

Diocese of Arlington
Battle of the Books
2026-2027 Reading List



The Green Ember is the first book in a popular Christian fantasy adventure series by S. D. Smith, following rabbit siblings Heather and Picket as they are thrust into an epic struggle for their people's freedom against tyrannical preylords, featuring themes of courage, hope, and faith. The series, aimed at ages 8-12 but enjoyed by older readers, is known for its action, humor, and heartwarming storytelling, often compared to *The Chronicles of Narnia*. It's the start of a larger world that includes multiple trilogies and companion tales, all centered on heroic rabbits with swords. Provided by *Google Books*

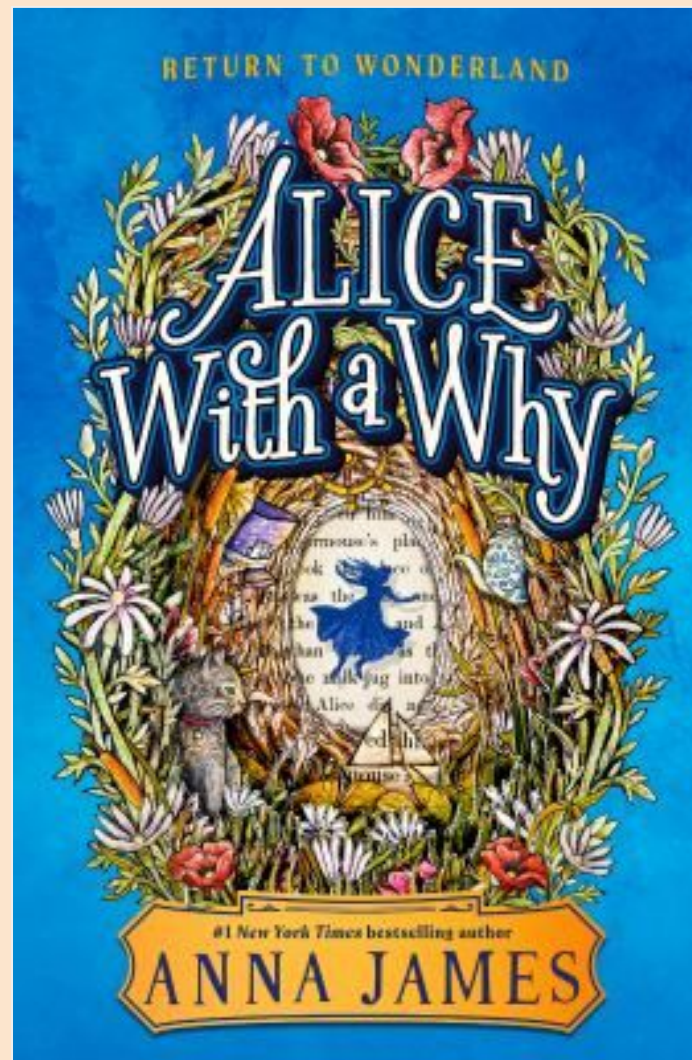
Genre: Adventure

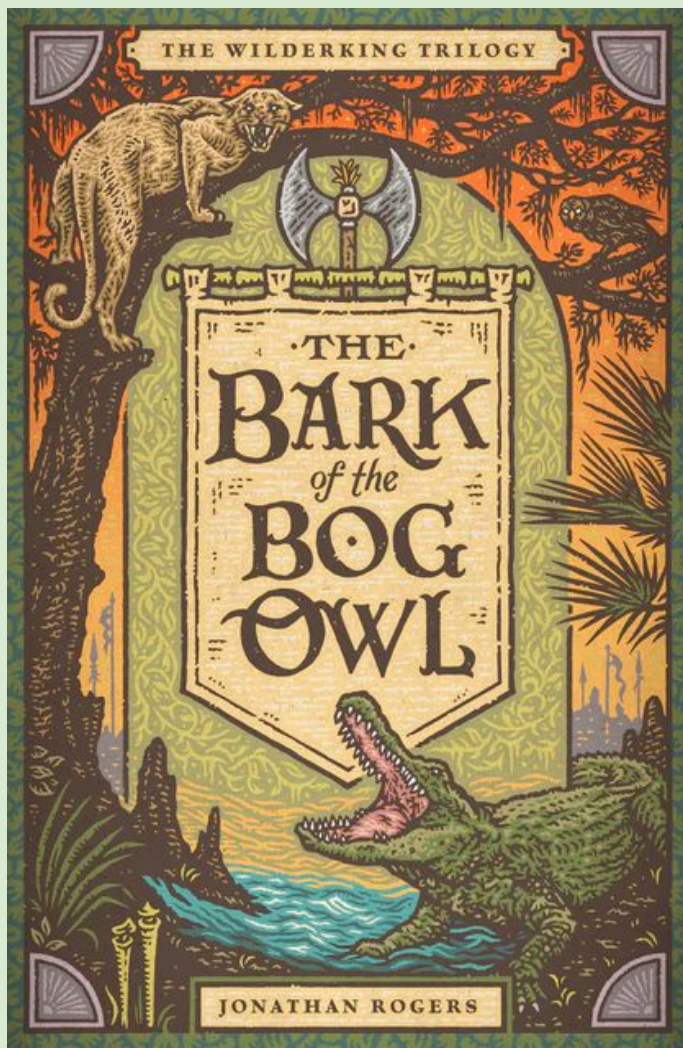
396 pages

"England, 1919. **Alyce--with a y--**is sent to live with her grandmother, the original Alice, after having lost her father during the Great War. When a mysterious invitation to a tea party hits her square in the face, Alyce realizes her grandmother's strange stories of a place called Wonderland might have some truth to them after all. Soon Alyce is tumbling down into Wonderland herself, but the place she finds is not the colorful world she's heard stories of but a world trapped in its own war." From the publisher

Genre: Adventure

216 pages





The Bark of the Bog Owl by Jonathan Rogers is the first book in The Wilderking Trilogy, a middle-grade fantasy adventure that retells the biblical story of King David in a new setting. It follows 12-year-old Aidan Errolson, a shepherd boy who is prophesied to become the Wilderking, a leader who will unite the wild and civilized parts of his kingdom, Corenwald, after he befriends a member of the swamp dwelling "feechiefolk" and is visited by a truthspeaker. The book is praised for its adventurous plot, engaging characters, and themes of courage and destiny, making it suitable for ages 9-12 and up. Provided by *Google Books*

