



4th into 5th Grade 2023 Summer Reading List

Prepared by SFWS Grade School Librarian Liz Perry for Class Susan Bolich

It was my special pleasure this year to host the children for weekly language arts groups in the library and to help them find material for their wonderful Animal Reports. "What can I do on my own?" is the big question in the realm of earliest coming-of-age fiction, where stories can begin with parents suddenly out of the picture (but the author's guiding voice definitely present).

As you enjoy your summer with your children, please continue reading aloud, which is a good method of sensing through story the various ways your children are experiencing the world.

Books to Support Conversations on Diversity, Race, Racism, and Resistance Source:

www.embracerace.org

1. *The Book Itch: Freedom, Truth & Harlem's Greatest Bookstore* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson. In the 1930s, Lewis's dad, Lewis Michaux Sr., had an itch he needed to scratch—a book itch. How to scratch it? He started a bookstore in Harlem and named it the National Memorial African Bookstore. People from all over came to visit the store. People swapped and traded ideas and talked about how things could change. They came together here all because of his father's book itch.
2. *The Boy and the Wall* by Palestinian refugee children in the Aida Refugee Camp. The writers and illustrators of this English/Arabic bilingual picture book are Palestinian refugee children in the Aida Refugee Camp near the city of Bethlehem in the West Bank. The wall that led to this picture book was built in 2004 across the West Bank, home to more than a million Palestinians. This wall separates the refugee camp from the children's old village and the land where their grandparents used to harvest. This hard-to-believe reality is conveyed through a poetic tone to the narration.
3. *Coretta Scott* by Ntozake Shange, illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Walking many miles to school in the dusty road, young Coretta knew, too well, the unfairness of life in the segregated south. A yearning for equality began to grow. Together with Martin Luther King, Jr., she gave birth to a vision and a journey -- with dreams of freedom for all. This extraordinary union of poetic text by Ntozake Shange and monumental artwork by Kadir Nelson captures the movement for civil rights in the United States and honors its most elegant inspiration, Coretta Scott. [PIC BIO SHA]
4. *The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson. A heartening book about finding courage to connect, even when scared and alone. This book reminds us that we all feel like outsiders sometimes-and how brave it is that we go forth anyway. [PIC WOO]
5. *Frederick Douglass: The Lion Who Wrote History* by Walter Dean Myers, illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Frederick Douglass was a self-educated enslaved man in the South who grew up to become an icon. He was a leader of the abolitionist movement, a celebrated writer, an esteemed speaker, and a social reformer, proving that, as he said, "Once you learn to read, you will be forever free."
6. *Filipino Friends* by Liana Romulo and Corazon Dandan-Albano. From the author of *Filipino Children's Favorite Stories* comes a book for young children that features a Filipino-American boy visiting the Philippines for the very first time. Each watercolor illustration is labeled with English

words and their Filipino translations and shows readers both the similarities and differences between Western and Philippine lifestyles. Filipino Friends, perfect for Filipino-American's or those just interested in the culture, is indispensable in bridging the gap between the two cultures.

- 7.** *Gordon Parks: How the Photographer Captured Black and White America* by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Jamey Christoph. His white teacher tells her all-Black class, “You’ll all wind up porters and waiters”. What did she know? Gordon Parks is most famous for being the first Black director in Hollywood. With his camera in hand, he found a way. Told through lyrical verse and atmospheric art, this is the story of how, with a single photograph, a self-taught artist got America to take notice.
- 8.** *Harlem’s Little Blackbird: The Story of Florence Mills* by Renée Watson. Born to parents who were both former slaves, Florence Mills knew at an early age that she loved to sing, and that her sweet, bird-like voice resonated with those who heard her. Performing catapulted her all the way to the stages of 1920s Broadway where she inspired everyone from songwriters to playwrights. Florence chose to support and promote works by fellow Black performers while heralding a call for their civil rights. Harlem’s Little Blackbird is a timeless story about justice, equality, and the importance of following one’s heart and dreams.
- 9.** *I Am Not A Number* by Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer, illustrated by Gillian Newland. When Irene is removed from her First Nations family to live in a residential school, she is confused, frightened and terribly homesick. She tries to remember who she is and where she came from despite being told to do otherwise. *I Am Not A Number* is a powerful story of resistance, resilience, family and identity.
- 10.** *The Legendary Miss Lena Horne* by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon. Celebrate the life of Lena Horne, the pioneering African American actress and civil rights activist, with this inspiring and powerful picture book from award-winning author Carole Boston Weatherford.
- 11.** *Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters* by Andrea Davis Pinkney. The lives of ten Black women activists are featured in an incredible story about courage in the face of oppression; about the challenges and triumphs of the battle for civil rights; and about speaking out for what you believe in — even when it feels like no one is listening.
- 12.** *Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History 20* by Vashti Harrison. An important book for all ages, *Little Leaders* educates and inspires as it relates true stories of forty trailblazing Black women in American history. Illuminating text paired with irresistible illustrations bring to life both iconic and lesser-known female figures of Black history.
- 13.** *Malcolm Little: The Boy Who Grew Up to Become Malcolm X* by Ilyasah Shabazz, illustrated by AG Ford. Malcolm X grew to be one of America’s most influential figures. But first, he was a boy named Malcolm Little. Written by his daughter, this inspiring picture book biography celebrates a vision of freedom and justice. Ilyasah Shabazz gives us a unique glimpse into the childhood of her father, Malcolm X, with a lyrical story that carries a message that resonates still today — that we must all strive to live to our highest potential.
- 14.** *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Carole Boston Weatherford depicts Harriet Tubman’s initial escape from slavery and her mission to lead others to freedom as divinely inspired, and achieved by steadfast faith and prayer. A foreword introduces the concept of slavery for children and an author’s note includes a brief biography of Tubman.

