



5th into 6th Grade 2024 Summer Reading

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Prepared by SFWS Grade School Librarian Liz Perry for Rising 6th grade class

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, our Summer Reading List offerings also include historical fiction, 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. *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. **[F MCC]** Also *Not the End of the World & The Kite Rider* by the same author.
2. *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. **[FIC SNY]**
3. **Girl Giant and the Monkey King** by Van Hoang (2020). Thom Ngho is keeping a secret: she’s strong. Like suuuuper strong. And it’s making it impossible for her to fit in at her new middle school. In a desperate bid to get rid of her super strength, Thom makes a deal with the Monkey King, a powerful deity and legendary trickster. Soon Thom is swept up in an ancient and fantastical world where demons, dragons, and Jade princesses actually exist. But she quickly discovers that magic can’t cure everything, and dealing with the trickster god might be more trouble than it’s worth. **[J HOA]**
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. **[FIC LAU]**
7. *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: the Staff of Osiris, Theodosia & the Eyes of Horus*). **[F LAF]**

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. **[J CHO]**
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. *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. **[J MOB]**
5. *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. **[FIC WAT]**
6. *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.
7. ***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. **[J CUR]**
8. *Moonpenny 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.
9. *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. **[F VAN]**
10. ***Ninth Ward*** by Jewell Parker Rhodes (2010). In New Orleans' Ninth Ward, twelve-year-old Lanesha, who can see spirits, and her adopted grandmother have no choice but to stay and weather the storm as Hurricane Katrina bears down upon them.
11. ***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*.

12. *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 to the rigors of pioneer living.
13. *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.
14. *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.
15. *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) [**FIC HUN**]
4. *Fleabrain Loves Franny* by Joanne Rocklin (polio epidemic) [**J ROC**]
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 dog sled racing) [**FIC JOH**]
8. *Ice Drift* by Theodore Taylor (Inuit, Arctic Ocean)
9. *Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George (north slope of Alaska) [**F GEO**]
10. *Kensuke's Kingdom* by Michael Morpurgo (a desert island)
11. *A Mango-Shaped Space* by Wendy Mass (synesthesia) [**F MAS**]
12. *May B.* by Caroline Starr Rose (Kansas prairie homestead in winter)
13. *North to Nowhere* by Liz Kessler (seaside village) [**FIC KES**]
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 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*. [**FIC KHA**]
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. [**FIC PAR**]

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 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. [J DIC]
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. [FIC WOL]
6. *Blossoming Universe of Violet Diamond* by Brenda Woods (2013) Violet is a smart, funny, brown-eyed, brown-haired girl in a family of blonds. Her mom is white, and her dad, who died before she was born, was black. She attends a mostly white school where she sometimes feels like a brown leaf on a pile of snow. She's tired of people asking if she's adopted. Now that Violet's eleven, she decides it's time to learn about her African American heritage. And despite getting off to a rocky start trying to reclaim her dad's side of the family, she can feel her confidence growing as the puzzle pieces of her life finally start coming together. [F WOO]
7. *Carry Me Home* by Janet Fox (2021). Twelve-year-old Lulu, burdened with caring for her sister, Serena, since their father disappeared, must learn to trust her new friends and community when secrets and lies catch up with her. [J FOX]
8. *Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt (2015). Ally doesn't fit in. She draws beautifully and can create movies in her mind, but she is often bullied and hides the fact that she cannot read. Now in her seventh school, she plans to pull the wool over the eyes of her sixth-grade teacher, as she has done with many other teachers in the past. But Mr. Daniels is different. He believes in Ally, insisting she is smart, and it's almost enough to make her want to try his different way of learning. This story explores themes of family, friendship, and courage. [F HUN]
9. *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?
10. *The Girl from Earth's End* by Tara Darman (2023). To save her father, Henna, a gifted gardener, attends St. Basil's Conservatory, a botanical boarding school rumored to house a legendary, long-extinct plant with miraculous healing powers, and while searching for the seeds, Henna learns to flourish with a little help from her newfound friends. [J DAI]
11. *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? [J LOR]
12. *Healer of the Water Monster* by Brian Young (2021). A novel inspired by Navajo culture follows the experiences of a boy whose summer at his grandmother's reservation home is shaped by his uncle's addictions and an encounter with a sacred being from the Navajo creation story. [F YOU]

