

jump into a good **book**



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PICTURE BOOKS

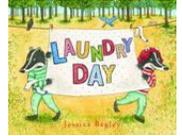
FLASHLIGHT, by Lizi Boyd (Grades Pre-K to 1)

What lurks in the dark corners of the night? A young boy goes exploring and finds all kinds of wonderful night life in the beam of his flashlight. The illustrations create a wonderful story of nighttime with pages that connect through very cleverly placed cutouts that draw your attention to specific items with masterful intention. Keep an eye on the rascally raccoon for that bandit has a sense of humor.



LAUNDRY DAY, by Jessixa Bagley (Grades Pre-K to 1)

This playful tale, sweetly illustrated, will delight young readers as they watch the antics of the badger siblings. Showcasing typical family dynamics, Mama Badger is occupied with the task of doing the laundry while Tic and Tac bewail: "I'm bored." Mama suggests many activities as she scrubs as her children add to her workload. Finally, she suggests they help her by introducing them to the activity of hanging the wet laundry on the clothesline. As she leaves them alone to do the chore while she goes to the market, even toddlers will soon be giggling as they recognize that perhaps Mama should have been nervous when they so readily agreed to "help."



MARIGOLD BAKES A CAKE, by Mike Marlborough (Grades Pre-K to 2)

Marigold is a very grumpy cat who is very particular about baking. When a gaggle of birds fly in through the window and disrupt his cake-making process, he doesn't know what to do. This funny book explores the themes of patience, friendship and learning to go with the flow through vivid watercolor illustrations. Kids will laugh out loud at Marigold's messy kitchen and his visitors' antics and take in new vocabulary words as Marigold uses a "smidgen" of this for his "snazziest" recipes for one "exquisite" dessert.



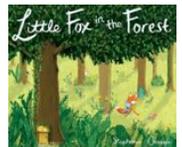
CAN AN AARDVARK BARK? by Melissa Stewart; illustrated by Steve Jenkins (Grades Pre-K to 2)

Who doesn't love Steve Jenkins' illustrations? They are detailed, colorful and lifelike complements to Melissa Stewart's charming text. This is a great read for all ages, as it has captivating visuals, lyrical narrative for young listeners, and then small bits of interesting information on each animal. We learn something new and different about each animal throughout. The common threads throughout the book are the questions asked about the sounds of each animal. And then subtly, that sound connects us to several other animals that make a similar sound. The descriptions and artwork make the reader feel as if they've just gone on a world tour of animals and their characteristics. A delightful and informative read.



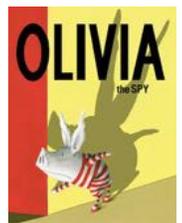
LITTLE FOX IN THE FOREST, by Stephanie Graegin (Grades Pre-K to 2)

This is an utterly charming and engaging wordless picture book. Perfect for a child who has a beloved stuffed animal. A picture book without text is a more interactive, way to "read" a book with a child, letting them look at the pictures and tell the story *with* you. It can change each time! But it always ends with the lost, little stuffed fox being found, through a group effort, and then generously shared, with happiness and contentment for all.



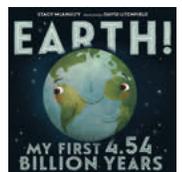
OLIVIA THE SPY, by Ian Falconer (Grades Pre-K to 2)

Olivia, the curious pig and star of the series of the same name, is full of mischief once again in this iteration. After overhearing her parents complain about their daughter's naughty behavior, she sets out to spy on them to determine what they are going to do with her. After Olivia eavesdrops on her parents talking about taking her to an "institution," she's convinced she is going to prison. But it turns out her mother has a magical evening planned for her instead. This sweet "Olivia" story is another hit in the series. Kids will love pointing out Olivia's clever hiding spots as she spies on her family.



EARTH! MY FIRST 4.54 BILLION YEARS, by Stacy McNulty; illustrated by David Litchfield (Grades Pre-K to 2)

This is a laugh-out-loud autobiography as told by the narrator, Earth. It's like an illustrated and humorous "Earth for Dummies" and really does a great job of telling so much about Earth in concise words and pictures. It is jam-packed with information about the planet and the universe, all told through the voice of the Earth. From the beginning of it all, to Earth introducing its extended family of planets, and finally expressing confidence in us humans to steward and take care of our planet, it is a terrific overview with delightful pictures.



