

Illinois Reading Council



Empowering
Lives
Through
Literacy

Communicator

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*"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed,
and some few to be chewed and digested."*

~ Francis Bacon

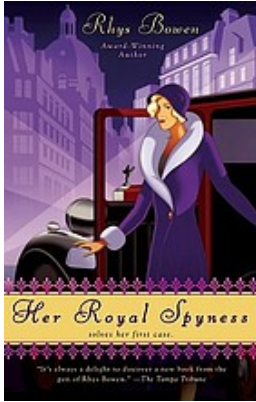
FROM THE DESK OF THE IRC PRESIDENT By Melissa Stinnett

My mother, Ann Stinnett, has always been an avid reader. She has several favorite authors and many books that I read often originate from her recommendations. Mom particularly likes an author by the name of **Rhys Bowen**. Rhys Bowen has written a few different series as well as stand-alone books. I will share three of them here.

The [*Her Royal Spyness Series*](#) is a favorite. This series comprises humorous historical mysteries featuring minor royal, Lady Georgie.

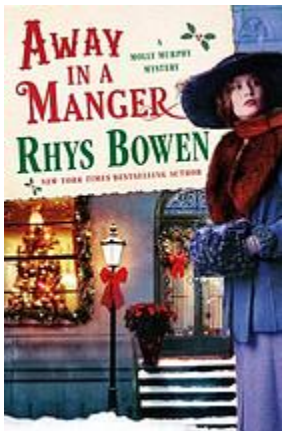
Georgiana's cousin is King Edward the 8th, the one who abdicated the throne of England. Many of Bowen's stories in this series occur either before he abdicates or after he abdicates.

One of the books in this series is entitled *Naughty in Nice*. This book is



the 5th book in the Royal Spyness Mystery Series. Lady Georgiana Rannoch has once again been called into service by Her Majesty the Queen. This time she's sent to Nice on a secret assignment to recover the Queen's stolen snuff box.

Initially Lady Georgie stayed with her relatives who were somewhat financially poor. She had to sleep in the library which was very uncomfortable. Georgiana was unhappy with her relatives. One day she was exploring and she bumped into her own mother. Her mother had a chateau in Nice and invited her to stay. From her mother's veranda, Lady Georgie could see a house with a pool. Georgiana experiences a series of events, such as sailing with a charming man who ends up dead, making police suspect her of the crime.



The second series is the [Molly Murphy Mysteries](#) which are set in turn-of-the-century New York City. Molly Murphy grew up a peasant on the coast of Ireland and she always imagined there was something more in store for her. There are 21 books in this series.

The book that I read was [Away in a Manger](#) which is book 15 in the series. It is Christmas in 1905 New York City. Molly Murphy Sullivan is married and has a baby son. As they listen to carolers in the street, they hear a lovely voice, the voice of an angel, and see a beggar girl huddled in a doorway with her brother, singing "Away in the Manger." The sister and brother have come from England and their mother has disappeared, and they are living with an aunt who mistreats them terribly. Molly is curious as to what happened to their mother. She gets drawn into an investigation that will take her up to the highest levels of New York society.



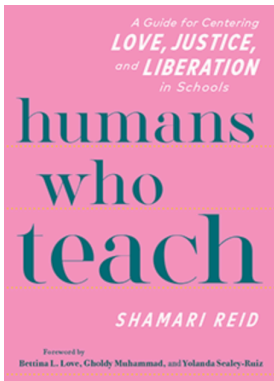
The third group includes books that are not part of a series, such as [The Rose Arbor](#). The setting is 1968 in London. Liz Houghton is languishing as an obituary writer at a London newspaper when a young girl's disappearance captivates the city. If Liz can break the story, it's her way into the newsroom. She already has a scoop; her best friend, Marisa, is a police officer assigned to the case. Liz follows Marisa to Dorset, where they make another disturbing discovery. Over two decades earlier, three girls disappeared while evacuating from London. One was found murdered in the woods near a train line. The other two were never seen again. As Liz digs deeper, she finds herself drawn to the village of Tydeham, which was requisitioned by the military during the war and left in ruins. After all these years, what could possibly link the missing girls to the abandoned village and why does a place Liz has never seen before seem so strangely familiar?

