

Al Capone Shines My Shoes

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This novel is about a boy named Moose Flanagan who lives with his family on Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco bay. He is 12 years old, and he lives in the Island because his father is a guard. Alcatraz Island used to be a prison where famous criminals such as Al Capone were incarcerated. The civilians who live on the island get their house work such as laundry, sewing and plumbing done by the less dangerous convicts.

Moose's sister is called Natalie. She has a disability where her mind has not developed completely, so she cannot go to the same school as Moose. Instead, she goes to the Esther P. Marinoff School because of Al Capone's help. The strange thing is that Moose has never met Al Capone before, but has gotten his help. There are other kids living on Alcatraz who are friends with Moose and his friend, called Scout, who lives in San Francisco. Since Moose is now in debt to Al Capone, he receives a note in the laundry saying to give flowers to Capone's wife, Mae. Moose finds the opportunity to do this on his visit to his sister at her new school. On the boat back to Alcatraz, he sees Mae and gives her yellow roses, but to erase suspicion, he gives one to every woman and girl on board.

Soon after, he finds out that the civilians on Alcatraz are going to have a huge banquet because the person who caught Al Capone is coming to the island. A few days before the banquet, Natalie is coming to Alcatraz as well. However, when Moose and his friends are helping Natalie unpack, they find a bar spreader used to spread prison bars. This arouses the kids' suspicion, and they throw the bar spreader into the Bay. A few days later, all of the things that could go wrong on Alcatraz seem to go wrong, and the kids have to fix everything without being caught by the adults.

This book was a fun read, full of facts and action, and I would recommend this book as a gift to anyone in middle school. I also liked the trivia section in the end of the book, because this showed the real information that was the basis for this book. In addition to this book, I would recommend the prequel, *Al Capone does my Shirts* and the *Joey Pigza* series by Jack Gantos.