



## Adjusting to a New Life in the South

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:  
ELA 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Keywords:** family life, growing up, Vietnam War, immigration, immigrant, life in the south, new life, new country, emigrate, Mexico, better jobs, better education, migration

**Teaching Standards:** See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit. (Insert a hyperlink to Appendix 1 where you have stated your unit's main standards.)

**Synopsis:** In this unit, students will explore some of the reasons, or mitigating circumstances that people migrate to another country, or important decisions that families make to move to another state. Through determination and perseverance, families thrive and flourish throughout adjusting to a new country, new state, and the culture shocks. We will use the novel assigned to the EL module, plus another book to demonstrate a different reason why this family chose to flee their country. Through enriching activities including writing, the students will discover that through determination, perseverance and hard work, and the support of family, you can get through anything.

### **Rationale**

In Module 1 of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade EL Curriculum, the novel titled *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz is the book centered around the module. It tackles the abbreviated version of the Declaration of Human Rights while building on the knowledge of same. Additionally, the module addresses determination and perseverance as the main character, Esperanza, experiences devastating losses, such as, her dad, her wealth, her house, and her land. Throughout the story, she perseveres through difficult situations. In a few of the lessons, they compare character reactions by inferring what the character(s) are thinking and feeling along with quoting evidence from the text to support their inference. Following this assignment, they write reaction paragraphs based on the information they acquire and write in their note catcher.

I want to enhance the skills of main idea, supporting details, summarizing, and writing to assist with developing comprehension by digging deeper into the assigned reading texts while enriching the students with similar books. I want to improve vocabulary through the additional

texts, as well as, commence rich book discussions with literature circles and Socratic seminars. In Module 1, *Esperanza Rising*, Units 2 and 3, there are important writing pieces, which are essential in helping make those connections to human rights and the characters of the story. Writing is an essential piece of reading comprehension. Incorporating the characters in a writing piece by comparing and contrasting them using figurative language, specifically metaphors with a theme is another way to develop comprehension skills. Encouraging the students to read other books, or novels with the same type of theme is extremely helpful because they are exposed to some of the other authors' different writing styles. This can be helpful to the students in helping them to develop their own writing style.

The students will discover and learn about the different reasons, and at times, extenuating circumstances as to why some families are forced to, or choose to leave their country and build new roots in another country. We will also touch on families having to uproot and move to another state within the same country. That experience can be just as traumatic. I currently have students in my class who have fled their country for a better life in the United States, as well as, students who have relocated to North Carolina from the South and the Northern areas of the U.S. We will have enriching discussions about perseverance and determination, and what it takes to endure those drastic changes that families undergo from the moment they make those difficult decisions. Socratic seminars will be a strategy I will use to encourage some of the students to volunteer to share their experiences.

### **Demographics**

Many of the students (55%) of the Southeast Learning Community where I teach are disadvantaged. At the school where I teach, 35% are White, 29% are Hispanic, and 30% are Black out of approximately 488 students. I teach 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and reading proficiency scores (last posted in 2018) are 10% below state average. I taught math for the last 8 years. However, because of the recent circumstances of the last 18 plus months, this is my second school year teaching in a self-contained setting. Teaching in this type of setting requires me to teach the newly acquired EL curriculum adopted by the Charlotte Mecklenburg School District. It was challenging at best to not only teach reading after a long hiatus, but I had to learn a new curriculum, and review the science standards because I also had the additional challenge of teaching the fifth grade science curriculum. We had the appropriate training, and resources, however, implementing it was equally as challenging because I was nervous about executing the new curriculum. I want to enhance the EL curriculum to better serve the students who attend my school to hopefully begin to close the ever so wide gap in reading. This school year, my class consists of 24 students of whom eight are Hispanic, and of those eight, 4 attend ESL classes. Three of my students are EC, and three students are TD. We also began the school year with in-person learning. The students are much more engaged and eager to learn. They appreciate that they are in the classroom and not in a picture box.

### **Unit Goals**

The students will make connections between two texts through a variety of discussions, and writing assignments. We will be reading, *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan, and *Inside Out*

& *Back Again* by Thanhha Lai. We will focus on people who emigrate from another country, the struggles they endure, their journey to persevere, and adjust to a new way of life. The unit will be introduced by a read aloud, picture book titled, *Dreamers* by: Yuyi Morales.