In closing, Mom said about Rhys Bowen, "I like that all her stories are very well written. You feel like you are right there with them. The scenery is beautifully described and you feel like you are there with the characters."

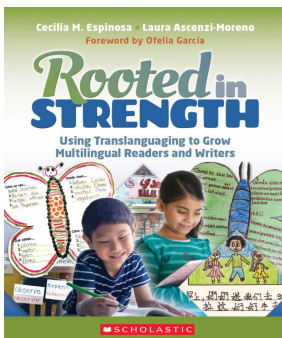
IRC BOOK CLUB

Join educators from all over the state in the online **Winter 2025 IRC Book Club!** Choose one, two, or all three books!

Beginning **January 19**, participants will be reading, reflecting on, and responding in the ***Humans Who Teach*** book club, the ***Rooted in Strength*** book club, and/or the ***Illinois Reads*** book club during the seven-weeks of online discussions. Participants who complete all assignments will be eligible to receive **15 PD clock hours** for each book club.

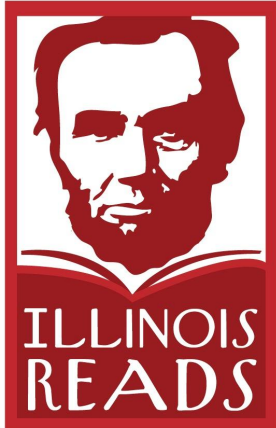


For the [*Humans Who Teach: A Guide for Centering Love, Justice, and Liberation in Schools*](#) book club, the book was written by Shamari Reid. This book club will be exploring the complicated humanity of those who teach and how within their humanity lies the transformative possibilities for cultivating lives and classrooms characterized by love.



For the [*Rooted in Strength: Using Translanguaging to Grow Multilingual Readers and Writers*](#) book club, the book was written by Cecilia M. Espinosa and Laura Ascenzi-Moreno. This book club will be demonstrating how our emergent bilingual students who speak two or more languages in their daily lives thrive when they are able to use “translanguaging” to tap the power of their entire linguistic and sociocultural repertoires.

For the [*Illinois Reads*](#) book club, participants will be selecting books from one of the age bands of the 2025 Illinois Reads list to prepare lesson plans and activities. For Birth to 2nd Grade, participants will select a new book each week for a total of six books; for 3rd to 5th Grade, participants will select three books; for 6th to 8th Grade, participants will select two books; and for 9th to 12th Grade or the Adult age band, participants will select one book.



Register by **January 15, 2025**, to participate in the book club. Registration is FREE for IRC Members. The cost for non-members is \$50, which includes IRC membership for one year. PLEASE NOTE: The cost of book is not included.

REGISTER TODAY!



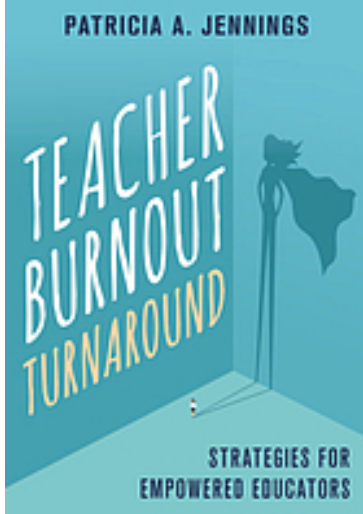
Book Review by Ashley Falkos, MSED

Title: [Teacher Burnout Turnaround: Strategies for Empowered Educators](#)

