

5th-into-6th Summer Reading

Liz Perry, Grade School Librarian for Alyssa Steller, 2020

In a year of prodigious historical journeys through Mesopotamia, India, Egypt, and Greece, 5th grade has traveled, too, through local realms as well as the world of botany (See "Places We've Been" and "The Life of a Child in America" below).

For those who wish to explore alternate domains, Summer Reading List offerings also include the fantasy worlds of places never experienced and the keenly experienced inward journeys of children navigating life and facing challenges with growing independence.

Places We've Been: Assyria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, India

1. *Ahimsa*, by Supriya Kelkar (2017). In 1942, when Mahatma Gandhi asks Indians to give one family member to the freedom movement, ten-year-old Anjali is devastated to think of her father risking his life for the freedom struggle. But it turns out he isn't the one joining. Anjali's mother is. And with this change comes many more adjustments designed to improve their country and use "ahimsa"--non-violent resistance--to stand up to the British government. Anjali is forced to get over her past prejudices as her family becomes increasingly involved in the movement.
2. *CASTING THE GODS ADRIFT* by Geraldine McCaughrean (1998). Tutmose, an apprentice sculptor, and his blind brother, Ibrim, an apprentice musician, are content in the court of Pharaoh Ahkenaten, but their father, a dealer in exotic animals, rages against the Pharaoh's worship of the sun god to the exclusion of other traditional deities and plots revenge. Also read *Not the End of the World* and *The Kite Rider* by the same author.
3. *The Egypt Game* by Zilpha Snyder (1967). Two girls become involved in an elaborate "Egypt Game," a fantasy diversion that leads to strange and unexpected happenings. Interesting characterizations of the gods. Novel set in Berkeley, California. Also read *The Headless Cupid* and *The Witches of Worm* by the same author.
4. *The Golden Bull* by Marjorie Crowley (2008). Five thousand years ago, in Mesopotamia, two siblings must go to the city of Ur to escape a drought so devastating their father cannot feed them. Johar is fortunate enough to apprentice with a goldsmith, but his sister, a musician, must take her trade to the streets.
5. *Pharaoh's Daughter: A Novel of Ancient Egypt* by Julius Lester (2000). A Hebrew infant, Mosis, rescued by the daughter of the Pharaoh, passes through a trying adolescence to eventually become a prophet to his people, while his sister discovers her true calling as a priestess to the Egyptian gods. Also read *Lights on the Nile* by Napoli.
6. *The Oracles of Delphi Keep* by Victoria Laurie (2009). Along the English coast above the White Cliffs of Dover, stands a castle, an orphanage where two siblings who always felt safe must unravel the dangerous secrets of a 3,000-year-old Greek scroll.
7. *To Ride the God's Own Stallion* by Diane Lee Wilson (2001). Soulai, not brave like his sister and sold into slavery, becomes a stable boy in the royal household in Nineveh, eager to make a name for himself and re-establish a connection with his father after accidentally destroying his family home.

8. *Theodosia: Serpents of Chaos* by R.L. LaFevers (2007). Theodosia Throckmorton has her hands full at the Museum of Legends and Antiquities in London, saving her father and visitors from the bewildering magic that may still hover around the priceless art objects in her midst (also: *Theodosia and the Staff of Osiris*, *Theodosia and the Eyes of Horus*).