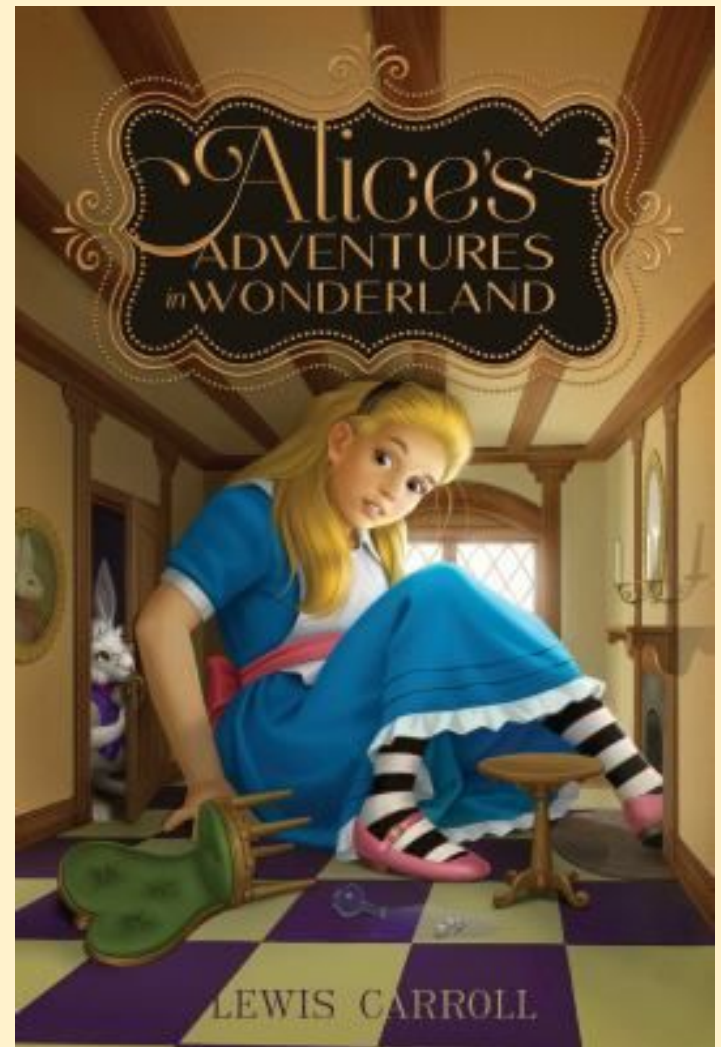
Genre: CLA

246 pages

When Alice follows a rabbit down its rabbit hole, she enters a fantastical new world full of strange and nonsensical creatures. There Alice stumbles from one predicament to the next-- drinking potions that make her shrink and grow, inviting herself to a tea party with the Mad Hatter, speaking to a disappearing Cheshire Cat, and playing croquet with a Queen of Hearts who is a little too eager to behead her opponents--as life in Wonderland gets curiouser and curiouser. From the publisher

Genre: Classic

171 Pages





The Last Dragon on Mars by Scott Reintgen is the first book in The Dragonships series, a sci-fi/fantasy blend about a boy named Lunar Jones on a struggling Mars colony who discovers he is a dragon rider, a role that could save his people from a dying planet. The story combines space adventure with fantasy elements, featuring dragons that power spaceships and a curse on Mars that makes life difficult for its inhabitants. It's praised for its fast-paced action, imaginative world-building, and relatable characters, appealing to fans of Eragon and Skandar. Provided by *Google Books*