Author: Patricia A. Jennings

Publisher: Norton and Company, Inc. 2021

Has the thought ever crossed your mind that you could leave teaching and get paid to do something entirely different, and perhaps even be appreciated a little more? Teacher Burnout Turnaround is a must read for any teacher who feels like the pandemic has affected learners and teachers alike, even all these years later. Educators are vastly burnt out and losing motivation to continue the hard work they get paid very little to do in comparison to other fields with equal education and experience. The burnout crisis has led to a teacher shortage; professionals in our field are leaving in droves. In fact, according to Jennings, 25% of all teachers quit the profession in 2020. Jennings calls for change in the education system to retain dedicated professionals who impact students' academic and



emotional learning in positive ways. Jennings provides thorough research, practical examples, and inspiration for teachers everywhere in her book, *Teacher Burnout Turnaround: Strategies for Empowered Educators*.

Jennings encourages educators to realize that we are a workforce of over three million dedicated professionals and empowers us to feel that we have the knowledge and capacity to make major changes in an outdated educational system. Our students are learning in a 21st century environment and often we are preparing them for jobs that don't currently exist. Furthermore, are we teaching our students mindfulness to deal with the stressors of the pandemic moving forward? Are we considering our own mental health as teachers working in what often seems like a pressure cooker?

The book is laid out in three parts. Here are the main takeaways from each section:

1. **Addressing Teacher Stress and Burnout** *How did we get here? This provides a brief history of the education system in America and points out that we are still operating with an old factory model, despite how much our world has changed. It addresses the stress educators are prone to managing emotions, fitting in curriculum, and making hundreds of decisions daily. It concludes with ways to build inner resilience. This is not surprising coming from Jennings, who was named "One of the Top Mindfulness Researchers You Should Know." She acknowledges the problems most teachers sarcastically joke about, but also offers a solution on ways to cope.*
2. **Preparing for Transformative Change** *Jennings also acknowledged the teacher's mindset, which was very interesting from a psychological standpoint. Are we telling ourselves scripts or is it our reality? She often refers to "mind traps" and how to overcome them as educators who have been asked to teach in an archaic system during the 21st century.*
3. **Empowering Teachers** *We have the power to make change as teacher leaders. Jennings raises questions such as, "What does our current professional development look like opposed to what should it look like to be effective?" She concluded with an ideal school as an example that empowers not only educators, but students as well.*

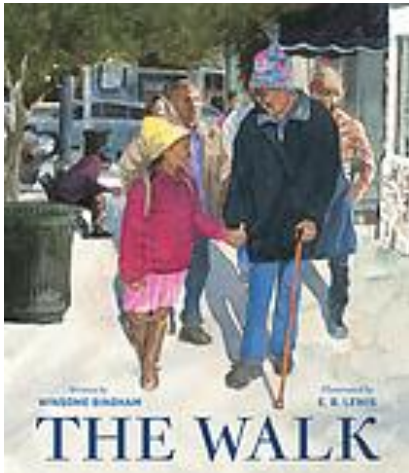
This book will motivate teachers to prioritize the social-emotional needs of students, as well as be aware of their own mindset. If you need some motivation and are feeling burnt-out, pick this book up today!

Bio
Ashley Falkos is a Reading Specialist in Geneva CUSD 304 (Illinois). She has 6 years of experience as an elementary classroom teacher and has been in her current position for over a decade at the middle school level. She has presented at the Illinois Reading Council and the Illinois Council of Instructional Coaches. She enjoys promoting literacy and spending time with her two little girls – reading, of course!

Family Literacy Bookshelf

By Barb Ashton

During November we're reminded it's Diabetes and Epilepsy Awareness Month. Native American Heritage or Indigenous People's Month is also in November. On Veteran's Day we remember and honor those who served our country and especially those who paid the ultimate price for preserving freedom. Let's not forget to "Give Thanks" for the many blessings we've received this year on Thanksgiving Day.