13. *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).
14. **Hope in the Valley** by Matali Perkins (2023). Twelve-year-old Indian-American Pandita Paul deals with change, grief, friendship, and growing up in a community facing a housing crisis. [F PER]
15. *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? [J SCA]
16. **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.
17. **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 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. [J SCH]
18. **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. [FIC BEH]
19. **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. [J ERS] 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.
20. **The Other Half of my Heart** by Sundee T. Frazier. (2011) Grades 5 to 7 Twin daughters of interracial parents, eleven-year-olds Keira and Minna have very different skintones and personalities, but it is not until their African American grandmother enters them in the MissBlack Pearl Pre-Teen competition in North Carolina that red-haired and pale-skinned Minna realize what life in their small town in the Pacific Northwest has been like for her more outgoing, darker-skinned sister.
21. *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. [J BIR]
22. **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.
23. *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. [J DOW]

24. *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).
25. ***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. **[FIC BLO]**
26. *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 lots of toast dinners, and making the most of life with people in the neighborhood who wish her well. **[F CON]**

Historical Fiction

1. ***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]**
2. *The Elephant Scientist* by Kaitlin O’Connel (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. ***Finding Junie Kim*** by Ellen Oh (2021). A tale based on true events follows the coming-of-age of a girl who is motivated by an act of racism at school to learn about her ancestral heritage and her grandparents’ experiences as lost children during the Korean War. **[F OH]**
4. ***One Crazy Summer*** by Rita Williams-Garcia. (2010) Grade 6 to 7 In the summer of 1968, after traveling from Brooklyn to Oakland, California, to spend a month with the mother they barely know, eleven-year-old Delphine and her two younger sisters arrive to a cold welcome as they discover that their mother, a dedicated poet and printer, is resentful of the intrusion of their visit and wants them to attend a nearby Black Panther summer camp. **[F WIL]**
5. ***When Winter Robeson came*** by Brenda Woods (2020) In August 1965, twelve-year-old Eden’s older cousin from Mississippi comes to visit her in Los Angeles, and while the Watts Riots erupt around them, they continue their investigation of the disappearance of Winter’s father ten years ago.
6. ***A Seed in the Sun*** by Aida Salazar (2022) Lula, a farm-working girl with big dreams, meets Dolores Huerta, Larry Itliong, and other labor rights activists and joins the 1965 protest for workers’ rights.
7. ***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. *Book of Fatal Errors* by Dashka Slater (2020). Twelve-year-old Rufus Takada Collins discovers feylings on his grandfather's farm and it is up to him and his cousin Abigail to find the magical train cars that will carry them safely home. [J SLA]
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. [J URS]
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. [JFIC JON]
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. [FIC SEL]
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, Ryter.
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. *The Rabbit's Gift* by Jessica Vitalis (2022). When the delicate balance between the mythical rabbits and the people of Montpeyrroux breaks down, runt Quincy and twelve-year-old Fleurine learn to trust each other to ensure their respective community's survival. [F VIT]
16. **Rover's Story** by Jasmine Warga (2022). Built to explore Mars, Resilience begins to develop human-like feelings as he learns from the NASA scientists who assembled him, and as he blasts off and explores Mars, Resilience must overcome different obstacles as he explores the red planet. [J WAR]
17. *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). [J DEL]
18. **Solimar** by Pam Muoz Ryan (2022). On the brink of her Quinceañera, and her official coronation, Princess Solimar is given a magical gift that sets her life on a new path. [F RYA]
19. *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. [J LLO]
20. *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.
21. *Troubled Girls of Dragomir Academy* by Anne Ursu (2021). Marya Lupu's parents has always believed that her older brother Luka is destined to be a sorcerer and make the family's fortune, so when the day he is tested turns into a disaster, and the Guild declares that he has no magical talent, they find it easier to blame Marya for upsetting the test than admit the truth, and she is sent to the Dragomir Academy, a school for wayward girls--but a school where she finds friendship and ultimately discovers her own talents. [F URS]
22. **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. [jFIC JON]
23. *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). [F BAR]
24. *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine 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.
25. *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.* [Fic]