*I plan to teach this unit during the next school year to 27 students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade.*

*I give permission for Charlotte Teachers Institute to publish my curriculum unit in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.*

**Teaching Standards:** Appendix 1

**RL.5.1** Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

**RL.5.3** Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.

**RI.5.5** Compare and contrast the overall structure of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.

**W.5.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

- a. Organize information and ideas around a topic to plan and prepare to write.
- b. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- c. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- d. Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.
- e. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- f. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

**SL.5.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**Title of books I will be using in my unit**

*Dreamers* by: Yuyi Morales – Picture Book



Author: Yuyi Morales

In 1994, Yuyi Morales was a swim coach, and left her home in Xalapa, Mexico and traveled to the United States, specifically, San Francisco with her infant son, Kelly. She was going to marry her son's father, who was a U.S. citizen. When she attempted to return to her roots, she was astonished to learn that she could not return because her immigration status had changed. She was considered to be a "permanent resident," and was obligated to remain in the U.S. She left behind everything she owned. It was an exceedingly difficult journey, as she had no knowledge of the English language. She discovered a San Francisco public library where she found solace in a plethora of books, and immersed herself in the English language while teaching herself how to read it and write it. Yuyi is also an illustrator. She has won the notable Pura Belpre Award for: *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book*, *Los Gatos Black on Halloween*, *Just in Case: A Trickster Tale and Spanish Alphabet Book*, *Nino Wrestles the World*, and *Viva Frida*, which additionally earned a Caldecott Honor.

In this picture book, Yuyi depicts her real life experience of leaving Mexico to pursue a richer life for her and her infant son. She dreamt of a new life the in the United States. She left everything she owned behind and crossed the border where she ended up in San Francisco, California. No one there spoke her language, and she did not understand the English language. However, she persevered and made San Francisco her new home where she discovered the amazing journey where an infinite about of books take you through remarkable journeys and places that books can provide for you. This is where she learned to read, speak and write. Books became the center of her universe.

*Inside Out & Back Again* by: Thanhha Lai



Thanhha Lai was born in Vietnam in 1965. She escaped from the Vietnam War after the fall of Saigon in 1975, and ended up in the United States in Montgomery, Alabama. There, she began a new life and attended the University of Texas, Austin where she majored in journalism. After earning her degree, she worked for the Orange County, California newspaper *The Register*, as a writer in 1988. While there, she wrote about Little Saigon, a Vietnamese community. She went to graduate school at NYU where she earned her masters degree in fine arts and taught at Parsons, the New School for Design.

In 2005, Lai created an organization for Viet Kids where they donate and raise money for bikes for children. Lai is an acclaimed young adult and children's author, having written three books to her credit, *Butterfly Yellow*, *Listen, Slowly*, and *Inside Out and Back*

*Again.* She has won several awards for her novels including the National Book Award and the Newbery Honor. She is a resident of New York where she shares a home with her husband, daughter, and dog, Pico.

In this free verse written story, ten-year-old Ha has lived in Saigon since the day of her birth. However, in the wake of the Vietnam War, Ha and her family are forced to flee Saigon on a ship headed to the United States in search of freedom. She and her family left mostly everything behind including her papaya tree. In the next year following her leap to the United States, she goes through many mixed emotions of grief while also healing from the traumatic experience of leaving the only home she ever knew.

### **Content Research**

When you think of people who leave their country to move to a different country, you think about people who come to the United States. Nevertheless, that is not always the case. Veterinary Nurse, Barbara Hyde, Dip (AVN) (Surg) decided it would be to her family's advantage to live in New Zealand. She and her husband believed it would be best to raise their two daughters in a "less hectic and more outdoor lifestyle." In addition, they did not have to learn a new language. After a considerable amount of research, phone calls, and applying for VN jobs, she finally accepted a position at a Veterinary Teaching Hospital. However, the journey to move to New Zealand was just beginning. There was a vast amount of paperwork to fill out from the NZ Immigration Service (NZIS) for emigration. Then, of course, the packing up, selling the house, looking for a temporary place to live, new bank accounts, and scheduling the movers to pack up your belongings and get them shipped. To say this was quite stressful is a complete understatement. In the beginning, everyone was welcoming and supportive. Ms. Hyde, endured a difficult adjustment, but overall she had no regrets. This is just moving from one country to another one by choice.

Push and Pull Factors – What drives people to leave their country or state? People migrate to other countries, or states for many different reasons. Migration is overall large-scale, which occurs due to economic, political, social, cultural, health, environmental, educational, and transportation factors. These factors are referred to as the push and pull factors. The push factors are issues that drive people to leave their homes, such as, no jobs, political unrest, poor medical care, natural disasters, famine, and loss of capital. Examples of pull factors are the reverse of the push factors. Pull factors are those factors that appeal people to certain locations around the globe. For example, better job opportunities, better living conditions, education, better medical care, political/religious freedom, and the feeling of safety for their families.