Every four years Americans head to the voting booth to cast their vote for the next president of our country. However, not all Americans had this privilege for many years due to voter suppression laws. To celebrate that privilege read [The Walk](#) by Winsome Bingham. Granny takes her granddaughter on the walk but doesn't tell her the reason, other than it's a walk that can't be missed. Along the way they meet several different people of all diverse races. They join them on the long walk. Although somewhat tired and confused Granny and her granddaughter arrive at her granddaughter's school, where the voting booth is located. Granny tells her that they walked all this way "for hope" and to "speak up, stand up, and say what's on their minds." She also tells her that by voting the voters can make a positive change and to give her an example of participating in democracy. Detailed watercolor illustrations not only engage the reader but also

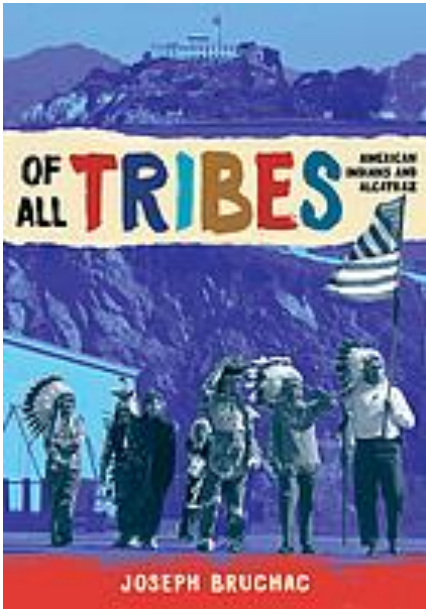
capture the emotion and joy the characters feel as they journey to the polling place. *The Walk* provides an excellent introduction for discussion on the importance of voting and the significance of participation in the democratic process. *The Walk* can be teamed with the book *The Day Madear Voted* by Wade Hudson.



[Dare to Question: Carrie Chapman Catt's Voice for the Vote](#) by Jasmine A. Stirling is the biography of Carrie Chapman Catt. When she learned about women not being able to work in various professions or even menial jobs, Carrie became passionate about finding the solution. Carrie's father believed girls didn't need to go to college. She defied him and worked as a dishwasher to put herself through college studying journalism. After graduation she had a successful career as a journalist. Carrie also joined the suffragist movement and worked with Susan B. Anthony. As she became more involved with the movement, Carrie got things moving and soon took over the leadership and became the president of the National American Women Suffrage Association. With America's involvement in World War I, women began to work at jobs previously held by men. President Woodrow Wilson supported Carrie's work. With a yellow rose pinned to her dress Carrie waited for Congress to vote on the 19th Amendment. With one final vote from a

Tennessee congressman the 19th Amendment became law. Carrie continued to work for justice and eventually founded The League of Women Voters. The illustrations of Udayana Lugo capture the emotions and spirit of Carrie Catt as she rallies crowds of suffragettes, inspires

readers of her articles in newspapers, and works for the suffragist movement. The back of the book contains an author's note and further information on the life of Carrie Chapman Catt. *Dare to Question* is a book for all libraries and provides a starting point for discussion on racism and voting rights.



We all know of Alcatraz as the famous prison located on an island in the San Francisco Bay Area. But did you know that it once was part of Native American territory/history? Read the book [*Of All Tribes: American Indians and Alcatraz*](#) by Joseph Bruchac, a Native American author. This book centers around the 1969 Native American occupation of Alcatraz. The author begins his narrative by introducing the reader to a brief history of the area and especially the Ohlone Tribe who were the original residents of the area. As America grew as a country, Native Americans were forced to leave their land and give up regional territory. During the late 19th century Alcatraz became a prison where Native American men were unjustly imprisoned. Over the years Native American activists tried to reclaim their lands but to no avail. It wasn't until November 1969 when a group of activists who called themselves *Of All Tribes* landed on Alcatraz. They demanded its return to Native Americans based on an old treaty from 1868 "that stated all abandoned federal land was to be returned to the Native Americans who once occupied it." Their occupation

lasted for 19 months. During this time the activists raised issues and awareness of the poor conditions on Native American reservations. The back of the book includes additional resources, a timeline, resource notes, an author's note, and bibliography. *Of All Tribes* is a good read for your middle school and high school students and makes a fine addition to your Native American book collection.