15. *My Hair is a Garden* by Cozbi A. Cabrera. After a day of being taunted by classmates about her unruly hair, Mackenzie can't take any more and she seeks guidance from her wise and comforting neighbor, Miss Tillie. Using the beautiful garden in the backyard as a metaphor, Miss Tillie shows Mackenzie that maintaining healthy hair is not a chore nor is it something to fear. Most importantly, Mackenzie learns that natural Black hair is beautiful.
- 16.** *Pan de Sal Saves the Day: An Award-winning Children's Story from the Philippines* by Norma Olizon-Chikiamco and Mark Salvatus. A heart-warming story of a young Filipino girl who builds self-confidence after spending a day with her classmates. For anyone who has ever felt like an outsider or experienced adversity, *Pan de Sal Saves the Day* teaches children to see the unique qualities in everything and everyone, even themselves.
17. *Preaching to the Chickens: The Story of Young John Lewis* by Jabari Asim. John wants to be a preacher when he grows up -- a leader whose words stir hearts to change, minds to think, and bodies to take action. But why wait? This inspirational story includes an author's note about John Lewis, who grew up to be a member of the Freedom Riders; chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; demonstrator on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama; and Georgia congressman, who is still an activist today.
- 18.** *Rosa* by Nikki Giovanni, illustrated by Bryan Collier. Fifty years after her refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, city bus, Rosa Parks is still one of the most important figures in the American civil rights movement. Award-winning poet, writer, and activist Nikki Giovanni's evocative text combines with Bryan Collier's striking cut-paper images to retell the story of this historic event from a wholly unique and original perspective.
- 19.** *Ruth and the Green Book* by Calvin Alexander Ramsey, illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Ruth was so excited to take a trip in her family's new car! But she soon found out that Black travelers weren't treated very well in some towns. Daddy was upset about something called Jim Crow laws. Finally, a friendly attendant at a gas station showed Ruth's family *The Green Book*. With this guidebook—and the kindness of strangers—Ruth could finally make a safe journey from Chicago to her grandma's house in Alabama.
20. *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* by Duncan Tonatiuh. Almost 10 years before *Brown v. Board of Education*, Sylvia Mendez and her parents helped end school segregation in California. Mendez, an American citizen of Mexican and Puerto Rican heritage, was denied enrollment to a "whites only" school. Her parents took action by organizing the Latinx community and filing a lawsuit in federal district court. Their success eventually brought an end to the era of segregated education in California. [379.2 TON]
21. *Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library* by Carole B. Weatherford. In luminous paintings and arresting poems, two of children's literature's top African-American scholars track Arturo Schomburg's quest to correct history. Where is our historian to give us our side? Arturo asked. Amid the scholars, poets, authors, and artists of the Harlem Renaissance stood an Afro-Puerto Rican named Arturo Schomburg. This law clerk's life's passion was to collect books, letters, music, and art from Africa and the African diaspora and bring to light the achievements of people of African descent through the ages. A century later, his groundbreaking collection, known as the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, has become a beacon to scholars all over the world. [PIC BIO SCH] [PIC AAC WEA]
22. *Shining Star: The Anna May Wong Story* by Paula Yoo. The true story of Chinese American film star Anna May Wong, whose trail-blazing career in Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s broke new ground for future generations of Asian American actors.