Places We've Been: Life of a Child in America

1. *The Actual & Truthful Adventures of Becky Thatcher* by Jessica Lawson (2014). In 1860, eleven-year-old Becky Thatcher of St. Petersburg, Missouri, wishes to have adventures to rival Tom's, so embarks first on an attempt to steal from the local witch.
2. *Al Capone Does my Shirts* by Gennifer Choldenko (2004). The lives of children on the island of Alcatraz in 1935 are recorded through the first-person narrative of 12-year-old Moose Flannigan, whose main wishes are to protect his autistic sister, play baseball, and avoid discord—both at school and at home.
3. *Billy Creekmore: A Novel* by Tracey Porter (2007). Born on a Friday night, the 13th of December, Billy, who thought himself unlucky, is transported from an orphanage to the journeys of a stranger, who exposes him to anything from the coal mines of West Virginia to the antics of a traveling circus.
4. *Fair Weather* by Richard Peck (2001). In 1893, the year of Chicago's World Columbian Exhibition, 13-year-old Rosie is ready for a change from country life, possibly even a hint of what her future might hold. In the author's typical humorous style, a tale is told that include Buffalo Bill, Lillian Russell, and high and low fashion. Also read *A Long Way to Chicago* and *A Year Down Yonder*.
5. *Ghost Girl: A Blue Ridge Mountain Story* by Delia Ray (2003). Appalachia during the Depression forms the backdrop for this story of a girl eagerly anticipating a visit from President Hoover to the one-room schoolhouse she may not be able to attend.
6. *Katerina's Wish* by Jeannie Mobley (2012). When 13-year-old Trina's family moves from Czechoslovakia in 1901 to Colorado for the comparative security of working in a coal mine (Mama and Katrina do laundry), the hope is the hardships of mine working will generate enough money for the family to buy a farm; nothing is easy.
7. *Kizzie Ann Stamps* by Jeri Watts (2011). In a series of letters, a young girl with a scar on her face and worries in her heart, writes to a teacher at her newly desegregated school. While her experiences are tolerable, those of her brother are not. Shades of grey are revealed in a book, where stereotypes around race are not permitted to flourish.
8. *Leaving Gee's Bend* by Irene Latham (2010). Set in rural Alabama, this work chronicles the journey of 10-year-old Ludelphia Bennett, blind in one eye, who leaves the dignity and safety of her "dirt-poor" island to seek medicine for an ailing mother, all the while assembling fabrics for a quilt that will tell her story. Also read *Yolanda's Genius* by Carol Fenner, *Glory Be* by Augusta Scattergood, and *Nora Ryan's Song* by Patricia Reilly Giff.
9. *The Mighty Miss Malone* by Christopher Paul Curtis (2012). Twelve-year-old Deza, the smartest girl in her class, is told by her teacher she is destined for greatness and must use all her resources as she, her mother, and brother follow her father in his search for work. Filled with adventure and humor.
10. *Moonpeny Island* by Tricia Springstubb (2015). When a geologist and his idiosyncratic daughter arrive on a remote island known mainly for its limestone quarries, Flor, who has just lost her best friend to the mainland, begins to discover new interests and insights through the excavation of prehistoric trilobites.

11. *The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg* by Rodman Philbrick (2009). When Homer's older brother is sold into the Union Army by an unprincipled guardian, Homer escapes from Pine Swamp, Maine, to Gettysburg to show how a backwoods boy can deal with unexpected dangers and also lend a hand.
12. *Navigating Early* by Clare Vanderpool (2013). Following World War II, Jack Baker, a land-locked Kansas boy, must go to a boy's boarding school on the Maine coast, where he meets a classmate who takes him on a river-quest to discover The Great Appalachian Bear, the Timber Rattlesnake, and the truth of a hero named The Fish.
13. *Gone Crazy in Alabama* by Rita Garcia-Wilson (2015). The third book in a series about Delphine and her sisters, Vonetta and Fern Gaither, transports the girls from Brooklyn to the rural south to reunite with their grandmother, Big Ma, and to encounter a devastating tornado, which makes one in the family disappear. If you like your series in order, begin with *One Crazy Summer* and *P.S. Be Eleven*.
14. *Our Only May Amelia* by Jennifer L. Holm (1999). The only girl in a Finnish-American family of seven brothers, is not remotely interested in growing up to be a lady in Washington circa 1899, preferring to go fishing with Wilbert, running around the logging camp, and wearing comfortable overalls.
15. *Prairie Song* by Pam Conrad (1985). Louisa's life in a loving pioneer family on the Nebraska prairie is shaken up a bit when a new minister arrives with a frail wife not suited the rigors of pioneer living.
16. *Ruby Holler* by Sharon Creech (2002). Told with Creech's typical wry humor and deft use of near Dickensian characters, this work follows the life of orphaned siblings (not exactly angels) transported to Appalachia to help an elderly couple track an elusive bird and also take a canoe trip. As the journeys unravel, trust is built between the children and the wise adults of their new home.
17. *True Colors* by Natalie Kinsey-Warnock (2012). Left on Hannah's doorstep in nothing but a tattered blanket, Blue relishes life on Hannah's farm, but wonders periodically who the person might be who walked away from her the night the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor so many years ago.
18. *What the Moon Said* by Gayle Rosengren (2014). Set in Wisconsin during the Great Depression, this book features Esther, who jumps into her new farm chores with zeal, all the while monitoring the vacillating moods of a superstitious mother.