Looking Ahead

November 1: All Saints Day

November 2: Dia De Los Muertos – A celebration of life and death of family members

November 5: U.S. General Election Day

November 11: Veterna's Day – Thank a veteran for his/her service

November 17: World Peace Day – Be kind to others and teach others to be peaceful

November 28: Thanksgiving Day – A time to give thanks and be grateful for blessings received

November 29: Black Friday

UPCOMING PD EVENTS

Don't forget to take advantage of some upcoming PD opportunities planned throughout Illinois.

- **November 1, 2024: IRC** is accepting submissions for the following awards and grants:
 - **[IRC Service Award](#)**: This award will recognize an outstanding IRC Leader for time, commitment, and service to the Illinois Reading Council.
 - **[IRC Hall of Fame Award](#)**: This award recognizes significant contributions to reading and reading education.
 - **[Barack Obama Library Award](#)**: This award is a classroom library valued at \$1,000 that is given to a teacher of 5th to 8th grade students each year.
 - **[Family Literacy Award](#)**: This award recognizes an IRC member who promotes and supports parent involvement in children's reading.
 - **[Jerry Johns Reading Educator of the Year Award](#)**: This award will recognize an outstanding teacher who makes significant contributions in promoting literacy among students, colleagues, and school communities.
- **November 5, 2024: MID-State Reading Council** will host the Shifting the Balance Book Club from 4:30 to 5:30 pm at Gill Street Restaurant, 3002B Gill Street, Bloomington, Illinois.
- **November 6, 2024: IRC Webinar on Understanding, Assessing, and Teaching Our Students with Dyslexia** with **Jan Hasbrouck** from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom Webinar.
- **November 12, 2024: Suburban Council of IRA (SCIRA)** will host the SCIRA Fall 2024 Workshop on Applying Culturally Relevant Practices to the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan with Sophie Degener and Hannah Graham from 4:30 to 6:00 pm at National Louis University, 1000 Capitol Drive, Wheeling, Illinois.
- **November 13, 2024: Prairie Area Reading Council and West Suburban Reading Council** will co-host the Book Gossip with Kathleen March from 5:00 to 7:30 pm at Anderson's Bookshop, 5112 Main Street, Downers Grove, Illinois.
- **November 16, 2024: Fox Valley Reading Council** will host an Illinois Reads Family Reading Event from 10:00 to 11:00 am at Aurora Santori Library, 101 S River Street, Aurora, Illinois.
- **November 19, 2024: Will County Reading Council** will host Unlocking the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan-Part II Word Recognition from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom.
- **November 21, 2024: Western Illinois Reading Council** will host Love: Wordsmith and Wine from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Reserve Artisan Ales, 185 S. Kellogg Street, Galesburg, Illinois.

To view the full **IRC Events Calendar**, please visit the [IRC Website](#).

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Members are encouraged to submit articles at any time to irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

[#WhatIAmReading](#): Share a book that you are reading, in 3 to 4 sentences.

[IRC Highlight Reels](#): Share snapshots of successes in your classrooms in 100 to 300 words. Remember no success is too big or too small to share and pictures welcomed!

[Other Literacy Topics](#):

- Literacy Meets STEAM
- SEL via Literacy
- Building the Reading and Writing Connection
- Culturally Responsive Teaching and Literature
- And any other literacy topics that interests you!

Thank you for helping to inspire your fellow educators! Posts will be shared on social media too!

QUICK LINKS

[Visit the IRC Website](#)

[Full IRC Events Calendar](#)

[Latest on the IRC Conference](#)

[Available IRC Awards and Grants](#)

[Bring IRC PD to your School District](#)

[Learn more about the Illinois Reads Program](#)

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to the Illinois Reading Council by email at irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org or by phone at 309-454-1341.

See what's also happening on our social media sites:



