GUIDE BOOK TO GIFT BOOKS
AN ANNOTATED LIST OF BOOKS FOR YOUTH 2017

IT’S HARD TO IMAGINE FINER GIFTS THAN BOOKS—they offer enjoyment, knowledge, and artistic stimulation. They’re also gifts that go on giving without requiring any upkeep or cleanup, they’re a cinch to wrap, and they’re easily sent through the mail! All of these titles have been reviewed in the Bulletin, so they’ve been recommended by professionals. All were in print in the U.S. at the time of this guide’s compilation, so they should be either in stock or quickly available through a special order from bookstores both brick-and-mortar and virtual.

You know your recipient better than we do, of course, so you’re the best judge of a title’s suitability and promise for an individual reader. We’ve included a broad range of styles, genres, subjects, and challenge levels (roughly divided by audience age), so whether you’re looking for a cheerful picture book, an absorbing nonfiction title, or a pulse-pounding novel, there will be something here for the young person on your gift-book list.

While titles are sorted into four categories according to their most likely use—picture books for reading aloud to youngsters, books for primary-grades readers, books for middle-grades readers, and young adult titles—neither books nor readers are so easily categorizable, so we’ve included age/grade-range designations to help you get an idea of just who in that category is a title’s likeliest audience. And since many books reach across category borders but could only be included once, you’ll want to check the next younger category for titles whose audience stretches up into the higher age range.

—Deborah Stevenson, Editor
Kate Quealy-Gainer, Assistant Editor

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A Publication of the University of Illinois
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501 E. Daniel Street, Champaign, IL 61820-6211
As much as he loves his dad, Thunder Boy Jr. wants his own name; fortunately, his search ends with affection and affirmation in this beautifully told and joyfully illustrated book.

BARBA, ALE Time Out!; written and illus. by Ale Barba. Philomel, 2017. $16.99 3-6 yrs
Kids will know how to make their next banishment to their room an exciting adventure after watching our piglet protagonist journey to the moon and back during his five-minute time out.

BISHOP, NIC Penguin Day; written and illus. with photographs by Nic Bishop. Scholastic, 2017. $16.99 4-6 yrs
Aspiring naturalists and fans of Nicola Davies’ early zoology books will be totally engrossed in this photo-illustrated story following the day to day lives of a rockhopper penguin family.

BROWN, LISA The Airport Book; written and illus. by Lisa Brown. Porter/Roaring Brook, 2016. $17.99 4-8 yrs
Viewers will pore over these busy illustrations, following the journeys of various passengers through the intricacies of air travel in this humorous but realistic picture book.

COOPER, FLOYD The Ring Bearer; written and illus. by Floyd Cooper. Philomel, 2017. $16.99 3-5 yrs
Little ones chosen for the wedding party will find their performance nerves soothed by young Jackson’s solid outing as ring bearer for his mother’s wedding, and kids with blended families will delight in the joyful depiction of Jackson’s love for his new stepfather and sister.

CRIMI, CAROLYN There Might Be Lobsters; illus. by Laurel Molk. Candlewick, 2017. $16.99 4-7 yrs
Sand that’s too sandy, waves that are too wavy, and the possibility of lobsters make a nervous wreck out of little dog Sukie on her day at the beach, but her bravery shines through when her beloved toy Chunka Munka is swept away in this humorous and reassuring story.

CORNWALL, GAIA Jabari Jumps; written and illus. by Gaia Cornwall. Candlewick, 2017. $15.99 3-6 yrs
Jabari’s ready to jump off the high dive at the pool—maybe. The board looks awfully high from the bottom rung of the ladder, but with a little support from his dad, Jabari climbs his way up and takes the leap in this warm, reassuring tale.

DENOS, JULIA Windows; illus. by E. B. Goodale. Candlewick, 2017. $15.99 4-8 yrs
There’s something magical about an evening walk, and our protagonist meanders through his neighborhood as the bustle of the day settles down into a nighttime lull in this cozy, charming book that will no doubt inspire a few sunset strolls.