Statistics have proven that The United States of America is the most popular destination for foreign migration since 1970. The U.S. has many pull factors that attract foreigners to make it a primary residence for their families. Most importantly, there is a wide selection of job opportunities with depending on where you come from, much higher wages. Eventually, once extended families hear of their success, they begin to migrate so that they, likewise, may benefit from these excellent opportunities. Because of this, the impacts of migration cannot go unnoticed. The vast increase of migrants to the U.S. affects the population in such

a way that it makes it difficult to track and to keep up with. However, it is certain that the labor market, businesses flourishing, and economic growth is due to the ever-growing immigrants populating our area. They are infiltrating our society with new cultures, languages, and increased housing development in the rural and urban communities. Just to think, all this occurred with a simple “push” and “pull” effect.

## Day 1

**Activity:** Socratic Seminar – Students in a circle

**Lesson:** Introduce Unit I of the EL Curriculum with *Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales (Nonfiction/Autobiography)

Teacher will read the book aloud, and students will answer a series of discussion questions based on teacher provided prompts.

### **Discussion questions:**

1. The title of the book is *Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales (Show book cover). What do you think this book is about?
2. Yuyi left everything behind when she moved to the United States with her infant son. How do you think she felt? How do you know? What evidence from the text supports your answer?
3. How did she persevere over the struggle of the language barrier?
4. How did the character change throughout the story? Find evidence in the text to support your answer.
5. How do you know? What evidence in the text supports your answer?

### **Writing Assignment:**

To check for understanding, the students will complete a Chronological Order Graphic Organizer, and write a summary of the story using the graphic organizer. I will provide the starting sentence and sentence stems.

Example:

In the story, “Dreamers,” written by Yuyi Morales, she leaves her country with her infant son, and a backpack full of gifts. (Then...Later... Next... Lastly)

*See Appendix 3 for graphic organizer referred to in this lesson.*

## Day 2

**Activity:** Students will obtain background information of the Vietnam War in order to have an understanding of why the novel *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai was written, and why Ha and her family fled Saigon.

**Lesson:** Students will learn about the Vietnam War, and the fall of Saigon. The lesson will begin with a K-W-L Chart. Students will have a quick write of what they know under “K.” They will turn and talk with their partner and compare notes. Then, we will have whole class discussion on what students know.

Teacher will have students think about what they wonder and have a second quick write under “W.” Once more, the students will turn and talk with their partner and compare what they each wonder about the Vietnam War. We will come back together for whole class discussion.

Teacher will give background on the novel we will be referring to, *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai, including information about the author. Teacher will then begin to present information, and conduct discussion about the Vietnam War, and Saigon.

Students will take notes, and fill in the “L” part of their KWL graphic organizer. They will turn and talk with their partner to compare notes and discuss what they learned. We will come back as a whole class to discuss what they learned, and address any unanswered wonders.

*See Appendix 3 for the graphic organizer referred to in this lesson.*



### **Day 3**

**Lesson:** Vocabulary, Push/Pull factors. Students will learn about and discuss the word, “migrate.” They will use a Frayer model to help with the research of the word “migrate.” We will also discuss the “push/pull” factors that lead people to migrate. They will draw a T-Chart in their notebooks, label one side “Push”, and the other side “Pull.”

**Activity:** Frayer model graphic organizer and T-chart. Students will work independently to complete the Frayer model with the word migrate. After a few minutes, they will gather in a small group of three to compare notes. We will come together as a whole class to talk about the word “migrate.” Then we will have a “brain dump.” Students will write all the reasons they believe that people migrate to another state or country. Students will turn and talk to their neighbor to compare notes. Next, students will have another “brain dump” on deterrents or limitations the migrants may experience before, during, or after a move.

To introduce push/pull factors students will draw a T-Chart in their notebooks. Label one side “Push” and the other side “Pull.” Teacher will discuss the meaning of each and give an example. The students will work for a few minutes in their small group of three to fill out their T-Chart.

*See Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 for graphic organizers referred to in this lesson.*

## **Day 4**

**Lesson:** Students will begin to read the novel *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai. Teacher will discuss the free verse text structure. Teacher will give background information on the meaning of “Tet.” Students will follow along as the book is read aloud to them.

**Activity:** To check for understanding students will work in a small group of three to answer discussion questions in their journal notebooks. Afterwards, will have whole group discussion.

