cancelled, they will take an impromptu trip to the grandparents' house, only about an hour away. But on the way, there is a terrible car accident. Mia's parents both die. Mia's little brother, Teddy, is severely injured, and dies later that same day at the hospital. Mia goes into a coma, but she is somehow aware of what is going on around her, and her spirit walks around, watching the reactions of everyone around her. She is left with an impossible decision—to stay, and be with those who are still alive who know and love her, or to die, to slip quietly away in a coma and be with her beloved parents and brother. Her decision, and the way that she makes it, will not soon leave you.



Hooks

- Mia is faced with an impossible decision. If you were faced with that same decision—die today, or live, what would you consider? What would make you want to stay?
- Teddy is Mia's little brother, and though he aggravates her sometimes, she truly loves him. Do you have a little brother or sister? Write about how they make you feel.
- Kim is Mia's best friend, and together with Adam, Mia's boyfriend, she does everything she can to make Mia feel loved and wanted. Do you have a friend like that? How would you feel something ever happened to them?

Meet the Author—Gayle Forman

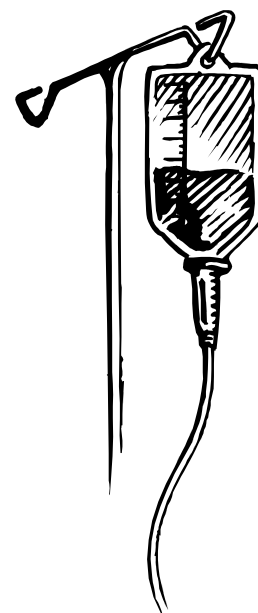


Gayle Forman started out as a journalist who focused her writing on social justice issues and stories affecting young people. Originally a reporter for *Seventeen*, she later freelanced for several magazines, including *Details*, *Jane*, *Glamour*, *The Nation*, *Elle*, *Budget Travel*, and *Cosmopolitan*.

In 2002, she and her husband left the United States to travel around the world. They spent time in many far-flung destinations, from Tonga to Kazakhstan.

Today, she lives in Brooklyn, New York, with her husband and two daughters. In addition to *If I Stay*, she has written *Sisters in Sanity* (2007), a novel based upon an article she had written for *Seventeen* about drug treatment centers, and *You Can't Get There From Here: A Year on the Fringes of a Shrinking World* (2005), the non-fiction work based upon her year of travel.

More information about Gayle Forman can be found at her website:
www.gayleforman.com





Asher, Jay. *13 Reasons Why*. Razorbill, 2007.

Foreman, Gayle. *Where She Went*. Dutton Juvenile, 2011.

Hoban, Julia. *Willow*. Speak, 2010.

LaCour, Nina. *Hold Still*. Speak, 2010.

Oliver, Lauren. *Before I Fall*. Harper Collins, 2010.



Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *If I Stay*



- Write a letter to Mia outlining for her the reasons why she should stay.
- Pretend you are Mia and you decide to “stay.” Compose a letter from Mia to one of her lost family members explaining her choice.
- Pretend you are Mia and you decide to “go.” Write a letter to Adam explaining your choice.
- Has there ever been a song that has captured one of your moods perfectly? Write about that song and the mood it was able to capture. Explain the connections between the music and the mood.
- If you had to start over again from scratch, which things about your life would you choose to change? What would you do differently? What would you want to remain the same?