Survival: In the Wilds—or within Oneself

1. *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor (small Caribbean Island)
2. *Diamond Willow* by Helen Frost (Athabaskan, Alaska)
3. *Fish in a Tree* (2015) by Lynda Hunt (dyslexia)
4. *Fleabrain Loves Franny* by Joanne Rocklin (polio epidemic)
5. *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen (Canadian wilderness)
6. *Icefall* by Matthew J. Kirby (prisoners of an imagined winter)
7. *Ice Dogs* by Terry Lynn Johnson (Alaskan dogsled racing)
8. *Ice Drift* by Theodore Taylor (Inuit, Arctic Ocean)
9. *Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George (north slope of Alaska)
10. *Kensuke's Kingdom* by Michael Morpurgo (a desert island)
11. *A Mango-Shaped Space* by Wendy Mass (synesthesia)
12. *May B.* by Caroline Starr Rose (Kansas prairie homestead in winter)
13. *North to Nowhere* by Liz Kessler (seaside village)

14. *Revenge of the Whale* by Rodman Philbrick (true story: surviving at sea)
15. *Snow Treasure* by Marie McSwigan (1940s Norway)
16. *Winter Sky* by Patricia Reilly Giff (urban jungle)

Contemporary Family Life: All Sorts

1. *Amina's Voice*, by Hena Khan (2018). A Pakistani-American Muslim girl struggles to stay true to her family's vibrant culture while simultaneously blending in at school after tragedy strikes her community in this "compassionate, timely novel" (Booklist, starred review) from the award-winning author of *It's Ramadan*, *Curious George* and *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns*.
2. *Adventures with Waffles* by Maria Parr and Kate Forrester (2015). Trille and Lena have been thrill-seeking friends forever—sledding down an icy slope with a chicken, coaxing a cow onto a boat—but then one day, Lena must leave and Trille must find his way on his own.
3. *The Anybodies* by N.E. Bode (2004). After learning she is not the biological daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Drudger, Fern embarks on a comic and magical adventure with her real father, The Bone. Also read the sequel, *The Nobodies*, where we see Fern navigate Camp Happy Sunshine Good Times (does any camp really deserve that name?). Then, there is a third book in the series: *The Somebodies*.
4. *Because of Winn Dixie* by Kate Di Camillo (2001). The summer Opal and her father, the preacher, move to Naomi, Florida, Opal walks into the Winn Dixie market and walks out with a dog, a dog who seems to know the town's occupants and who leads Opal into her new life. Also read *Tiger Rising* by the same author and *Sun & Spoon* by Kevin Henkes.
5. *Beyond the Bright Sea*, by Lauren Wolk (2017). An award-winning, well-researched, historical novel about an orphaned girl who sets out with her adoptive father to learn about her past despite the many dangers they face. A poignant story of belonging and the meaning of family.
6. *The Boys of Blur* by N.D. Wilson (2014). When his stepfather moves him to the Everglades, 12-year-old Charlie locates a secret world hidden beneath the sugar cane fields, where boys hunt rabbits for \$3 a skin and where the "night muck" holds frightening secrets. A slightly older read.
7. *The Forget-Me-Not Summer* by Leila Howland (2015). Can sisters be friends, and can girls from Los Angeles survive a summer in Cape Cod, severed from technology and asked to replace electronic experiences with clambakes and brownie-making? Can they make new friends? And can they work together to produce a local talent show?
8. *Half a Chance* by Cynthia Lord (2014). When Lucy moves to an old house on a lake while her father is away, she uses her time to enter a photography contest her father will ultimately judge. How does she do this anonymously with the help of a neighboring boy, Nate, as she records the slow decline of his aging grandmother?
9. *Hope, Faith, and Ivy June* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (2009). When push comes to shove, two Kentucky girls—one well off and from the city, the other dirt poor and from a shattered family—explore their similarities and their many differences on a student exchange program, finding strength in one another when tragedy occurs. Also read *The Agony of Alice* by the same author and *Wild Girls* by Pat Murphy (2007).
10. *The Great, Good Summer* by Liz Garton Scanlon (2015). When Ivy Green's mother runs off "to find herself" at the Great Good Bible Church of Panhandle Florida, Ivy finds

- solace in a new friend, Paul, whose ambitions to become an astronaut are dashed with the cancellation of the country's Space Shuttle Program. How do they set things right?
11. *How to Steal a Dog* by Barbara O'Connor (2007). Georgina may be homeless, living in a car, but her life is not hopeless; she has plans for self-improvement, which may include borrowing/stealing a dog and crossing her fingers, hoping all turns out OK. Also read *Hold Fast* by Blue Balliett.
 12. *The Junction of Sunshine and Lucky* by Holly Schindler (2014). Living with her grandfather, a trash hauler, in a poor part of town, August bristles when a classmate's father threatens her home with the House Beautification Committee. In protest, she redefines "beauty" with recycled objects, creating house enhancements that include a rainbow walkways made out of church windows. Also read *Hope is a Ferris Wheel* by Robin Herrera (2014) and *The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place* by E.L. Konigsburg.
 13. *Lucky Broken Girl* by Ruth Behar (2017). In 1960s New York, fifth-grader Ruthie, a Cuban-Jewish immigrant, must rely on books, art, her family, and friends in her multicultural neighborhood when an accident puts her in a body cast.
 14. *Mockingbird* by Katherine Erskine (2011). A girl with Asperger's—bright in school and an accomplished artist—must navigate the loss of a brother in her unique and often difficult literal way. A school counselor provides a compassionate voice and paths for Caitlin to take to heal both herself and her family. Students who like this also read *Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper, *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio, *A Mango-Shaped Space* by Wendy Mass, *Reaching for the Sun* by Tracie Zimmer, and *Rules* by Cynthia Lord.
 15. *The Penderwicks in Spring* by Birdsall (2015). For those who know the series, Book Four is told from the perspective of Batty, now 10—graced with a beautiful singing voice and planning a grand surprise. She starts a dog-walking business to pay for voice lessons and move through worries she may be responsible for the death of the family dog, Hound.
 16. *Saving Kabul Corner* by N.H. Sensai (2014). Twelve-year-old Ariana—a tomboy—and her traditional, obedient cousin, Laila, who has recently arrived from Afghanistan, must think of ways to work together when a rival grocery store threatens their own, igniting an old argument from the motherland.
 17. *The Second Life of Abigail Walker* by Frances O'Rourke Dowell (2012). Bullied by two mean girls in their 6th-grade class, a lonely girl gains new status and outlooks after a fox mysteriously bites her. Also read *Falling In* or *Dovey Cove* by the same author.
 18. *Surviving the Applewhites* by Stephanie Tolan (2002). Jake—a budding juvenile delinquent—is sent to the arty and eccentric Applewhite family's home school Creative Academy, where he discovers talents and interests he never knew he had. Also read the sequel *The Applewhites at Wit's End* (2012).
 19. *Tangerine* by Edward Bloor (2006). Viewing the world through very thick glasses, Paul Fisher—a lover of soccer—finds something amiss in his "sinkhole" of a school and the underground fires burning near his housing development. Joining a neighboring team, however, he gains confidence with his new teammates, learns how to save citrus groves in a frost, and discovers the disarming truth about his brother.
 20. *Waiting for Normal* by Leslie Connor (2010). Addie wants "normal"—a place where she can live with her half sisters with predictable routines and outcomes, but along the way, she must grapple with living in a trailer, eating lost of toast dinners, and making the most of life with people in the neighborhood who wish her well.
 21. *Zane and the Hurricane: A Story of Katrina* by Rodman Philbrick (2014). Zane Dupree, visiting New Orleans for the first time, navigates flooded terrain with a stray dog, Bandy, an aging musician, and a small boy, witnessing deeds both noble and unkind as he

makes sense of the world during a national disaster. Also by the author: *Freak the Mighty* and *The Young Man and the Sea*.

Fantasy & Science Fiction

1. *The Bartimaeus Trilogy* by Jonathan Stroud (2003). In the first book, a boy, sold by his parents to a middle-ranking magician, ultimately gains the skills to summon a 5,000-year-old jinni to do his will and, consequently, exposes himself to a future of danger and suspense. Also read *The Screaming Staircase* (2013—new series) by the same author.
2. *Breadcrumbs* by Anne Ursu (2011). Hazel and Jack are best friends until an accident with a magical mirror and a run-in with a villainous queen find Hazel on her own, entering an enchanted wood in the hopes of saving Jack's life.
3. *The City of Ember* by Jeanne Du Prau (2003). In the year 241 far in the future, 12-year-old Lina trades jobs on Assignment Day to be a runner for her beloved but deteriorating city, while her friend Doon descends underground, hoping to find the clue to their home's dwindling resources.
4. *Darkbeast* by Morgan Keyes (2012). When Keara must sacrifice her beloved raven, Caw, upon turning twelve, a bird who absorbs all her negative emotions, she elects to preserve his life and escape with a band of rebel Travelers, setting up a pursuit and endangering her life. Also read the sequel, *Darkbeast Rebellion* (2013).
5. *The Ghosts of Tupelo Landing* by Sheila Turnage (2014). Mo and Dale, leaders of the Desperado Detective Agency, strive to unravel the mystery of a ghost's identity at the town's old inn. Secrets about many of the town's inhabitants are also unearthed. This book is the sequel to *Three Times Lucky*.
6. *Ghoulish Song* by William Alexander (2013). In this sequel to National Book Award winning *Goblin Secrets*, author Alexander finds Kaile, who has become separated from her shadow while playing a magic flute, searching for this essential part of her being while saving the city of Zombay. Also read the *Great Good Thing* by Townley.
7. *Handbook of Dragon Slayers* by Merrie Haskell (2014). Wishing for a life in a sequestered scriptorium, free from a princess's responsibilities, Tilda, compromised by a crippled foot, must brave the world with two dragon slayers to recover stolen lands.
8. *Howl's Moving Castle* by Diana Wynne Jones (2001). The eldest of three sisters, in a land where being third is considered a misfortune, Sophie is resigned to her fate as a hat shop apprentice until a witch turns her into an old woman and she finds herself in the castle of the feared Wizard Howl. Also read *Talking to Dragons* by Patricia Wrede.
9. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick (2007). Orphan, clock-keeper, and thief, Hugo lives in the walls of a Paris train station, where his survival depends on secrets and anonymity. But when his future interlocks with a bookish girl and a bitter old man who runs a toy booth, Hugo's clandestine life is put in jeopardy.
10. *The Kronus Chronicles: Books I, II, & III* by Marie Rutkowski (2008 through 2013). Beginning with Petra, a girl whose spider, Astrophil, (nesting in her hair) gives her counsel as she searches for her father's eyes, stolen by a diabolical prince. Fine writing.
11. *The Mark of the Dragonfly* by Jaleigh Johnson (2014). When Piper finds a girl with a mark of the dragonfly in the Meteor Fields, she knows there is a ransom—the girl is protected by the king. But can they get past the green-eyed boy, who guards entry to the train bound for The Territories.

12. *The Last Book in the Universe* by Rodman Philbrick (2000). A boy, afflicted with epilepsy and in love with books in a world where no books or genuine human intelligence are allowed, risks his life to find his sister with the aid of an old mentor, Rytter.
13. *The Lost Children* by Carolyn Cohagan (2010). When 12-year-old Josephine falls through a wormhole in her garden shed into another time and place, she realizes the troubles she has at home (there are no other children about and her father insists she wear gloves at all times) are minor compared to the ones in front of her.
14. *The Luck Uglies* by Paul Durham (2014). Eleven-year-old Rye and her friends delve into the secret lore of their village when mysterious creatures of legend reappear on the night before the Black Moon.
15. *A Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster (1961). In this classic tale, a boy learns the value of words and numbers in a trip designed to cure his chronic boredom.
16. *Seven Wild Sisters* by Charles de Lint (2014). When a girl saves an injured sangman fairy in the Tanglewood Forest, she puts herself, her six sisters, and many others in the midst of a fairy feud (fun illustrations).
17. *A Snicker of Magic* by Natalie Lloyd (2014). A word collector and new arrival to Midnight Gulch, Felicity is determined to ignite the dwindling magic of her new home while befriending kind Jonah, who introduces her to words she has never encountered.
18. *Time out of Time: The Telling Stone* by Maureen Doyle McQuerry (2015). Timothy, sister Sarah, and friend Jessica must race against the clock and restore peace to the Traveler's Market in order to save Timothy and Sarah's mother. Characters from Scottish myth and folklore enliven the tale.
19. *Unusual Chickens for the Exceptional Poultry Farmer* by Kelly Jones (2015). New to farm life and conscious of being "one of the only brown people in town," Latina protagonist Sophie begins a correspondence course on poultry care with Agnes at Redwood Farm Supply and attempts to comprehend the mystery of chickens with seemingly magical powers. A novel told in letters, newspaper clippings, and artwork.
20. *The Witch's Boy* by Kelly Barnhill (2014). When a Bandit King comes to steal the magic Ned's mother, a witch, is meant to protect, this stuttering and weak child villagers believe should have died rather than his twin joins with the daughter of the Bandit King to guard his community. Also read *Juniper* and *Wise Child* by Monica Furlong (1991).
21. *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeline L'Engle (1962). If you haven't read this classic yet, please do. The chronicle of three children searching a haunted universe for Meg's missing father can't be missed—children's science fiction/fantasy started with this author's work, which was rejected by 29 publishers before one was brave enough to pick it up.
22. *The Wizard of Earthsea Trilogy* by Ursula K. Le Guin. *Sometimes called science fiction, sometimes fantasy, enjoyed by adults as well as children, this series explores the use and misuse of power.*

Friendships (and a Few Annoying Bullies)

1. *Afternoon of the Elves* by Janet Lisle (1989). Tired of her much-too-normal life, Hillary escapes to her neighbor Sara-Kate's "dumpy" back yard to build an elf village and glimpse a life where fantasy may be essential for survival in the real world.
2. *Armstrong and Charlie*, by Steven B. Frank (2018). Charlie isn't looking forward to sixth grade. If he starts sixth grade, chances are he'll finish it, and he'll be older than his older brother ever was. Armstrong isn't looking forward to sixth grade either. He'll have to wake up at five thirty to ride a bus to an all-white school in the Hollywood Hills. When

- they are assigned seats next to each other, what starts as a rivalry becomes a close friendship.
3. *Bluish* by Virginia Hamilton (1999). They are different from one another—all three girls—but it's the new girl in a wheelchair and knitted hat who spawns the others' curiosity and their determination to find a way to become supportive friends. Also read *Firegirl* by Tony Abbott.
 4. *Fame and Glory in Freedom, Georgia* by Barbara O'Connor (2003). Wanting to win the promised trip to Disney World, Bird and Harlem—not a match made in heaven—decide to partner in a state spelling bee, learning much about their limits in friendship along the way. Feisty female protagonist.
 5. *A Handful of Stars* by Cynthia Lord (2015). When Lily's blind dog, Lucky, escapes over the blueberry barrens, migrant Salma Santiago hands him a sandwich and begins a friendship that will lead the two girls, while painting bee boxes for Lily's grandfather, to explore two tasks: restoring Lucky's vision and entering Selma in the local pageant.
 6. *Holes* by Louis Sachar (2000). Stanley Yelnats, coming from a family plagued with bad luck, moves his destiny in a different direction after being accused of stealing sneakers and landing at the Camp Green Lake Detention Center in the middle of a desert.
 7. *The Fourteenth Goldfish* by Jennifer Holm (2014). Saddened by the death of her goldfish, the departure of a friend, and a nostalgia for 5th grade, Ellie encounters wonderment at the arrival of a cranky, bossy, 13-year-old boy, who just might be Ellie's grandfather, scientifically driven to discover the secrets of immortality.
 8. *The Janitor's Boy* by Andrew Clements (2001). A fifth-grader finds himself the target of ridicule when classmates find out his father is the school janitor, so he turns his anger briefly on his dad and faces consequences that bring enlightenment.
 9. *The Liberation of Gabriel King* by K.L. Going (2007). Gabe believes he was born chicken—he's afraid of spiders, corpses, loose cows, and just about everything related to the 5th grade....enter, Frita, Gabe's personal "Fear" trainer.
 10. *Loser* by Jerry Spinelli (2002). Even though his classmates from 1st grade on have considered him strange, Zinkhoff, an eternal optimist loved by his family, shows all one winter night that his unique characteristics can transform him—however briefly—into an instant hero. Also read *Wringer* by the same author (a slightly dark read).
 11. *Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli (2002). After his parents die in a trolley accident, Maniac accomplishes tremendous athletic feats—mostly by running—that astonish his contemporaries and unite the East and West sides of his racially divided town.
 12. *Mudville* by Kurtis Scaletta (2009). In a town where, because of rain, baseball hasn't been played for 22 years, a foster child Sturgis arrives, and, with him, sunshine. Time to finish the game that was never properly completed with rival town, Sinister Bend. For baseball, also read *Choosing Up Sides* and *Fenway Fever* by John H. Ritter
 13. *Paperboy* by Vince Vawter (2013). In 1959 Memphis, in an age of segregation, a boy with a profound stutter takes over a friend's paper route, meeting the challenges of verbally communicating with his customers and learning from them about what he might become.
 14. *Schooled* by Gordon Korman (2007). Homeschooled by his flower-child grandmother, Capricorn (who has never eaten pizza or watched TV) must brave the halls of public school when his grandmother can no longer care for him. Will his knowledge of tie-dyeing and Zen Buddhism help him?
 15. *The Stars of Summer* by Tara Dairman (2015). In the sequel to last year's *All Four Stars*, 11-year-old foodie Gladys, derailed from her task of finding the best hot dog in New

- York City (not easy when one considers sausage is a worldwide multicultural phenomenon) must attend camp at Camp Bentley. Here, she discovers the newspaper assignment was a hoax and she must channel cooking passions in new direction.
16. *Violet Raines Almost got Struck by Lightning* by Danette Hayworth (2008). Violet is happy with things just the way they are in her sleepy Florida town until a city-girl, Melissa, moves in and threatens to unbalance friendships with everyone she holds dear.
 17. *Wishtree* by Katherine Applegate (2017). An old red oak tree tells how he and his crow friend, Bongo, help their human neighbors get along after a threat against an immigrant family is carved into the tree's trunk.
 18. *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio (2016). August Pullman was born with a facial deformity that, up until now, prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, he wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid -- but his classmates can't get past Auggie's extraordinary face. *Wonder* begins from Auggie's point of view, but soon switches to include his classmates, his sister, her boyfriend, and others. These perspectives converge in a portrait of one community's struggle with empathy, compassion, and acceptance.

Mysterious Happenings

1. *Absolutely Truly: A Pumpkin Falls Mystery* by Heather Vogel Frederick (2014). Discovering an undelivered letter in an autographed copy of *Charlotte's Web* in her family's threatened bookstore, Truly Lovejoy embarks on a journey to locate the letter's author, make new friends in her new town of Pumpkin Falls, and understand her father's difficulties as he moves forward following injury in Afghanistan.
2. *A Drowned Maiden's Hair* by Laura Amy Schlitz (2006). Maud Flynn is known at the orphanage for her impertinence, so when she is given a chance to live with eccentric sisters and participate in their séance sessions, she jumps at the chance—but is she willing to deceive people and is there more to her new life than meets the eye?
3. *The Boundless* by Kenneth Oppel (2014). On its maiden voyage across the country, the *Boundless* hosts first-class passenger Will Everett, with access to invaluable treasures, on the most adventurous trip of his life. Finding sanctuary with a Circus and a peer who is a skilled escape artist, Will moves quickly with villains at his heels.
4. *Curiosity* by Gary Blackwood (2014). Rufus, a 12-year-old chess prodigy, hides inside a chess automaton called "The Turk" in this mystery turned on discovering Rufus's missing predecessors. References not only to chess, but Edgar Allen Poe and P.T. Barnum, make this a story filled with interesting paths.
5. *Eddie Red Undercover: Mystery on Museum Mile* by Marcia Wells (2015). The NYPD's youngest crime-solving hero, Eddie (our African-American protagonist from "Mystery on Museum Mile" fame), now delves into the riddle of his father, accused of stealing an ancient mask. As before, Eddie's photographic memory and artistic gifts come in handy as he collaborates with local Julia, who sets him straight on held Mexican stereotypes.
6. *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library* by (2014). Following a night of fun, food, and games in their local library, Kyle and friends discover they are unable to leave. Gathering clues for their exit becomes the most challenging game of all.
7. *Eyes of the Amaryllis* by Natalie Babbitt (1986). When 11-year-old Jenny goes to stay with her widowed grandmother, who lives by the seaside, she looks with her on the beach for a message from the sea—a story about wanting very much to believe in the unseen. Also read *Tuck Everlasting* by the same author.