Genre: Fantasy/Sci-Fi

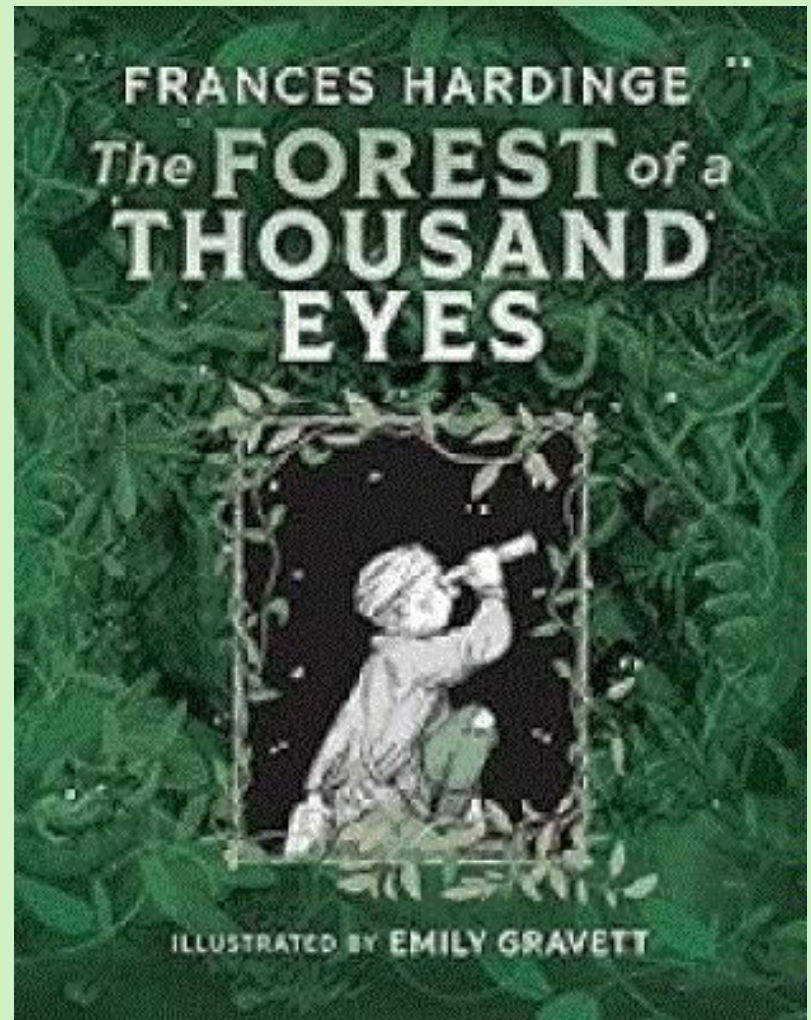
384 Pages

One thing Feather knows to be true is that given the chance, the Forest will devour her home just like it's devoured everything else in her world. Her small community lives in a section of the crumbling Wall that runs through and above the trees, doing everything they can to keep the Forest out.

When a stranger tricks Feather and makes off with her people's precious spyglass, she has no choice but to go after him, coming face-to-face with the Forest's dangers--and to revelations beyond her wildest imagination. From the publisher

Genre: Fantasy/Sci-Fi

120 pages





It's 1889, barely twenty-five years after the Emancipation Proclamation, and a young Black family is tired of working on land they don't get to own. So when Will and his father hear about an upcoming land rush, they set out on a journey from Texas to Oklahoma, racing thousands of others to the place where land is free-if they can get to it fast enough. But the journey isn't easy-the terrain is rough, the bandits are brutal, and every interaction carries a heavy undercurrent of danger. And then there's the stranger they encounter and befriend: a mysterious soldier named Caesar, whose Union emblem brings more attention -and more trouble- than any of them need. All three are propelled by the promise of something long denied to them: freedom, land ownership, and a place to call home-but is a strong will enough to get them there?

Provided by *Google Books*

Genre: Historical Fiction

196 pages

Light Comes to Shadow Mountain by Toni Buzzeo is a middle-grade historical fiction novel about a young girl, Cora Mae Tipton, in 1937 rural Kentucky who fights to bring electricity to her Appalachian community through the Rural Electrification Act, facing resistance from her mother and neighbors who fear change. The story, told from Cora's first-person perspective, explores themes of progress, tradition, family, and friendship as she starts a school newspaper to spread the word and convince people to support the project. Provided by *Google Books*

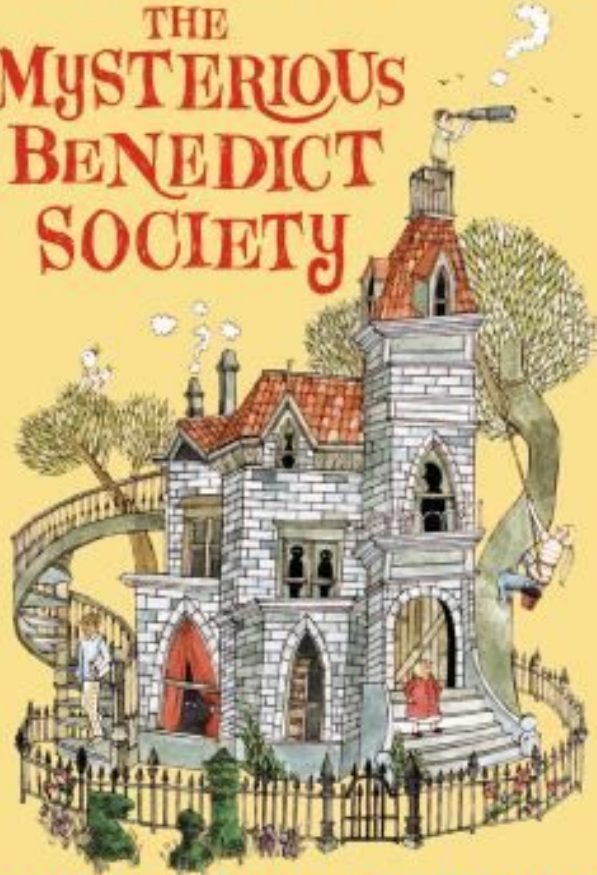
Genre: Historical Fiction

272 pages



THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING SERIES

THE MYSTERIOUS BENEDICT SOCIETY



TRENTON LEE STEWART

"Are you a gifted child looking for special opportunities?" Dozens of children respond to this peculiar newspaper ad and are put through a series of mind-bending tests, which readers take along with them. Only four children--two boys and two girls--succeed. Their challenge: a secret mission that only the most intelligent and inventive children could complete. To accomplish it, they will have to go undercover at the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened, where the only rule is that there are no rules. But what they'll find in the hidden underground tunnels of the school is more than your average school supplies. So, if you're gifted, creative, or happen to know Morse Code, they could probably use your help. From the publisher