- 23.** *Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up By Sitting Down* by Andrea Davis Pinkney. This picture book is a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the momentous Woolworth's lunch counter sit-in, when four college students staged a peaceful protest that became a defining moment in the struggle for racial equality and the growing civil rights movement.
- 24.** *Sojourner Truth's Step-Stomp Stride* by Andrea Davis Pinkney. Born into slavery, Belle had to endure the cruelty of several masters before she escaped to freedom. But she knew she wouldn't really be free unless she was helping to end injustice. That's when she changed her name to Sojourner and began traveling across the country, demanding equal rights for Black people and for women. Many people weren't ready for her message, but Sojourner was brave, and her truth was powerful.
- 25.** *Something Happened in Our Town* by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins, and Ann Hazzard, illustrated by Jennifer Zivoin. This story follows two families — one white, one Black — as they discuss a police shooting of a Black man in their community. The story aims to answer children's questions about such traumatic events, and to help children identify and counter racial injustice in their own lives. Includes an extensive Note to Parents and Caregivers with guidelines for discussing race and racism with children, child-friendly definitions, and sample dialogues.
- 26.** *That's Not Fair! Emma Tenayuca's Struggle for Justice* by Carmen Tafolla and Sharyll Tenayuca, illustrated by Terry Ybáñez. A vivid depiction of the early injustices encountered by a young Mexican-American girl in San Antonio in the 1920's. Through astute perception, caring, and personal action, Emma begins to get involved, and eventually, at the age of 21, leads 12,000 workers in the first significant historical action in the Mexican-American struggle for justice.
- 27.** *Unstoppable: How Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team Defeated Army* by Art Coulson. In the autumn of 1912, the football team from Carlisle Indian Industrial School took the field at the U.S. Military Academy, home to the better-equipped West Points Cadets. For lightning-fast Jim Thorpe and the other Carlisle players, that day's game was about skill, strategy, and determination. Known for unusual formations and innovative plays, the Carlisle squad was out to prove just one thing—that it was the best football team in all the land.
- 28.** *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Ekua Holmes. Despite fierce prejudice and abuse, even being beaten to within an inch of her life, Fannie Lou Hamer was a champion of civil rights from the 1950s until her death in 1977. Voice of Freedom celebrates Fannie Lou Hamer's life and legacy with a message of hope, determination, and strength.
- 29.** *We Are Grateful, Otsaliheliga* by Traci Sorell, illustrated by Frané Lessac. The Cherokee community is grateful for the blessings and challenges that each season brings. This is modern Native American life as told by an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation. Beginning in the fall with the new year and ending in summer, follow a full Cherokee year of celebrations and experiences.
- 30.** *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom, illustrated by Michaela Goade. Water is the first medicine. It affects and connects us all . . . When a black snake threatens to destroy the Earth and poison her people's water, one young water protector takes a stand to defend Earth's most sacred resource. [PIC LIN]
- 31.** *When We Were Alone* by David A. Robertson, illustrated by Julie Flett. When a young girl helps tend to her grandmother's garden, she begins to notice things that make her curious. Why does her grandmother have long braided hair and beautifully colored clothing? Why does she

speak another language and spend so much time with her family? *When We Were Alone* is a story about a difficult time in history and, ultimately, one of resilience, empowerment and strength.

- 32.** *When I Was Eight* by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard. Olemaun is eight and knows a lot of things. But she does not know how to read. Ignoring her father's warnings, she travels far from her Arctic home to the outsiders' school to learn. Young readers can meet this remarkable girl who reminds us what power we hold when we can read.

Places We Have Been: The Norse and Those Nearby

1. *Classic Sea Stories* by renowned collector of vintage children's picture books by Cooper Edens (2007). This anthology features tales of ocean adventure with art by Arthur Rackham and N.C. Wyeth to name a few. Also consider *Princess Stories* and *The Big Book of Little* by the same collector.
2. *Leif the Lucky* by Edgar and Ingri d'Aulaire (1920s). Stunning research and artistry inform this d'Aulaire biography chronicling Leif's adventures in navigation and his ultimate "discovery" of Newfoundland.
3. *Odd and the Frost Giants* by Neil Gaimon (2009). An unlucky twelve-year-old Norwegian boy named Odd (which means "tip of a blade") leads the Norse gods Loki, Thor, and Odin in an attempt to outwit evil Frost Giants who have taken over Asgard.
4. *The Shipwreck: The Inuk Quartet Volume 1* by Jorn Riel (1979). When Leiv Steinurrson travels to Greenland in 1,000 CE as a stowaway to avenge his Viking father, a shipwreck plants him in the middle of an Inuit clan, where two children teach him how to survive in their rugged world and shift the doubts of an aging shaman wary of "others".
5. *The Sword of Siegfried* by Katherine Scherman (1959). Siegfried, hero of the Volsung Saga, seeks his fortune with the Magic Sword of Bradstock in hand, freeing the maiden Brynhild and stalking a fearful dragon.
6. *Viking Adventure* by Clyde Bulla (1963). Sigurd, a Viking boy, does not understand why he must learn to read and write. He wishes to live a life of adventure, but when he wants his adventures commemorated, he sees the value in learning a new skill.

Places We Have Been: Animals

1. *Caesar's Antlers* by Brooks Hansen (1997). Bette, a mother sparrow, separated by an accident from her mate in the wilds of Norway, takes her chicks on a long search for their father in the protection of a reindeer's antlers.
2. *Don't Feed the Boy* by Irene Latham (2013). Eleven-year-old Whit, who lives and goes to school at the zoo his parents oversee, stops seeing his life as one inside a cage when a the "Bird Girl" visits who sees his habitat as a refuge.
3. *Firstborn* by Tor Seidler (2015). When Blue Boy, the alpha wolf of Yellowstone Park, discovers in his son, Lamar, a thread of compassion for stragglers, an interest in chasing beetles, and, worst of all, a devotion to coyotes, Lamar feels criticized enough by his father to leave the pack, until an unsavory sort threatens a wounded Blue Boy....
4. *Ivy Takes Care* by Rosemary Wells (2013). A long-time resident of Nevada, Ivy hires herself out to take care of other people's pets while they are away, in particular, a stubborn pony named Chestnut (beautiful illustrations by Jim LaMarche).
5. *Mogo, The Third Warthog* by Donna Jo Napoli (2008). In this retelling of the Three Little Pigs, the runt of his litter, Mogo is set on surviving in the unforgiving African savannah, a terrain filled with

lions, cheetahs, wild dogs, and the threat of isolation. A cast-out baboon makes the journey easier and gives Mogo the chance at a new family.

6. *Odder* by Katherine Applegate (2022). Odder spends her days off the coast of central California, practicing her underwater acrobatics and spinning the quirky stories for which she's known. She's a fearless daredevil, curious to a fault. Her life takes a dramatic turn, one that will challenge everything she believes about herself--and about the humans who hope to save her. [J APP]
7. *One White Dolphin* by Gill Lewis (2013). A mother dolphin and her albino calf draw the attention of a young girl, Kara, struggling to survive with her father in a fishing village in Cornwall, England. When a young Paralympics sailing hopeful comes to town, he joins forces with Kara to save not just the dolphins but the entire reef. An older read.
8. *Trash Mountain* by Jane Yolen (2014). When the grey squirrel kills his parents, red squirrel, Nutley, wonders what it will be like to leave the safety of his tree, seeking revenge, with the help of rats and gulls.
9. *Tua and the Elephant* by R.P. Harris (2013). Discovering an elephant in need in the bustling Thailand marketplace, Tua commences a journey in which rich descriptions of local sites abound.
10. *The Worm Whisperer* by Betty Hicks (2013). Ellison Ellis Coffey, a lonely 5th grader, discovers he might have the special gift of talking to bugs. This prompts him to use his new-found ability to enter his town's Woolly Worm Race to win the \$1,000 needed for his father's back surgery.

Places We Have Been: The Wild West

1. *The Cabin Faced West* by Jean Fritz (1958). Ten-year-old Ann, in what was once considered "the West" (rural Pennsylvania), learns to understand how important her role is in guaranteeing her family's survival and comfort in their new home. Also read *Black-Eyed Susan* by Jennifer Armstrong (1995) and *Caddie Woodlawn* by Brink (1935).
2. *Classic Western Stories* compiled by illustration archivist Cooper Edens (2009). In this collection chronicling outlaws, mountain men, gunslingers, settlers, cowboys, and lumberjacks, Edens couples tales with artwork by N.C. Wyeth, Winslow Homer, and Fredric Remington, to name a worthy few.
3. *Emily's Fortune* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (2010). As shy Emily travels to her Aunts home by trains and stagecoach with her pet turtle, Rufus, she meets a troublemaker and fellow orphan, Jackson, who helps her outwit a greedy relative.
4. *A Family Apart: The Orphan Train Adventures* by Joan Lowery Nixon (1987). When a young widow in New York City in 1856 knows she cannot provide for her six children, she sends them West, hopefully to discover more secure lives with new families. The first stop is St. Joseph, Missouri. Other books in the series find the children in other places, finding their way back to one another.
5. *Jim Ugly* by Sid Fleischman (same author as *By the Great Horn Spoon*) (1992). The adventures of 12-year-old Jake and Jim Ugly, his father's part-mongrel, part-wolf dog as they explore the West searching for Jack's missing actor father.
6. *On to Oregon* by Honoré Morrow (1926). Not one to follow through on chores, eldest brother John Sager must grow up quickly when a raid forces him to take his siblings to Oregon on his own. A powerful take of survival.
7. *Our Only May Amelia* By Jennifer Holm (1999). As the only girl in a Finnish American family of seven brothers, May Amelia Jackson resents being expected to act like a lady while growing up in Washington State.

8. *Riding Freedom* by Pam Munoz Ryan (1998). A biography of Charlotte “Charley” Parkhurst, who “couldn’t sew a stitch and didn’t know a petticoat from a pea-pod,” recounts in lively first-person the life of a woman who escaped an orphanage to become a stagecoach driver and the first woman to vote in this country.
9. *The Year of Miss Agnes* by Kirkpatrick Hill (2000). In 1948, a school teacher arrives in remote Alaska to give children an educational experience they haven’t encountered in years...at the same time accepting their odd-smelling fish sandwiches and insisting that the deaf-boy, Bakko, attend school with everyone else. Also read *Bo at Ballard Creek* by the same author (2013).

And This is My Family.....Just Now, or Perhaps “Forever”

1. *Canned and Crushed* by Bibi Belford (2015). When Sandro Zapote finds out his little sister needs heart surgery, he starts a can-collecting, save-the-environment business to earn money his father—an undocumented laborer who rigorously harvests scrap metal and roadkill—can’t raise single-handedly.
2. *Circus Mirandus* by Cassie Beasley (2015). Micah, tier of knots, has a special relationship with his Grandpa Ephriam, who will soon leave this world if Micah doesn’t extract a favor from a miraculous magician, The Man Who Bends Light. Gorilla balloons, mysterious bird women, and a friend, Joey Mendoza, contribute to fast-paced drama.
3. **For Black Girls Like Me** by Mariama J Lockington (2019). Eleven-year-old Makeda dreams of meeting her African American mother, while coping with serious problems in her white adopted family, a cross-country move, and being homeschooled. [J LOC]
4. *The Great Gilly Hopkins* by Katherine Paterson (1978—Newbery Award). Sometimes the family one seeks is not the family one ends up wanting, a truth 11-year-old foster-child Gilly discovers in her latest “placement” with an overweight, near illiterate guardian, Maime Trotter; a wizened and old African American; and “freaky” seven-year-old boy. How could these people possibly compete with the beautiful mother of Gilly’s dreams?
5. **Hold Fast by Blue Balliett** (2013). When her father mysteriously disappears and her family must move into a Chicago shelter, Early seeks answers on street corners and the public library to improve her family circumstances and bring her father home.
6. *The Incurable Children of Ashton Place: The Unmapped Sea* by Maryrose Wood (2015). A seaside setting at Brighton Beach creates the holiday backdrop for the Ashton children, who are expecting a new sibling they hope won’t be burdened with the wolfish curse afflicting their family.
7. **The Junction of Sunshine and Lucky** by Holly Schindler (2014). Auggie and her grandfather use found objects to transform the appearance of their home and, in the process, change a whole town’s perceptions of beauty and art. [J SCH]
8. **The Lotterys Plus One** by Caroline Hadilaksono (2017). Once upon a time, two couples with Jamaican, Mohawk, Indian, and Scottish ethnic roots won the lottery and bought a big house where all of them, four adults and seven adopted and biological children, could live together in harmony—but change is inevitable, especially when a grandfather comes to stay. [J DON]
9. **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.
10. **The Other Half of my Heart** by Sundee T. Frazier (2010). Twin daughters of interracial parents, eleven-year-olds Keira and Minna have very different skin tones and personalities, but it is not until their African American grandmother enters them in the Miss Black Pearl Pre-Teen competition in North Carolina that red-haired and pale-skinned Minna realizes what life in their

small town in the Pacific Northwest has been like for her more outgoing, darker-skinned sister. [J FRA]

11. ***The Misadventures of Family Fletcher*** by Dana Alison Levy (2015). A family with two fathers and four adopted boys travels through the school year as they navigate the discontent of a grumpy neighbor. Of the brothers, Sam likes soccer, Jax loves fourth grade, Eli relishes elite academic challenges, and Frog spends much of his time protecting his invisible cheetah. [J FLE]
12. ***The Penderwicks in Spring*** by Jeanne Birdsall (2015). In this last book in the Penderwicks series, Batty, who has just lost her dog, Hound, prepares for a Birthday Concert with her singing at the center. Affording voice lessons, however, means launching a dog-walking business.
13. ***Rapscott's Girls*** by Elise Primavera (2015). Ms. Rapscott, the headmistress of a school catering to girls of very busy parents, receives five (whoops, four) new students in boxes on her doorstep and teaches the neglected children previously unmastered attainments, such as knowing how to identify a birthday cake (they have never seen one) and walking across the street without being slaughtered.
14. ***Shelter*** by Christine Matheson (2021). While ten-year-old Maya attends an elite private school on scholarship her classmates are unaware that she and her family are living in a homeless shelter, but on one poignant day Maya discovers having a house is not the only way to have a home.

Friendships—All Sorts

1. ***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 leaves and Trille must find his way on his own.
2. ***Bluish*** by Virginia Hamilton (2002). 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.
3. ***Faith and the Electric Dogs*** by Peter Jennings (1998). Set in San Cristobal de las Casas, Mexico, this story recounts the imagination and courage of a ten-year-old girl who seeks to escape her local tormentors and return to San Francisco on a tin rocket ship fueled with pork fat and chili peppers. Also read *How Tia Lola Came to (Visit) Stay* by Julia Alvarez (2002) and *Grandma Torrelli Makes Soup* by Sharon Creech.
4. ***The Great Unexpected*** by Sharon Creech (2013). Two orphan girls in Blackbird Tree, USA, one quiet and another who "could talk the ears off a cornfield," meet a mysterious boy who drops out of a tree and links their lives with others in Rook's Island, Ireland.
5. ***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.
6. ***A Little Bit of Spectacular*** by Gin Phillips (2015). Eleven-year-old Olivia, moving in with a strict grandmother in Birmingham, Alabama, finds herself without friends at her new school until she sees the phrase, "We are Plantaganet," on a bathroom wall. Suddenly she and an unusual girl, Amelia, join forces to solve a mystery.
7. ***Notes from a Liar and Her Dog*** by Gennifer Choldenko (2003). Burdened with the pressure of two "perfect" sisters, Ant, beloved by her dog Pistachio, makes up stories about herself in an effort to seem more appealing; receiving attention from a concerned teacher and volunteering at the local zoo help her to see herself with different eyes.

8. ***Temple Alley Summer*** by Sachiko Kashiwaba (2021). "From a renowned Japanese children's author. This is a fantastical and mysterious adventure featuring the living dead, a magical pearl, and a suspiciously nosy black cat named Kiriko. [J KAS]"
9. *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.

Getting into Trouble...and Out of It

1. *A Bear Named Trouble* by Marion Dane Bauer (2005). Told in alternating voices—the boy's and the bear's—this story, based on a true tale, is about a zookeeper's son who must sort out the confusion he feels when a befriended bear kills his favorite goose.
2. *Binney for Short* by Hilary McKay (2013). Eleven-year-old Binney struggles to cope with her father's death and the loss of her favorite beloved dog when she adjusts to a new home that might be haunted by her horrible Aunt Violet. Read McKay's other books: *A Dog Named Friday* and *The Amber Cat*.
3. ***The Buddha's Diamonds*** by Carolyn Marsden (2008). As a storm sweeps in, Tinh's father tells them to tie up the fishing boat, but the storm scares Tinh and he runs away; how will he make amends to repair the damage to the boat? Also read *Rickshaw Girl* by Mitali Perkins (2007).
4. *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.
5. *Handbook of Dragon Slayers* by Merrie Haskell (2013). Compromised by a cripple foot, and wishing to dwell in a cloistered scriptorium, Princess Matilda—accompanied by two dragon-slayers—must go out in the world to reclaim her family lands.
6. ***Ice Drift*** by Theodore Taylor (2005). Two young Inuit brothers and their loyal sled dog struggle to survive on an ice floe adrift in the Greenland Straight.
7. *The Mysterious Benedict Society* by Trenton Lee Stewart Four children answer the ad, "Are you a gifted child looking for splendid opportunities?" Adventure awaits.
8. ***The Mighty Miss Malone*** by Christopher Paul Curtis (2012). The "smartest" girl in her class in Gary, Indiana, Deza must make educational sacrifices when they land in a "Hooverville" outside Flint, Michigan. A brother's beautiful singing voice and her own determination shift a potentially dim outlook into a reflection of the family motto: "We are a family on a journey to a place called wonderful."
9. *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](#).
10. *Ruby Holler* by Sharon Creech (2012). Told with Creech's typical wry humor, this work records the life of two orphaned siblings (not exactly angels) transported to Appalachia to help an elderly couple track down an elusive bird and also take a canoe trip. As the journeys unravel, trust builds between the children and wise adults of their new home.
11. *Skinnybones* by Barbara Park (1997). Jokester, Alex, the smallest boy in his class, tells everyone he is an amazing pitcher—even though he is, in fact, terrible at baseball. Luckily his second joke has a better ending.
12. *Smith* by Leon Garfield (1967). Moments after he steals a document from a man's pocket, an illiterate young pickpocket in 18th-century London witnesses the man's murder by a man who wants the papers for themselves. Also read *John Diamond* by the same author.

13. *Broken Bones* by Scott William Carter (2013). Based on the story of Pinocchio, this book focuses on Pino, a boy who used to be a puppet, who has a talent for creating other puppets and bringing them to life (Gepetto's wife, for instance). Will he strike a deal with the villagers who would like to use him or strike out on his own?

Magic Happens

1. *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.
2. *The Castle Corona* by Sharon Creech (2007). Marvelous illustrations intersperse this book where two orphaned peasant children discover a mysterious pouch, the contents of which lead them to the magnificent Castle Corona. Also read *The Princess Academy* by Shannon Hale.
3. *Castle Hangnail* by Ursula Vernon (2015). When 12-year-old Molly arrives at the Castle Hangnail to fill a vacancy for "Wicked Witch," her innate kindness in spite of her extraordinary magic skills might keep her from fitting in. But she hides a secret. What could it be and how could this threaten her new home?
4. *The City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau (2004). Living in the City of Ember, believed to be that last refuge of the human race, two children—Lina and Doon—must find what is making the lights flicker and go out. Also read *The People of Sparks*, *The Prophet of Yonwood*, and *The Diamond of Darkhold*.
5. *Fog Magic* by Julia L. Sauer (1943). Greta, from Nova Scotia, who loves the fog, is transported by the fog to a stone house and a woman in plum-colored silk, who takes her on a journey into the village's past. Winner of a 1986 Newbery Honor.
6. *Jinx* and *Jinx's Magic* (2013 & 2014) by Sage Blackwood. An ill-used orphan is the hero of a tale in which he enters a primeval forest to discover wizards and witches and his own ability to conjure fire.
7. *Ophelia and the Marvelous Boy* by Karen Foxlee (2014). In this retelling of "The Snow Queen," young Ophelia Jane Worthington-Whittard spends her lonely days attempting to rescue a boy imprisoned in a remote museum display.
8. ***Opportunity Knocks*** by Sara Farizan (2023). "When a strange key opens a door to good fortune and to Opportunity, who will stay with her for seven serendipitous days, Lila soon discovers that the person who lost the key will do anything to get it back. [J FAR]
9. *Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes* by Jonathan Auxier (2012). A blind 10-year-old orphan, trained as a thief, finds himself in possession of a box with magical eyes. When he tries on the first pair, he is transported to an island, where he is expected to assist those in need rather than steal. Also read the sequel: *The Night Gardener* (2014).
10. *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. [JFIC JUS]
11. *Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin* by Liesl Shurtliff (2013). In this book, we discover why Rumpelstiltskin's name is so important, how he is able to spin straw into gold, and why a first-born child is ultimately his reward.
12. *The Secret of the Ruby Ring* by Yvonne MacGrory (1994). A ring grants an 11-year-old girl two wishes, but what if she loses the ring after the first wish? Also read *Emma and the Ruby Ring* and *The Quest of the Ruby*.

13. *Splendors and Glooms* by Laura Amy Schlitz (2012). Lizzie and Parsefal, apprentices to the evil puppeteer Grisini, seek to uncover the whereabouts of a beloved girl who disappears at the birthday party.
14. *A Tale of Two Castles* by Gail Carson Levine (2012). Newly arrived to a town with two castles, Elodie finds herself assisting a wise dragon to solve the mystery of a greedy king, a giddy princess, a fearsome ogre, and handsome cat trainer.
15. *A Tangle of Knots* by Lisa Graf (2013). A tale told from multiple perspectives, this book, based in Poughkeepsie, focuses on the lives of several with special talents: Cady is a magnificent cake baker, Zane specializes in long-distance spitting, another is gifted in origami and another in whistling. Then there is the villain whose talent is stealing other's talents and everything becomes very, well, tangled.
16. *Time out of Time* by Maureen Doyle McQuerry (2015). Timothy James, his sister Sarah, and a friend race against both time and evil in their quest to find The Four Treasures of the Market. Hindering and assisting them are well-drawn characters from Scottish myth and folklore. A good book for mystery lovers and accomplished code-breakers.
17. *Tilly's Moonlight Garden* by Julia Green (2013). Having just moved into a drafty old mansion and away from her friends, Tilly, follows a fox into a magic garden where she discovers a new friend whom no one else can see.
18. *The Wish Giver: Three Tales of the Coven Tree* by Bill Brittain (1983). Wishes granted are often filled with unexpected consequences, as children discover following a Church Social. The Wishes? Being Well-liked. Staying put. Avoiding water-hauling.

Father-Son

1. *Dragonwings* by Laurence Yep (1975). During the early years of the 20th-century in San Francisco, a Chinese immigrant father and his son build a flying machine just after the Wright Brothers successfully launch theirs.
2. *Fortunately, the Milk* by Neil Gaimon (2013). A rollicking, exaggerated tale of the sacrifice and ingenuity of a father caring for his family while his wife is away. It is truly amazing how many things can happen on the way to the grocery store and back.
3. *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 father and faces consequences that bring enlightenment.

Ordinary Girls (and Some Princesses) Overcoming Obstacles

1. *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo (2000). Moving to a new Florida town with her preacher father, a young girl, Opal, befriends a dog who introduces her to a handful of the community's unique residents.
2. *Harriet the Spy* by Fitzhugh (1964). Harriet, in part a girl on her own, keeps a frank journal, which when discovered and read by her friends, isolates her even further. How to make amends? Others in this series: *The Long Secret* and *Sport*.
3. *The Haunting of Granite Falls* by Eva Ibbotson (1987). Ghosts are upset when their castle is relocated from Scotland to Texas...just to keep an indulged oil magnate's child, Helen Hopgood, happy.
4. *Ghoulish Song* by William Alexander (2013). Kalie, who loves music, is delighted when a goblin gives her a flute carved out of bone, but when the tune separates her from her shadow, she must leave home, and discover ways to reunite with her village.

5. ***Just Right Jillian*** by Nicole D. Collier (2022). Pip. Unzip. Escape! It's hatching season, and all of Jemison Elementary is buzzing about the arrival of the baby chicks. Soon, the chicks will pip a hole in their shell, unzip the egg, and take their places in the world. For fifth-grader Jillian, breaking out of her shell is much harder. With the help of her best friend, Marquz, and some unexpected allies, Jillian summons the courage to stand up to her fears and let herself be seen and heard. [J COL]
6. *The Ordinary Princess* by M.M. Kaye. At her christening, a princess is given the gift of “ordinariness” by a fairy, leading her to a neighboring palace where she, as the 14th assistant kitchen maid, unexpectedly meets the prince of her dreams.
7. *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.
8. *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).
9. *A Snicker of Magic* by Natalie Lloyd (2014). A mother and daughter moving to Midnight Gulch Tennessee, are caught up in the legendary magic of their new home as Felicity Pickle, a lover of words, seeks for a permanent home.
10. *The War that Saved My Life* by Kimberley Brubaker Bradley (2015). A young disabled girl and her brother are evacuated from London to the English countryside during World War II, where they find life to be much sweeter away from their abusive mother.
11. ***When the Circus Came to Town*** by Laurence Yep (2001). A gentle story records how the musical gifts of a young Chinese girl pull her back into the world following a rough encounter with smallpox, which scars her face.

Shorter Chapter Books (under 125 pages)

7. *Donovan's Word Jar* by Monalisa DeGross (1996). When the jar Donovan keeps his word collection in fills, he discovers a special means of giving his words away and receiving something wonderful in return.
8. *The Dragon's Boy* by Jane Yolen (1990). Young Arthur meets a dragon he comes to accept as a friend and mentor. Also read *The Pit Dragon Chronicles* by the same author.
9. *The Green Book* by Patton Walsh (2012). A family needing to leave Earth to live on a new planet must take little with them and use their wits in the place carefully chosen for them. Told from the perspective of Pattie, who chooses to bring a book.
10. *Like Jake and Me* by Mavis Jukes (1984). Alex, who loves to dance, admires his new cowboy stepfather, who wields a sharp ax and doesn't seem to be afraid of anything...until an encounter with a furry wolf-spider (hint: Alex to the rescue!).
11. *Not My Dog* by Colby Rodowsky (2001). Ellie wanted a cute puppy, not a full-grown mutt...so she resists her new pet until one day her resistance almost makes her lose the only pet she's ever likely to have.
12. *Sable* by Karen Hesse (1998). Tate is delighted when a stray dog turns up at her doorstep, but the dog makes so much trouble for the neighbors it may not be able to stay. Also read *A Wish on a Unicorn* by the same author.
13. *Skinny Bones* by Barbara Park (1982). The smallest boy on a baseball team gets more than he bargains for when he challenges the team's star pitcher with his active sense of humor. Also read the sequel.

14. *The Skirt* by Gary Soto (1993). Bringing her mother's folklorico skirt to school, Miatta accidentally leaves it on the bus and must find it before the class performance.
15. *Tornado* by Betsy Byars (1996). As they wait out a tornado in a storm cellar, two boys listen to their farm hand's tale of a dog blown into his life many years ago by similar weather.

Truth be Told

1. *Can We Save the Tiger?* By Martin Jenkins. The beauty and potential disappearance of ground iguanas, partula snails, and white-rumped vultures are stories told of some of the many animals described in this thoughtful, age-appropriate book.
2. *The Elephant Scientist* by Kaitlin O'Connell (2012). Winner of the American Library Association's Siebert Award for nonfiction, this work follows the journey of scientist O'Connell in Namibia observing the African Elephant at Atosha National Park. It is during such a trip that she makes an astonishing discovery.
3. **Becoming Muhammad Ali** by Kwame Alexander and James Patterson (2020). A biographical novel tells the story of Cassius Clay, the determined boy who would one day become Muhammad Ali, one of the greatest boxers of all time. [J PAT]

Classic and Near-Classic Tales

Abel's Island (Steig)

All-of-a-Kind Family (Taylor)

Anne of Green Gables (Montgomery)

Schlemiel Went to Warsaw (Singer)

In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson (Lord)

The Animal Family (Randall Jarrell)

Lassie Come Home (Knight)

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH

The Black Stallion (Farley)

Castle in the Attic (Winthrop)

Five Children and It (Nesbit)

Moffat Series (Estes)

The Secret Garden (Burnett)

My Friend Flicka (O'Hara)

Homer Price (McCloskey)

The Wizard of Oz series (Baum)

.....Do start with the Lion, Witch and Wardrobe!!

The Borrowers (Norton)

The Incredible Journey (Burford)

Misty of Chincoteague (Henry)

Magic Maize (Mary Buff)

Half Magic (Eager)

Bright Island (Robinson)

Black Beauty (Sewall)

The Black Cauldron (Alexander)

A Little Princess (Burnett)

Light Princess, The Princess and Curdie,

Curdie and the Magicians (MacDonald)

The Twenty-One Balloons (duBois)

Swallows and Amazons (Ransome)

The 13 Clocks (Thurber)

Children of Green Knowe (Boston)

The Narnia Series (Lewis)

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