8. *The Girl Who Drank the Moon*, by Kelly Barnhill (2016). Every year, the people of the Protectorate leave a baby as an offering to the witch who lives in the forest. They hope this sacrifice will keep her from terrorizing their town. But the witch in the Forest, Xan, is kind. She shares her home with a wise Swamp Monster and a Perfectly Tiny Dragon. Xan rescues the children and delivers them to welcoming families on the other side of the forest, nourishing the babies with starlight on the journey. One year, Xan accidentally feeds a baby moonlight instead of starlight, filling the ordinary child with extraordinary magic. Xan decides she must raise this girl, whom she calls Luna, as her own. As Luna's thirteenth birthday approaches, her magic begins to emerge--with dangerous consequences.
9. *The Golden Hour*, by Maiya Williams (2006). Thirteen-year-old Rowan and his twin friends, Xanthe and Xavier, find a time portal in an abandoned resort hotel, that takes them back to revolutionary France to find Rowan's missing sister, Nina.
10. *The Green Glass House* by Kate Milford (2014). An ancient smuggler's inn forms the setting for the mysterious disappearance of objects linked to the building's history as Milo, traveling with his adoptive parents, and his friend Meddy, the cook's daughter, work together decipher clues.
11. *The Inquisitor's Apprentice* by Chris Moriarty (2013). Sacha, a nice Jewish boy from the Lower East Side, who has the power to see witches, teams up with the daughter of a Wall Street Wizard to discover who is trying to kill mechanical witch-detector inventor: Thomas Edison. Also read the sequel, *The Watcher in the Shadows* (2014).
12. *Masterminds* by Gordon Korman (2015). "Don't Lie." That's one of the laws in Serenity, New Mexico. But when Eli becomes sick approaching Serenity's border on a bike, his friend suddenly disappears, making Eli question the "truths" underlying his utopian community, which seems to be hiding a secret.
13. *Pals in Peril* by M.T. Anderson (2009). Boy technonaut, Jasper Dash and his friends Lily and Katie travel into the mist-shrouded heart of the forbidden, mountainous realm of Delaware to unravel a terrible mystery involving monks, tentacles, eye doctors, and The Curse of the Jaguar.
14. *Pieces and Players* by Blue Balliett (2015). A Vermeer and Manet have vanished, along with 11 other paintings, from one of the most buttoned-up museums in the world, and Petra, Calder, and Tommy must get to the bottom of things with two new assistants: Zoomy and Early, a lover of words. If you haven't read this author's previous works, here they are: [Chasing Vermeer](#), [The Wright 3](#), and [The Calder Game](#).
15. *Rex Zero Series* by Tim Wynne-Jones (2008-). Set in the Cold War, the simultaneously fearless and fearful hero of the first book worries about strange noises and possible invasion of his Canadian town and yet is determined to ferret out and give a name to what he fears: could it be a panther escaped from a zoo, something transformed by nuclear fall-out, or a third thing? Also read *Countdown* by Deborah Wiles.
16. *The Secret Hum of a Daisy* by Tracy Holczer (2014). Twelve-year-old Grace, who has always traveled from town to town with her mother like gypsies, moves in with her grandmother when her mother passes away and commences a treasure hunt that begins with a silver origami crane—she hopes, a sign from her mother.
17. *Steinbeck's Ghost* by Lewis Buzbee (2008). What will Travis do when he spies a ghost in the attic of Steinbeck's house and other characters from the author's books appearing in his hometown of Salinas, California? And how to save the public library with help from a friend who is an expert on the history of this town?

Short, Satisfying Reads (under 125 pages)

On My Honor by Marion Bauer

Frances Tucket by Gary Paulsen

The Green Book by Jill Patton Walsh

The Janitor by Andrew Clements

Coerr

The Midnight Inn by Paul Fleischman

Seesaw Girl by Linda Sue Park

Mudshark by Gary Paulsen

The Skirt by Gary Soto

Twenty and Ten by Claire Huchet Bishop

Water Buffalo Days by Huynh Quang Nhuong

Red Dirt Jessie by Anna Meyers

Other Bells for Us to Ring

Ghost in the Noonday Sun by Sid Fleischman

Owls in the Family by Farley Mowat

Keeper of the Doves by Betsy Byars

Meiko and the Fifth Treasure by Eleanor

Field of Dogs by Katherine Paterson

Year of the Panda by Miriam Schlein

A Week in the Woods by Andrew Clements

Regarding the Fountain by Kate Klise

The Whipping Boy by Sid Fleischman

Pleasing the Ghost by Sharon Creech

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