DIpucchio, KELLY Everyone Loves Cupcake; illus. by Eric Wight. Farrar, 2016. $17.99 4-6 yrs
Puns abound in this unabashedly whimsical book about a sugary little treat and her desire to be liked by the delicacies around her.

They’re firefighters, they’re duckies, they’re cute as all get out; is there really more to say?
Eaton, Jason *Carter the Catawampus Cat*; illus. by Gus Gordon. Crown, 2017. $16.99 4-7 yrs
Viewers who have a quirky take on their world will happily relate to the 45-degree-tilted catawampus cat and his humorously skewed view, especially when his unique perspective offers freedom and creativity to the people around him.

Edwards, Michelle *A Hat for Mrs. Goldman*; illus. by G. Brian Karas. Schwartz & Wade, 2016. $17.99 4-6 yrs
“Keeping keppies warm is our mitzvah,” Mrs. Goldman tells Sophia, as the young girl and her beloved neighbor make little hats for little heads as their good deeds; subtle blending and soft curves in the illustrations complement a story that’s as warm and fuzzy as a skein of wool.

Ellis, Carson *Du Iz Tak?*; written and illus. by Carson Ellis. Candlewick, 2016. $16.99 5-8 yrs
A group of insects work together to build a fort, but the fun in this picture book comes in decoding the bugs’ chatter, which is not in any human dialect; be prepared to hear shouts of “Booby voobeck!” and “Unk gladdenboot!” after this linguistic outing.

Elya, Susan Middleton *La Princesa and the Pea*; illus. by Juana Martinez-Neal. Putnam, 2017. $16.99 5-8 yrs
Lively rhyming text and illustrations that echo Peruvian textiles give this recast of “The Princess and the Pea” charming appeal, and visual clues will engage readers as the Prince stealthily gives help to his future wife unbeknownst to his mother.

Fenske, Jonathan *Plankton Is Pushy*; written and illus. by Jonathan Fenske. Scholastic, 2017. $14.99 3-5 yrs
Plankton is indeed pushy, berating poor Mister Mussel for not speaking—but when Mussel does finally open his mouth, well, Plankton is in for a surprise; hand this to kids who like a bit of sly edge to goofy humor.

Fogliano, Julie *When’s My Birthday?*; illus. by Christian Robinson. Roaring Brook, 2017. $17.99 4-6 yrs
The anticipation of the big day is perfectly captured by Fogliano’s playful poetry and Robinson’s childlike compositions; gift this to the birthday kid for something to assuage the stress of the next 364 days.

Ghahremani, Susie *Stack the Cats*; written and illus. by Susie Ghahremani. Abrams Appleseed, 2017. $14.95; e-book $14.95 3-5 yrs
A counting book featuring Pusheen-like cats is perfect for feline fan youngsters looking for an interactive read.

In this poetic address to his daughter, the author explores the challenges of having a complicated identity in a world that often asks “What are you?” while the illustrations provide a visual love song to two strands of heritage.

In this charming wordless story, a little girl follows a fox that has taken her beloved stuffed toy and finds herself in a fantastical forest village; viewers will want repeat looks at this one, as the illustrations are packed with delightful Easter egg details.

Graham, Bob *Home in the Rain*; written and illus. by Bob Graham. Candlewick, 2017. $16.99 4-8 yrs
Graham focuses on the small details in this story of a mother and daughter’s long drive home; cozy lyricism and cheerful but nuanced art may inspire kids to look at that oh-so-boring ride to the store in a different light.

Hatke, Ben *Nobody Likes a Goblin*; written and illus. by Ben Hatke. First Second, 2016. $17.99 4-8 yrs
Actually, it’s pretty certain that every viewer will like this particular goblin as he sets off to save his skeleton friend from marauding invaders in this subversive, amusing little book.

Hall, Michael *Wonderfall*; written and illus. by Michael Hall. Greenwillow, 2016. $17.99 4-6 yrs
A series of short poems, some rhyming and some not, describe activities that take place in and around a tree narrator as fall gradually changes to winter.
**Lam, Maple** My Little Sister and Me; written and illus. by Maple Lam. Harper/HarperCollins, 2016. $17.99 3-6 yrs
The dialogue will ring true to older sibs put in charge of the littles, and the Peanuts-like illustrations give the book a classic feel.

This picture-book biography follows Muddy from his Delta childhood under the care of a churchgoing, blues-skeptic grandmother to his first recording success; the dynamic illustrations and lyrical text will have kids ready to string their guitar and belt out their own tunes.

**McCardie, Amanda** Our Very Own Dog; illus. by Salvatore Rubbino. Candlewick, 2017. $15.99 5-8 yrs
An effective blend of you-are-there pet companionship and informative details about man’s best friend, this follows our young narrator and her adventures with Sophie, the shelter dog she adopts.

**Miller, Pat Zietlow** The Quickest Kid in Clarksville; illus. by Frank Morrison. Chronicle, 2016. $16.99 4-8 yrs
African-American Alta, self-described quickest kid in Clarksville, gets a challenge from the new girl in the hearty tale of rivals becoming friends; the illustrations burst with serio-comic sass.

**Reinhardt, Jennifer Black** Blue Ethel; written and illus. by Jennifer Black Reinhardt. Farrar, 2017. $17.99 3-6 yrs
An accidental roll in a chalked sidewalk turns black and white cat Ethel into a pale blue, humiliated mess, but when white kitten Fluffy shows up covered in pink dust, the pair decides the more color the better and are soon strutting their stuff as flashy, multihued felines.

**Reynolds, Aaron** Creepy Pair of Underwear; illus. by Peter Brown. Simon, 2017. $17.99; e-book $10.99 5-8 yrs
Young Jasper Rabbit experiences some serious buyer’s remorse after pleading with his mom to purchase him a pair of glow in the dark underpants, whose glow, he soon finds out, is more frightening than fun; a nice blend of humor and horror (just a bit), this will resonate with young scare seekers.

**Santat, Dan** After the Fall: How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again; written and illus. by Dan Santat. Roaring Brook, 2017. $17.99 4-7 yrs
Humpty’s shell might be put back together, but his spirit isn’t, as he is now afraid of heights; fortunately, he eventually overcomes his fear and spreads his wings (quite literally) in this thoughtful, diverting take on the old tale.

**Sheth, Kashmira** Sona and the Wedding Game; illus. by Yoshiko Jaeggi. Peachtree, 2015. $16.95 5-8 yrs
This breezy look at weddings and Indian cultural traditions effortlessly informs while staying firmly on the side of girly fun.

**Smith, Alex T.**, ad. Little Red and the Very Hungry Lion; written and illus. by Alex T. Smith. Scholastic, 2016. $17.99 4-6 yrs
Textured, bold, and patterned art illustrate this African reboot of “Little Red Riding Hood,” in which Little Red faces off with a hungry lion.

**Tabor, Corey R.** Fox and the Bike Ride; written and illus. by Corey R. Tabor. Balzer + Bray/HarperCollins, 2017. $17.99 4-6 yrs
The “Annual Tour de Tip-Top, Slow-and-Steady, There-and-Back bike ride (plus snacks),” is jazzed up a bit when Fox decides to soup up his friends’ bikes in this cleverly goofy picture book.

**Vanderwater, Amy Ludwig** Every Day Birds; illus. by Dylan Metrano. Orchard/Scholastic, 2016. $17.99 2-6 yrs
Rhymed verses delineate characteristics of particular birds in this handy field guide for youngsters who are ready to make the animal identification leap from “bird” to “specific bird.”

**Watkins, Rowboat** Pete With No Pants; written and illus. by Rowboat Watkins. Chronicle, 2017. $16.99 3-6 yrs
Youngsters who prefer to spend their days au naturel will appreciate bare-bottomed Pete and his in-the-buff antics.
A multicultural cast, a mixed-gender team, a female coach and along with a serendipitous blunder are just a few modern updates to the classic baseball underdog story.

ALVAREZ, LORENA *Nightlights*; written and illus. by Lorena Alvarez. Nobrow, 2017. $18.95 Gr. 3-5
In this immersive and creepy graphic novel, Sandy is a dreamy kid whose imaginative artwork brings about a menacing force; anyone with a vivid fantasy life and a love of spooky stories will likely read this book more than once.

Compassionate, warm, and funny, this story follows third grader Bat and his efforts to convince his veterinarian mom that an orphaned baby skunk would make an excellent pet.

In this warm, funny tribute to the power of books and stories, little bug Eddie, resident of Ferny Creek Elementary School (for human kids), thwarts a new teacher’s plan to destroy the library; readers will see anew the magic of libraries.

Tasked with saving all PB&J from an evil chicken, human Marvin and his clumsy, chaos-causing robot friend zap, dash, splat, and crunch their way through this entertaining graphic novel.

Gorgeous photos and a multi-layered text invite young readers of varying reading abilities to explore the natural phenomena of bioluminescence.

Video game references and 8-bit-like art make this story of an everyday kid trying to navigate the trials of middle school a winner for gamers, and the book may even convince a non-gamer to pick up that controller.

The Cuban solenodon, the desert sand cat, Speke’s pectinator—readers may not yet be familiar with these less known but nonetheless awesome creatures, but after reading this breezy, informative text, they’ll be ready for animal trivia night.

Elements of survival stories, family dramas, and animal tales combine in this elegantly told and unique story of a robot learning the ways of nature after being stranded on a lone island.

DAYWALT, DREW *The Legend of Rock Paper Scissors*; illus. by Adam Rex. Balzer + Bray, 2017. $17.99 Gr. 2-4
The origin story of the playground game is told in epic comedic fashion as warriors Rock from the Kingdom of the Backyard, Paper from the Empire of Mom’s Home Office, and Scissors from the Kitchen Realm search for worthy opponents.
When unexplained misfortunes start befalling their fellow El Corazón residents, best friends Lou Lou Bombay and Peacock Pearl use their wits to figure out what's afoot in this chapter book featuring a diverse cast and an immersive mystery.

**Dowell, Frances O'Roark** *Sam the Man & the Rutabaga Plan;* illus. by Amy June Bates. Dlouhy/Atheneum, 2017. $15.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 2-3
Vegetable-averse Sam gets stuck with the seemingly boring rutabaga for a science class project but soon has a change of heart; kid logic, kid humor, and an unusual friendship makes this a standout among chapter books.

A compelling story of a black girl from Boston enrolling in an all-white school nearly a century before integration, this makes clear that progress is a slow march forward, and young activists will be both in awe of and inspired by Sarah Roberts’ tale.

**Grimes, Nikki** *Garvey’s Choice.* Wordsong/Boyds Mills, 2016. $16.95; e-book $7.99 Gr. 3-5
Eloquent but simple verse follows African-American Garvey as he comes into his singing talent but still feels unloved and unwanted by his jock father.

Young artists will appreciate and be inspired by Haring’s memoir of her brother Keith, a champion of public art.

This retelling of three years of Jesus’ public ministry unfolds with visual beauty and fluid prose.

Naturalists and aspiring biologists will find delight and, well, wonder in this stunningly photo-illustrated exploration of why similar traits show up in different species.

Class pets GW, Barry, and Boneyard the Biter all try to bust out of their elementary school prison in this appealing, accessible, and utterly hilarious graphic novel.

Sure, pink may have a special popularity among young girls, but it’s also pretty cool in nature as the seventeen animals—from land, sea, and air—featured here demonstrate.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid meets video gaming in this illustrated book that will have Minecraft fans charged up.
LEWIS, J. PATRICK  *Keep a Pocket in Your Poem: Classic Poems and Playful Parodies*; illus. by Johanna Wright. Wordsong/Highlights, 2017. $17.95 Gr. 2-5
Rhyme-writing kids will enjoy this unusual collection, in which former children’s poet laureate Lewis takes thirteen poems by well-known poets and pairs them with his own verses that echo and respond to the originals with humor and creativity.

