

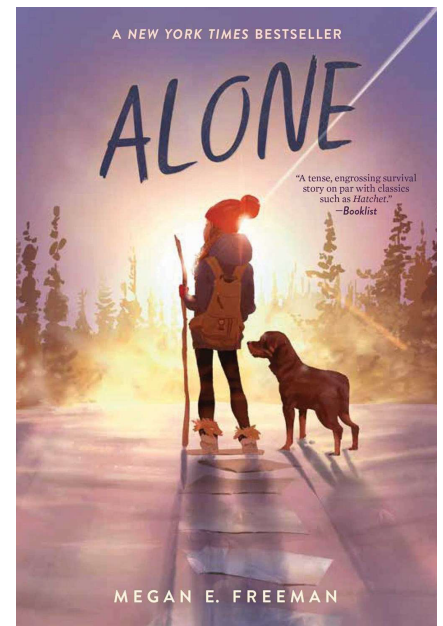


Selecting a book for your reading program is an important decision. To help you select the right book for your young readers and your community, we are providing the following context related to potentially sensitive content to help make a well-informed decision. As always, we encourage and recommend that book selections come after a full read of the book by multiple decision-makers or stakeholders.

Alone
by Megan E. Freeman

Read This Book to Discover...

The inspiring, triumphant story of one 12-year-old girl's effort to stay alive for three years all alone in her mysteriously deserted Colorado town. Maddie forages for food and supplies, learns how to build a fire by using the library, and manages the challenges of fending for herself. She grapples with untrustworthy strangers, harsh winter weather, a tornado, a flash flood, and a fire—but her biggest challenge is loneliness. She is equally resourceful in fighting it: she adopts a faithful Rottweiler, reflects and processes with her journal, and dives into books to find inspiration and solace in the words of others. Her story is told through buoyant, reflective, and highly accessible free verse poetry, which makes for quick but self-reflective reading. Readers will be as inspired as Maddie was by the question articulated by poet, Mary Oliver: "Tell me, what is it you plan to do/with your one wild and precious life?"



What to Watch Out For...

Maddie's solitude is ever-present, but the challenges from the flash flood, the tornado, and the fire present more immediately harrowing circumstances. Maddie manages to safely navigate through them all, but they are each stressful situations.

It is people who might pose a more fraught danger. Maddie is desperate to be rescued, but wise enough to be wary, when a group of strangers come to town. A band of looters arrive, noisy and destructive, and Maddie assesses from the sidelines. When one of the men cruelly kills a kitten in a sack, Maddie knows to stay hidden until the men leave. Though it is critical for

developing Maddie's worldly street smarts, students sensitive to the fate of animals will not enjoy this moment.

Soon after, when exploring a pawn shop, Maddie discovers a handgun in a case. She decides to take it as she might need it for protection. She even grabs some ammunition and heads out to a field to practice using it. For a time, she takes it with her whenever she goes out foraging beyond her town. It is never used in any conflict, and Maddie eventually leaves it at home, largely forgotten.

Sometime after turning fourteen Maddie gets her first period. She is wistful for her Mom and thinks about her peers - but this development passes quickly in a single two-page poem. One might hope that your middle schoolers will manage this material as calmly and maturely as Maddie does.