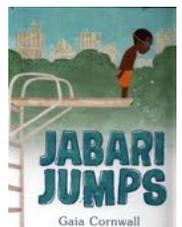
BIG CAT, LITTLE CAT, by Elisha Cooper (Grades Pre-K to 3)

The big housecat was used to being the only cat in the house until his new roommate, the little cat, comes along. The big cat shows the little cat when to eat, drink and sleep. Soon, the little cat becomes the big cat! The years go by and all of a sudden, the original big cat is no longer there. "Big Cat, Little Cat" is a seemingly simple story told in stark, black and white sketches. But it tells us a lot about friendship and loss. A wonderful story for anyone who has ever loved and lost a pet and a great way to introduce this concept to young readers.



JABARI JUMPS, by Gaia Cornwall (Grades Pre-K to 3)

Jabari has just finished swimming lessons and is confident in his new ability. "I'm jumping off the diving board today" he tells his dad. It soon becomes apparent that his confidence is a bit shakier than he realizes. Sometimes, when bravery wavers, quiet encouragement and patience is all one needs to move forward. This is a beautiful story that reminds us all that it's okay to be a little scared.



KATE, WHO TAMED THE WIND, by Liz Garton Scanlon; illustrated by Lee White (Grades Pre-K to 3)

With wind whipping the shutters and causing general destruction the old man on the hill becomes quite sad. But little Kate at the bottom of the hill is a problem solver and together they work on a solution. Reminiscent of repetitive and folksy tales like *Aunt Patty Patty's Piggy* and *The House that Jack Built*, Scanlon and White have mastered the pairing of words and pictures in this lovely story of friendship and resourcefulness.



ROSIE & CRAYON, by Deborah Marcerio (Grades Pre-K to 3)

The subtle yet expressive artwork by Deborah Marcerio tells as much of the story as do her words. Rosie is a little girl who loves her dog, Crayon, and is loved very much by him. That love and their activities are expressed through bright colors on each page. When Crayon sadly leaves Rosie's world, the colors change to muted greys and blacks, and Rosie packs away her crayons. "Rosie's heart zipped itself up, and the world became a cold, colorless place," is a feeling to which we can all relate. Rosie then hears another child calling for his missing cat, Inky. As she begins to help look for Inky, the colors shift, and she begins going for walks again to help look for Inky. Loss, and new friendships and ways of finding meaning in life are beautifully described in these words and pictures.



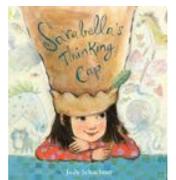
ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL ANSWERS THE CALL, by Mary Ann Fraser (Grades K-2)

Many books have been written about this incredible inventor and problem solver, but this engaging one makes him and his ideas accessible to the picture book crowd. At the age when kids are curiously asking, "Why?", they see how Bell would think about a problem, trying different methods to solve it, experiencing many failures and occasionally find a solution that helped the world.



SARABELLA'S THINKING CAP, by Judy Schachner (Grades K-3)

Once in a while, a book comes along that stops you in your tracks and takes your breath away, and this is one of them. Coming from a creative family, Sarabella has her "feet on the ground and her head in the clouds. According to her teacher, Mr. Fantozzi, she's a thinker. "Some ideas came as a complete surprise to her while other notions were cuddled and cared for like rare plants in a well-loved garden." Mr. Fantozzi just wants to know what Sarabella is thinking and to get her head out of the clouds. And it's clear he really does want to know. Each page is a creative invention to be pondered. Allow some time for a daydream or two while you read this one.



MALALA'S MAGIC PENCIL by Malala Yousafzai; illustrated by Kerascoet (Grades K-3)

Adults know the story of Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai and the harrowing experience she faced while fighting for girls' rights to attend school in her native Pakistan. Here, she tells her story to a young audience through a vividly illustrated picture book. While the violent details of her ordeal are left out, Malala's story is no less inspiring as she explains how she used her "magic pencil" to create a better place. Malala's courage in the face of adversity and willingness to make the world a better place are inspiring for readers young and old.



SQUARE, by Mac Barnett; illustrated by Jon Klassen (Grades K-4)

Square spends his days moving square-shaped rocks into a pile. One day, his friend Circle floats by and proclaims that Square is a genius sculptor! Square doesn't know what a genius or a sculptor is, but Circle is adamant that he is both. Circle then urges Square to create a sculpture of Circle herself. Square works anxiously to come up with a way to sculpt squares into a "perfect" circle for his friend. This second entry in the "Shapes" trilogy offers a way for young readers to see things differently and learn that everything is not black and white, or circles and squares. A humorous concept bolstered by "beguiling" artwork and new vocabulary words.



