



ABOUT THE BOOK

Thirteen-year-old Matthew is miserable. His journalist dad is stuck overseas, and his mom has moved his great-grandmother in with them to ride out the pandemic, adding to his stress and isolation.

In his great-grandmother's belongings, Matthew finds a photo that provides a clue to a hidden chapter of her past, one that will reveal a life-shattering family secret. Set in alternating timelines that connect the present day to the 1930s and the US to the USSR, Katherine Marsh's latest novel sheds light on the Holodomor—the horrific famine that killed millions of Ukrainians.

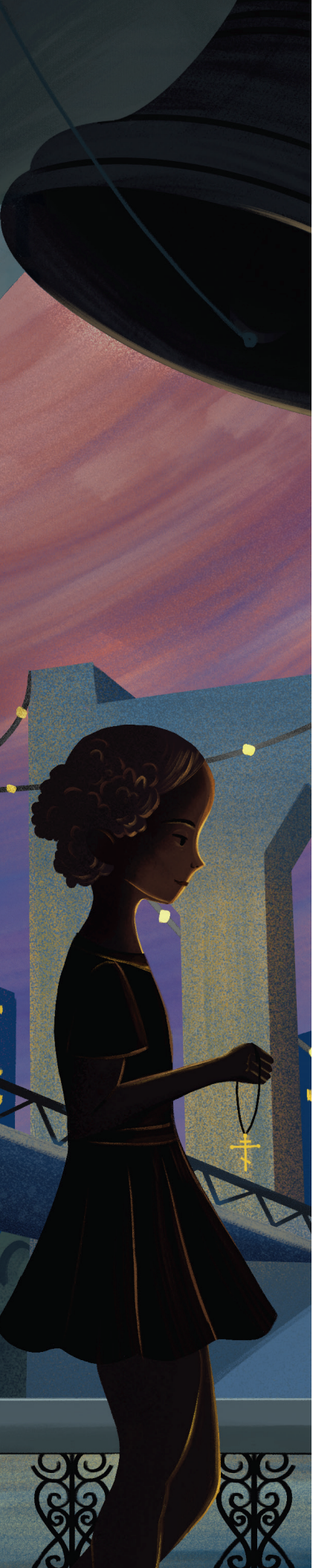
An incredibly timely, page-turning story of family, survival, and sacrifice inspired by Marsh's own family history, *The Lost Year* is perfect for fans of Ruta Sepetys's *Between Shades of Gray* and Alan Gratz's *Refugee*.



Photo © Julian E. Barnes

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KATHERINE MARSH is the Edgar Award-winning author of *The Night Tourist*; *Nowhere Boy*; *The Twilight Prisoner*; *Jepp*, *Who Defied the Stars*; and *The Doors by the Staircase*. She grew up in New York and now lives in Washington, DC, with her husband and two children. katherinemarsh.com @MarshKatherine



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Each chapter of *The Lost Year* is told from a different character's perspective. As you read Mila, Helen, Nadiya, Matthew, and GG's perspectives, describe each character in detail (e.g., What do they look like? What do they say and what does it reveal about their personalities and their fears and joys?). Using textual evidence discuss how the people in the story are related to one another. Can you create a visual to clarify how they are connected?
2. What do you learn about news reporting by reading this story? What are examples of common guidelines that Helen, Matthew, and Matthew's father follow as journalists? Matthew's father shares some guiding principles of interviewing: "Establish trust, Listen, Show ur fair" (Chapter 5, pg.41). Why do you think these guidelines are important?
3. Explore how Mila's life changes over the course of the story. Describe her life at the beginning, middle, and end of the book. Analyze her character arc. Why are the changes important to the story?
4. What surprised you while reading? Look back at the text. Can you find foreshadowing? If you were surprised, share your reaction with your fellow readers. Guide readers to reread chapters 45 and 46. What clues does the author leave as she leads up to revealing the truth? How do they affect a reader as they turn the pages?
5. Why do you think GG decides to tell her story to Matthew? How might her life have been different if she revealed her story sooner (at the orphanage or when she arrived in America)? What might have changed if she had revealed her truth at a different time?
6. Consider what each character has lost. What has each character gained?
7. Now that you have read the story, why do you think Katherine Marsh chose the title *The Lost Year*? How does your answer compare to your original prediction about the title? Discuss how this title is relevant to each of the characters in the story. Do you feel like the first year of the pandemic was a "lost year"? Why or why not?
8. What are some alternative titles for this story? Explain your choices.



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