**After Reading** discussion questions:

1. What do we learn about a 10-year-old Ha from “1975: Year of the Cat”?
2. How does that make Ha feel that only boys can bring luck? How do you know?  
Support your answer with a quote from the text.
3. What does she do about it?
4. What can you infer about Ha and her non-acceptance of traditional roles? Support your answer with a quote from the text.
5. Explain what Ha meant by the statement, “An old angry knot expanded in my throat.”

## **Day 5**

**Lesson:** Students will continue to read the novel *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai. Students will follow along as the book is read aloud to them.

**Activity:** To check for understanding students will work in a small group of three to discuss and answer journal prompt questions in their journal notebooks. They will choose sentence strips with discussion questions. When prompted, students will rotate to other groups to discuss each other's questions and answers. I will walk around facilitating the groups to be sure they are on the right track with their answers and I will ask more probing questions based on their answers and discussions.

### **Days 6 and 7**

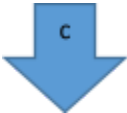
**Lesson:** Students will finish listening to *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai. Students will follow along as the book is read aloud to them.

**Activity:** Students will fill out a note catcher graphic organizer (appendix 7) with what they notice and what they wonder. Students will confer with a small group of three to compare their notices and wonders, and discuss their notices and wonders. At the end of the day 7, we will come together as a whole class (Socratic seminar style) to share and discuss their notices and wonders further.

**Appendix 2 – Chronological Order Graphic Organizer**

**Sequence/Chronological Order**

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_



Appendix 3 – KWL Chart

# K-W-L Chart

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>KNOW</b>	<b>WONDER</b>	<b>LEARN</b>

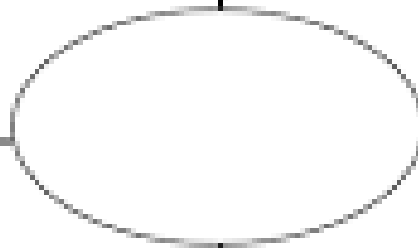
**Appendix 4 – Frayer Model**

**Definition**

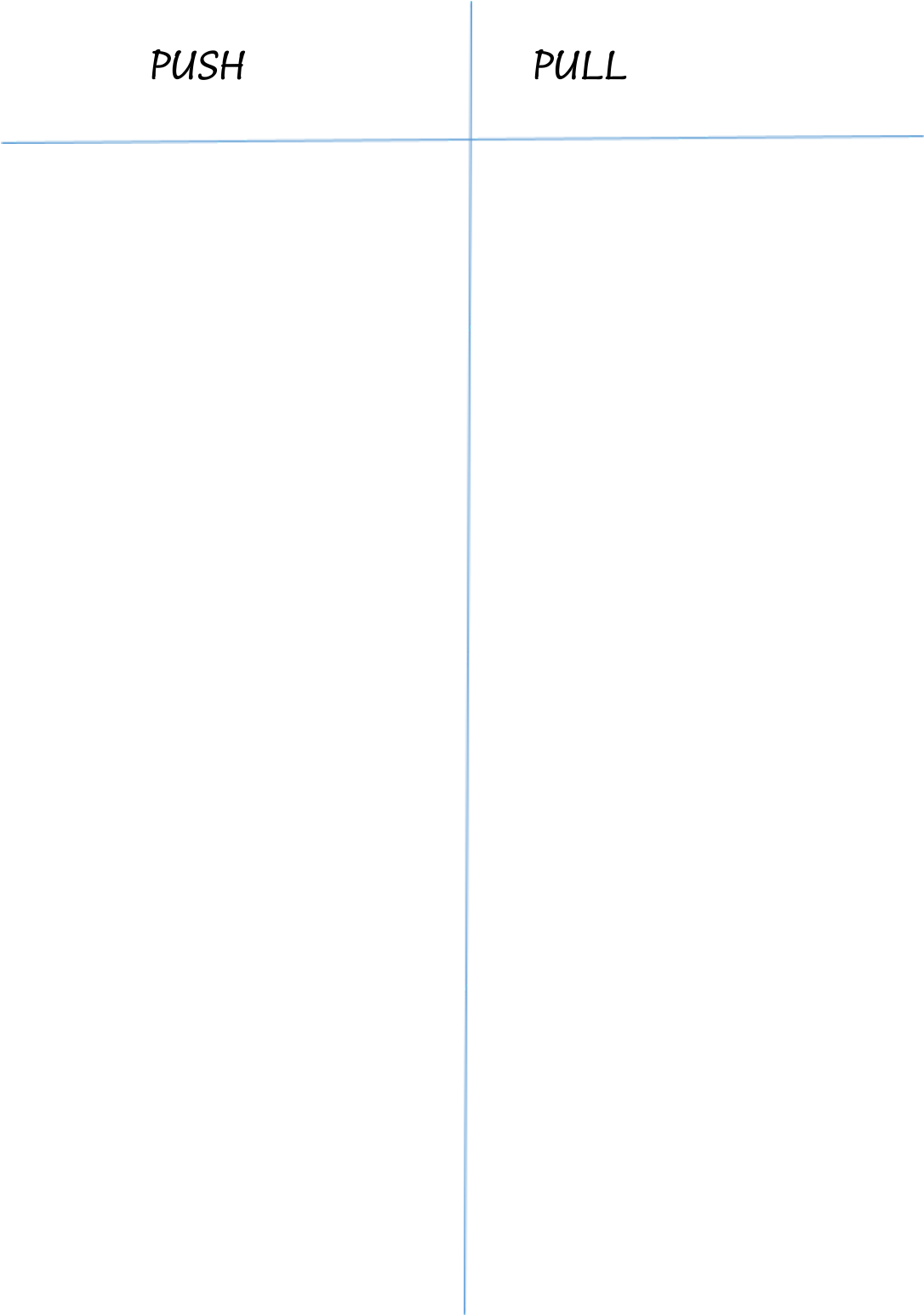
**Characteristics**

**Examples**

**Non-examples**



**Appendix 5 – T-Chart**





Appendix 6 – Journal prompt questions for Day 5 lesson

1. How many brothers does Ha have?
2. How do they treat her?
3. How does she respond?

4. Do you believe that Ha's brothers tease her because they adore her, as her mother says?
5. Do you have siblings, or cousins that tease you?
6. How do you respond?

7. Why is the papaya tree so special to Ha?
8. How do you know?
9. What evidence can you quote from the text that will support your answer?

10. Where is Titi going?
11. How can you tell?

12. How do you think kids feel who have to leave their country because of war?
13. Is this a "push" or "pull" factor?

14. When did Kim Ha's father leave on a navy mission?
15. What do you believe happened to him?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Appendix 7

**NOTICE AND WONDER NOTECATCHER**

<b>I NOTICE...</b>	<b>I WONDER...</b>

### Additional Recommended Texts

*90 Miles to Havana* by: Enrique Flores-Galbis



Enrique Flores-Galbis was born in Havana, Cuba. He studied the art of painting at the New York University Graduate School under the leadership of “photo-realist,” Adelle Weber. Additionally, he studied with renowned portraitist, Daniel Greene, followed by Ramond Everett Kinstrler at the National Academy of Design. Enrique Flores-Galbis earned a Master of Fine Arts Degree from Parsons School of Design in 1992. Mr. Flores-Galbis returned to Cuba after thirty years. He was painting the streets of Havana where the vivid memories began to flow. He began to record these memories. Two books were born from those colorful memories, *Raining Sardines* and *90 Miles to Havana*. He now lives in New York with his wife, also an artist, his two daughters, and his dog, Chico.

For this book, he earned the Pura Belpre honor, a Bank Street Best Children’s book of the year, and a Sunshine State Young Reader’s award selection.

In *90 Miles to Havana*, three brothers are sent to Miami during the Peter Pan operation where there was a drastic departure of over 14,000 unaccompanied Cuban minors ages 6 to 18 from 1960 to 1962. This is a historical novel based on Flores-Galbis’s experience from leaving Cuba when he was a young boy due to the Peter Pan operation. He tells the story of the Peter Pan operation through his perspective, and terrifying experience. He depicts the unrest, the bravery, and appreciation of those young children who fled the island of Cuba to avoid the abrupt removal from their families by the communist government, and trained to be a part of Castro’s dictatorship.

*Tangerine* by Edward Bloor



Mr. Bloor

Mr. Bloor was born in 1950 in Trenton, New Jersey. He worked as a high school teacher. He worked for three years before starting a career in children's publishing. He created his first novel in his mind while shuttling back and forth to work on Florida's back roads west of Orlando. He witnessed the daily destruction of citrus groves along the route. This made a lasting impression on Mr. Bloor to the point where he references it in *Tangerine*.

*Tangerine* involves a boy, Paul Fisher, and his family who relocate from Texas, and lay down new roots in Florida. What pulls them towards this move is a serious problem with his older brother. He perseveres through a lot of grief, chaos, and bullying with the help of new friends, and soccer. Paul grows up, and matures quickly. Through much determination,, he gains the courage necessary, and the strength he needs to endure the trauma he discovers along with the family secret.

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