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. **[FIC FRA]**
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. **[FIC HAM]**
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. **[yFIC OCO]**
5. *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. **[FIC HOL]**
6. ***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. **[J LOR]**
7. *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. **[F SAC]**
8. ***Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus*** by Dusti Bowling (2017). Aven Green loves to tell people that she lost her arms in an alligator wrestling match, but the truth is she was born without them. And when her parents take a job running Stagecoach Pass, a rundown western theme park in Arizona, Aven knows that she'll have to answer the question over and over again. Her new life takes an unexpected turn when she bonds with Connor, a classmate who also feels isolated because of his own disability. **[J BOW]**
9. *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. **[J CLE]**
10. ***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.
11. *Losers* 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).
12. ***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. **[FIC SPI]**

13. *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
14. *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.
15. *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-dying and Zen Buddhism help him?
16. *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.
17. *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. **[J HAW]**
18. *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. **[FIC APP]**
19. *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. **[JFIC PAL]**
20. *The Year I Flew Away* by Maria Arnold (2021). After moving from her home in Haiti to her uncle's home in Brooklyn, ten-year-old Gabrielle, feeling bullied and out of place, makes a misguided deal with a witch. **[J ARN]**

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. **[JFIC FRE] [F FRE]**
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? **[FIC SCH]**
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. **[FIC OPP]**

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. **[J BLA]**
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. **[FIC BAB]**
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. As Luna’s thirteenth birthday approaches, her magic begins to emerge. **[FIC BAR]**
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. **[FIC WIL]**
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 to decipher clues. **[F MIL]**
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. **[FIC KOR]**
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? **[jFIC BUZ]**
18. *Turtles of the Midnight Moon* by Maria Jose Fitzgerald (2023). Twelve-year-olds Barana and Abby come together to solve a sea turtle egg poaching mystery plaguing Barana’s Honduran coastal village, and learn the true meaning of friendship, courage, and community along the way. **[F FIT]**

Short, Satisfying Reads (under 125 pages)

On My Honor by Marion Bauer
Frances Tucket by Gary Paulsen **[FIC PAU]**
The Green Book by Jill Patton Walsh
The Janitor by Andrew Clements
Seesaw Girl by Linda Sue Park **[jFIC PAR]**
Mudshark by Gary Paulsen **[J PAU]**
The Skirt by Gary Soto **[J SOT] [yFIC SOT]**
Twenty and Ten by Claire Huchet Bishop
Water Buffalo Days by Huynh Quang Nhuong **[yFIC HUY]**
Red Dirt Jessie by Anna Meyers **[jFIC MYE]**
Other Bells for Us to Ring
Ghost in the Noonday Sun by Sid Fleischman
Owls in the Family by Farley Mowat **[jFIC MOW]**
Keeper of the Doves by Betsy Byars
Meiko and the Fifth Treasure by Eleanor Coerr **[yFIC COE]**
Field of Dogs by Katherine Paterson **[jFIC PAT]**
Year of the Panda by Miriam Schlein **[EAC jFIC SCH]**
A Week in the Woods by Andrew Clements **[J CLE]**
Regarding the Fountain by Kate Klise **[yFIC KLI]**
The Whipping Boy by Sid Fleischman **[yFIC FLE]**
Pleasing the Ghost by Sharon Creech **[yFIC CRE]**

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