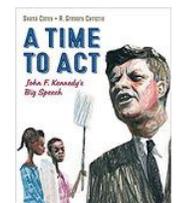
A DIFFERENT POND, by Bao Phi; illustrated by Thi Bui (Grades 1-3)

In this beautiful Caldecott Honor Book, an immigrant family tries to live the American dream after fleeing war-torn Vietnam. The story is told from the point of view of a young boy whose father awakens him in the middle of the night to take him fishing. The father and son enjoy the activity of fishing, but we realize that if they don't catch any fish, they might not eat that night. The details of their difficult existence seep out in the short, descriptive elements of life that are accepted by the boy, but perhaps are questioned more by the reader. A bittersweet picture book for our times.



A TIME TO ACT: JOHN F. KENNEDY'S BIG SPEECH, by Shana Corey; illustrated by R. Gregory Christie (Grades 3 and up)

A concisely written, stunningly illustrated history of the Civil Rights movement and President John F. Kennedy's part in it. Beginning with JFK's childhood, this inspiring tale chooses to include some of the difficult parts of his history and presidency while focusing on his growth as a Civil Rights advocate. Racism and intolerance are an unfortunate and indelible part of our nation's (and the world's) history. It is only by reading books like this that we learn from our past and are inspired to make a difference in the future. *A School Library Journal* "Best Book of 2017," "A Time to Act" is an important addition to any home.



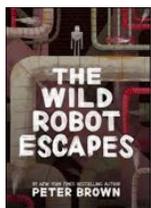
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CHAPTER BOOKS & MIDDLE GRADE NOVELS

CILLA LEE-JENKINS: FUTURE AUTHOR EXTRAORDINAIRE, by Susan Tan (Grades 3-5)



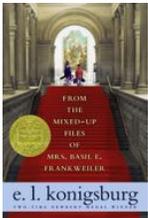
Cilla Lee-Jenkins has much to consider before her new baby sister is born. In order to become a “future author extraordinaire”, she decides to write about what is close to her heart: How she coped with being bald until she was almost five years old; how she met the challenge of learning to read; how she learned to make friends and get along with her family; and how she grew to love and embrace the traditions of the Jenkins family as well as those of her Chinese grandparents, Nai Nai and Ye Ye Lee. Cilla grows and learns to overcome her fears and learns to celebrate both cultures that are part of her life.



THE WILD ROBOT ESCAPES, by Peter Brown (Grades 3 – 6)

First, Brown captured our hearts in *The Wild Robot*, the tale of a lovable, compassionate robot named Roz who washed up onshore an island teeming with wildlife. Now, in this sequel that meets all expectations, Roz is forced to leave the island to keep her newfound friends and family safe. She is assigned to farm labor, but dreams of returning to the island where she feels she belongs. And, it’s true – Roz feels like she doesn’t belong on the farm. But robots aren’t supposed to have feelings, are they? This philosophical read is destined to open the minds and hearts of both young and old alike.

FROM THE MIXED UP FILES OF MRS. BASIL E. FRANKWEILER, by E.L. Konigsburg (Grades 3 – 6)



Claudia is fed up with the way things are at home, so she decides to run away and take her brother Jamie with her (he saves his allowance, and she needs funding). She chooses a rather remarkable place to call her new home – the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Claudia and Jamie’s adventures after the museum closes for the night are the stuff of daydreams! After the siblings discover there is a museum mystery at hand, they shoulder the mission of finding the answer. Little do they know, all the answers are close by, in the mixed-up files of Basil E. Frankweiler.



HELLO, UNIVERSE, by Erin Entrada Kelly (Grades 3-7)

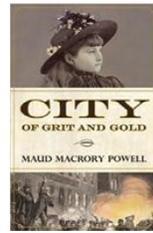
The 2018 Newbery Medal winner features a plucky cast of characters. This charming, critically-lauded book is about friendships and relationships with some interesting plot twists. Set in one day, four neighbors who aren’t friends, exactly, find themselves in the middle of a prank gone wrong and they all must work together to get out of a sticky situation. The characterizations of the four main protagonists are well done with some interesting quirks, as the story is told from four different characters’ points of view – a unique tactic for a middle-grade novel. This is a fun read indeed.

ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHINS, by Scott O’Dell (Grades 3-7)



This is a classic that is likely to stay with any reader well into adulthood. A fictionalized account of an actual Native American woman left shipwrecked on an island off the coast of California for 18 years, the 1960 novel details Karana’s survival and the ways she copes with isolation. Families planning summer vacations out west can visit the woman who inspired the character’s final resting place at Mission Santa Barbara on California’s mainland.