LONG, MATTY  *Super Happy Magic Forest;* written and illus. by Matty Long. Scholastic, 2016. $17.99 Gr. 2-4
Well, the forest is super happy and magical until—gasp!—the Magical Crystals of Life are stolen; a unicorn, a mushroom, a gnome, and centaur must journey to retrieve them in this delightful send-up of classic quest stories.

A clever game format introduces readers to three different stories per section, asking readers to figure out which statements are true and which are fiction. Science-minded readers might have a leg up, but kids (and adults) are in for some surprises.

PIZZOLI, GREG  *The Quest for Z: The True Story of Explorer Percy Fawcett and a Lost City in the Amazon;* written and illus. by Greg Pizzoli. Viking, 2017. $17.99 Gr. 3-5
Pizzoli balances optimism and tragedy in this recount of Fawcett’s doomed expedition; armchair adventurers and fans of unsolved mysteries will appreciate the dramatic tension, the detailed information, and the wealth of back matter.

RENNER, BENJAMIN  *The Big Bad Fox;* written and illus. by Benjamin Renner, tr. from the French by Joe Johnson. First Second, 2017. $15.99 Gr. 3-6
Both snarky and emotionally savvy, this graphic novel follows the Big Bad Fox (he’s not quite as big and bad as the Wolf) as he falls in parental love with the three chicks that were meant to be his dinner.

RILEY, ANDY  *King Flashypants and the Evil Emperor;* written and illus. by Andy Riley. Holt, 2017. $13.99; e-book $9.44 Gr. 2-4
Sure to please fans of the Captain Underpants and Lunch Lady series, this goofy royal romp features nine-year-old Edwin, a.k.a. King Flashypants, whose kingdom is threatened by Emperor Nuribison and his fearsome dragon (really a cow with wings, candles, and other impressive crafty, terrifying additions).

SAVAGE, DOUG  *Laser Moose and Rabbit Boy;* written and illus. by Doug Savage. Andrews McMeel, 2016. $9.99 Gr. 2-6
Who doesn’t love a moose who can shoot lasers out of his eyes? Sure it’s a little weird and maybe a bit dangerous when his aim isn’t so great, but there’s plenty of fun to be had in this wryly humorous graphic novel.

Kids will want to get their dancin’ shoes on and boogie down after reading these sixteen poems that celebrate different types of dance, from polka to hip hop to the cha-cha.

When her friend shows Alfie a box of free kittens, Alfie launches “Operation Kittycat,” an attempt to circumvent her parents’ rule against pets and sneak one of the kittens into her room.

WEING, DREW  *The Creepy Case Files of Margo Maloo;* written and illus. by Drew Weing. First Second, 2016. $15.99 Gr. 3-6
A brisk pace and witty banter elevate this graphic novel about young Charles, who’s not that happy to be dragged off to Echo City and is even more dubious when Margo Maloo recruits him for monster wrangling.

Baseball fans will cheer for this appropriately playful biography of the manager and self-proclaimed “goofball” who led the Yankees to seven World Series wins.

ZHANG, KAT  *The Emperor’s Riddle.* Aladdin, 2017. $16.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 3-5
In this fast-paced mystery, Mia is excited to be spending a month in China with her aunt, but she’s soon flung into a search for a long-lost treasure when an odd man comes to visit and her aunt then goes missing.
**Alexander, Kwame** *Out of Wonder: Poems Celebrating Poets*; by Kwame Alexander with Chris Colderley and Marjory Wentworth; illus. by Ekua Holmes. Candlewick, 2017. $16.99 Gr. 5-12
Taking inspiration from twentieth-century poets, the authors offer their own tribute poems, accompanied by stunningly elegant collage illustrations; hand this to aspiring poets and artists alike.

**Anderson, John David** *Insert Coin to Continue.* Aladdin, 2016. $16.99; e-book $7.99 Gr. 4-7
Twelve-year-old Bryan's middle school has magically morphed into a video game in this quirky quest tale that will be a hit among gamers, especially those with a soft spot for nerd-turned-hero scenarios.

Vivid storytelling brings the lives of three female scientists front and center, laying out the obstacles they faced and the significant contributions they made.