Genre: Mystery

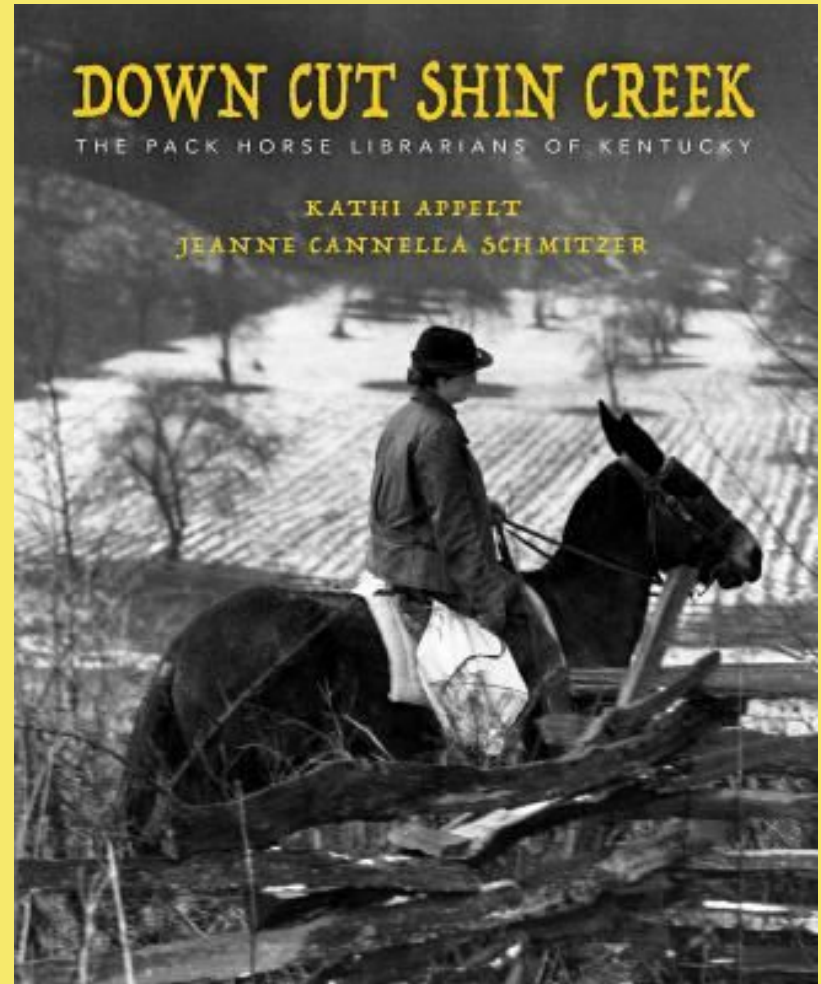
485 pages

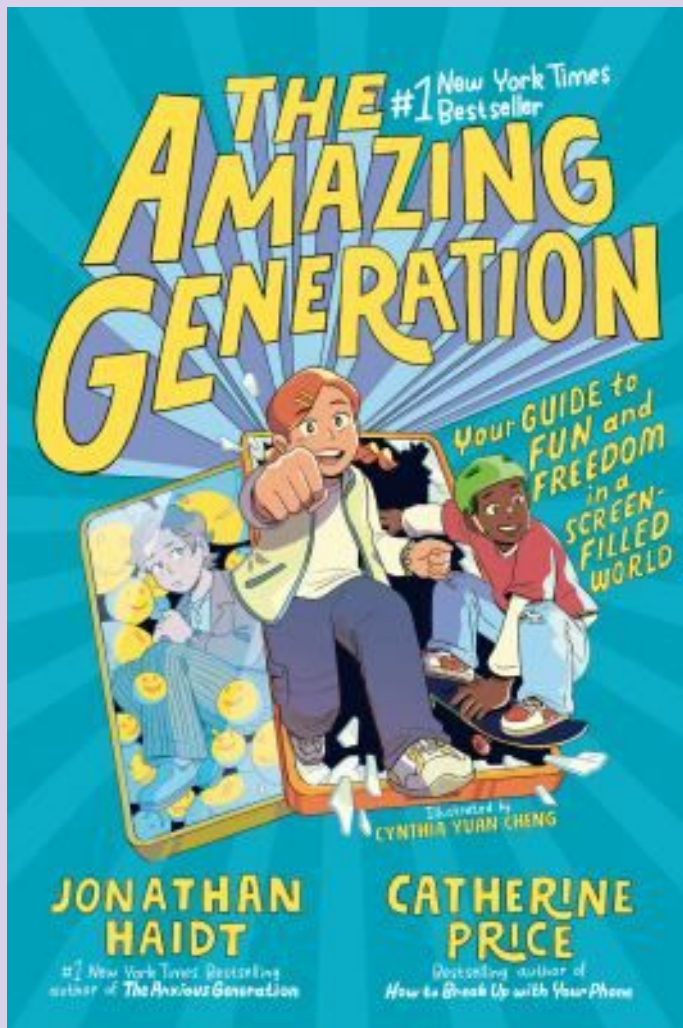
It's 4:30 in the morning, and the "book woman" and her horse are already on their way. Hers is an important job, for the folks along her treacherous route are eager for the tattered books and magazines she carries in her saddlebags.

During the Great Depression, thousands lived on the brink of starvation. Many perished. In 1935 President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Works Progress Administration under his 1933 New Deal initiative. The WPA was designed to get people back on their feet. One of its most innovative programs was the Pack Horse Library Project of Eastern Kentucky. From the Publisher

Genre: Nonfiction

58 pages





The Amazing Generation: Your Guide to Fun and Freedom in a Screen-Filled World is a book by Jonathan Haidt and Catherine Price, aimed at kids aged 9-12, that empowers them to take control of their screen time and prioritize real-world experiences. Inspired by Haidt's *The Anxious Generation*, it uses a "greedy wizards" fairy tale, interactive challenges, and real-life stories to explain the impact of smartphones and social media, encouraging a "Rebels' Code" for a more authentic, confident, and adventurous life. The guide is designed to be engaging and practical, offering strategies for kids to use technology as a tool rather than letting it dominate their lives. Provided by *Google Books*

Genre: Nonfiction

226 pages

Lucretia Sanderson has a secret. Lucretia and her mother have come to tiny Candle Island, Maine (Population: Summer, 986; Winter, 315) to escape--escape memories of the car accident that killed her father and escape the journalists that hound her mother, a famous and reclusive artist. The rocky coast and ocean breeze are a welcome respite for Lucretia, who dedicates her summer days to painting, exploring the island, and caring for an orphaned osprey chick. But Candle Island has secrets of its own--a hidden room in her new house, a mysterious boy with a beautiful voice--and just like the strong tides that surround the shores, they will catch Lucretia in their wake.

From the Publisher

Genre: Realistic Fiction

342 pages