CITY OF GRIT AND GOLD, by Maud Macrory Powell (Grades 4-6)



Twelve-year-old Addie, the youngest daughter in a German-Jewish immigrant family, is trying to make sense of life in 1886 Chicago. Her gruff Papa, owner of a hat shop, is fearful of workers rioting in the streets for workers’ rights and unionization. While venturing out to seek medical attention for her ill cousin, Addie experiences the street riots with police in which her beloved Uncle Chaim is involved. At this young age, Addie struggles with her thoughts, asking “Where do I fit into this great city of grit and gold, illness and adventure?”



MACY MCMILLAN AND THE RAINBOW GODDESS, by Shari Green (Grades 4-6)

The surprises in this wonderful book go beyond just the format – which is in free verse. In one relatively short book, Shari Green touches so compassionately on difficult issues; parents apart, moving, deafness, aging, sense of self and connection. The free verse and commentary is a great gateway for any hesitant reader, and a terrific change of format for any reader at all. We get a real sense of Macy’s challenges, both physical and emotional. Her deafness doesn’t stop her in anything she wants to do but does have an obvious impact. Through her evolving friendship with her 86-year-old neighbor, Iris, she imagines possibilities. They find a way to share stories, books and dreams and help each other in ways beyond just the original task of helping Iris pack her belongings for moving to an assisted living facility. They scheme, go on adventures, and most importantly they learn that friendship can develop across ages and miles. The free verse makes Macy’s story much more moving and easy to absorb.

ALL’S FAIRE IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, by Victoria Jamieson (Grades 4-7)

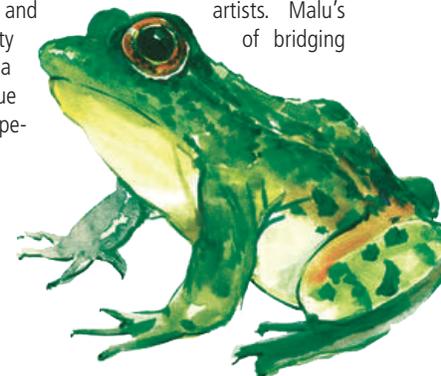


Eleven-year-old Imogene, aka “Impy,” is entering middle school after being home-schooled all her life. As if middle school isn’t hard enough to navigate, having never been part of a public-school system, Imogene has no idea about some of the unspoken rules. And, in training to be knight at the Renaissance Faire where her parents work, is exactly the type of “odd” home school activity that can get one laughed at. This is a lengthy graphic novel full of realistic coming of age struggles about identity choices and being true to oneself.



THE FIRST RULE OF PUNK, by Celia C. Perez (Grades 4-7)

This book takes a typical plot (rebellious 12-year old moves to a new city and copes with being bullied) and adds enough originality and fun to make it a very compelling read. Some of the fun comes from the main character Malu’s obsession with creating zines about her likes – rock music and dying her hair – and things that bug her, such as her Mexican-American mom. The text and pictures of Malu’s zines are included, which gives the author a chance to insert cultural information about Mexico, its history and artists. Malu’s search for identity includes the difficulty of bridging two cultures as well as trying to fit in to a different city and school while staying true to herself. The book should be a hit, especially with young musicians.





DRAGONFLY SONG, by Wendy Orr (Grades 4-8)

Aissa, the daughter of a High Priestess on an island in the Aegean Sea during the Minoan civilization, was born with an extra thumb on each hand and deemed not suitable to be raised as a priestess. She was banished to a life of poverty, servitude and homelessness. Each year, the powerful Minoans required groups of 13-year-old boys and girls to be sent as tribute to learn the acrobatic skills required to confront powerful bulls raised to provide circus-like entertainment. If they survived a year of training, both the tributes and their home islands would gain their freedom. Aissa is chosen to be sent to Crete and the skills and talents she has developed despite her neglected life make her story a very exciting one. Children and young adults who love Percy Jackson books, "The Hunger Games" series and Greek mythology will enjoy reading this book.



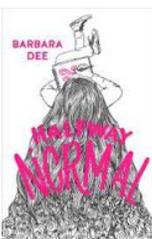
GHOST, by Jason Reynolds (Grades 5-8)

Castle Crenshaw, self-nicknamed "Ghost," is a young man with a disturbing family history and an incredible running skill. This very well-written and interesting book is largely about Ghost's emerging ability to "run away from who you are...[and] run toward who you want to be." He and his single mother and little sister live in a relatively small world, consisting of his home, his school, the local basketball courts, and a small store where he buys pumpkin seeds every day. Written in the first person, this book details Ghost's chance meeting with Coach, his street-wise track team and his integration into the team and its cast of characters. Along the way, we (and Ghost) learn some important life lessons and follow Ghost's emergence as a crack short distance runner. This is the first in Reynolds' "Track" series.



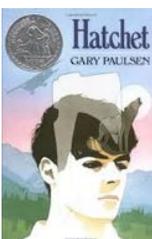
GRANTED, by John David Anderson (Grades 5-8)

"Most wishes come true. If you're lucky. But there are limits to everything." Ophelia Delphinium Fidgets is an unlikely fairy, one of a select few who are appointed as "Granters." Wishes are complicated, it turns out, and what seems to be a simple fantasy story on the surface ends up exploring some big ideas. The old saying, "Be careful what you wish for" turns out to be pretty sage advice. With a lovable, dopey dog and a good dose of humor, "Granted" is a wicked fun read.



HALFWAY NORMAL, by Barbara Dee (Grades 5-8)

Norah returns to school after surviving a two-year battle with leukemia, with a pixie haircut and very mixed feelings about what she expects from old friends, old enemies, teachers, and administrators. Written in the first person, which adds to the texture of personal interactions, this intricate story revolves around Norah's desire not to be singled out as "the girl who had cancer." Not unexpectedly, teachers and counselors want to ease her re-entry, her friends don't want to pry, and the mean girls don't want her to get too much attention. How Norah, her parents, and her schoolmates work out this complex dance makes for a very interesting novel for young readers. It has a lot to say about relationships and the complexity of re-entering "normal" life after a very serious illness.



HATCHET, by Gary Paulsen (Grades 6-8)

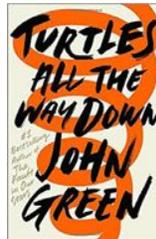
Like "Island of the Blue Dolphins" above, this classic 1987 survival novel is another that readers will remember for years to come. The first in Gary Paulsen's beloved trilogy, "Hatchet" is about a young boy who must survive the Canadian bush following a plane crash. Using grit, tenacity and the hatchet given to him by his mother before the crash, Brian must not only deal with his wild surroundings, but also with the death of his father.

FOR OLDER READERS

ALL THAT WAS, by Karen Rivers (Grades 9 and up)

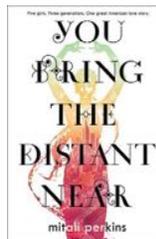


An emotionally challenging novel about three friends; love, friendship, mistakes, regrets, joy and sorrow. Best friends Piper and Sloane are attached at the hip until Sloane catches her boyfriend, Soup, kissing Piper. Tragedy strikes when Piper is found dead and Sloan and Soup must grapple with that loss and the flurry of questions that come with it. This is a dark novel that older readers can appreciate; Karen Rivers really understands and is able to portray the complexity of the teenage mind.



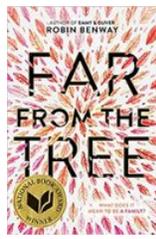
TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN, by John Green (Grades 9 and up)

High school junior Aza Holmes, who suffers from crippling anxiety disorders, crosses paths with Davis Pickett, a boy from her past whose billionaire father has disappeared just prior to being arrested on fraud charges. Aza and her best friend Daisy are at first interested in the \$100,000 reward for information about the fugitive, but the story quickly becomes much more than a mystery, as it follows Aza's attempt at a romantic relationship despite her mental health, the search for Davis's father and the realities of her illnesses. Those familiar with John Green's earlier novels will be enthralled once again with the author's prose and ability to recreate the teenage experience in a truthful, bittersweet and humorous way.



YOU BRING THE DISTANT NEAR, by Mitali Perkins (Grades 9 and up)

In our fast-paced world, few teenagers have likely ever read a multi-generational novel set over half a century. This National Book Award Honor Book may well be the start of a whole new genre. This story traces one Bengali family's move from India, by way of London, to New York City, with some family members moving back to the subcontinent and everyone trying to figure out their place in the American Dream. Each generation's story is told from the teenager's point of view and the historic details are explored in a manner that would be compelling to today's teens.



FAR FROM THE TREE, by Robin Benway (Grades 9 and up)

In this beautiful and emotionally raw National Book Award-winning novel, three biological siblings who have each been adopted or fostered by different families meet each other for the first time. Not only must Grace, Maya and Joaquin grapple with the emotions their meeting brings up, but they also have to deal with other coming-of-age issues such as teen pregnancy, divorce, family dynamics, racial implications, breakups and just getting through high school. On top of all of this, Grace tries to rope her newly found siblings into finding their biological mother. Author Robin Benway tackles these heavy issues with humor and lovely prose. A bittersweet triumph.