**Barnhill, Kelly** *The Girl Who Drank the Moon.* Algonquin, 2016. $16.95; e-book $10.99 Gr. 5-8
Deeply emotional and highly readable, this fairy tale-like story is a unique mixture of humor (nothing's funnier than a sage but amusing swamp monster) and pathos, and it will stay with readers long after the final page.

**Bauer, Joan** *Soar.* Viking, 2016. $16.99; paperback $7.99; e-book $16.99 Gr. 4-7
Baseball-crazy Jeremiah finds himself in the middle of the local scandal that erupts around the death of a star high school pitcher; a witty narrator and a brisk pace keep this one flying.

**Bolden, Tonya** *Pathfinders: The Journeys of 16 Extraordinary Black Souls*; illus. with photographs. Abrams, 2017. $24.95; e-book $18.65 Gr. 4-7
While familiar faces show up in this collective biography, Bolden broadens her reach beyond the well-known to include an opera singer, an illusionist, a mathematician, among others, making this appealing to readers with a wide range of interests.

**Bunker, Melanie** *Felix Yz.* Viking, 2017. $16.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 5-8
A lab accident when he was a baby left Felix's mind connected with an interdimensional being, but now there might be a way to separate their bond; sci-fi fans who also appreciate realistic fiction will find this perfectly combines the contemplative tone of an introspective teen with the futuristic view of a contemporary world.

**Cassidy, Sara** *A Boy Named Queen.* Groundwood, 2016. $14.96; e-book $12.95 Gr. 4-6
Queen doesn't give a hoot about what people think of him, his rainbow beads, or his shiny shorts, and it's this confidently carefree perspective that twelve-year-old Evelyn needs as she tries to find her own voice.

This graphic novel follows Priyanka as she learns about her mother's past and her family history when a magical pashmina takes her on journeys through India and ultimately to the goddess Shakti.

**Challoner, Jack** *Maker Lab.* Smithsonian/DK, 2016. $19.99 Gr. 3-6
A slew of projects and experiments are offered here for young DIYers and aspiring scientists.

**Cowell, Cressida** *The Wizards of Once*; written and illus. by Cressida Cowell. Little, 2017. $17.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 4-6
The author of the popular How to Train Your Dragon books returns here with a clever and fresh new series that explores a magical world where warriors and wizards are at odds and witches threaten everyone.

**Crowder, Melanie** *Three Pennies.* Atheneum, 2017. $16.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 4-6
Powerful symbolism and high emotional drama combine to make this story of Marin and her struggle to accept the love of her adoptive mother deeply moving.
Eagar, Lindsay *Hour of the Bees*. Candlewick, 2016. $16.99; e-book $8.99 Gr. 5-8
The story of twelve-year-old Carolina connecting to her Mexican American roots through the fanciful stories of her dying grandfather makes an appealing introduction to Latin American magical realism.

Goldstone, Lawrence *Higher, Steeper, Faster*: The Daredevils Who Conquered the Skies; illus. with photographs. Little, 2017. $18.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 5-8
Thrillseekers and history buffs will appreciate Goldstone’s deft balancing act that chronicles the breathtaking stunts of early aviators and the innovation that went into making their aircraft.

In this humorous and accessible nonfiction account, the authors describe how a small project at a Girls Who Code summer camp became a popular hit.

Hale, Shannon *Real Friends*; illus. by LeUyen Pham; color by Jane Poole. First Second, 2017. $21.99; paperback $12.99; e-book $9.22 Gr. 4-6
In this graphic-novel memoir about the making, keeping, and losing of friends, young Shannon moves from kindergarten to sixth grade, relaying her struggles with anxiety, and bullies as well as her joyful discovery of “her crowd.”

Hopkinson, Deborah *Dive! World War II Stories of Sailors & Submarines in the Pacific*. Scholastic, 2016. $17.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 5-9
History buffs are the obvious choice to enjoy this exploration of four different Allied underwater missions, but adventure fans will be riveted by the danger and heroism even more compelling.

A stellar cast and an eminently likeable heroine freshen up the outcast-turns-star story when shy twelve-year-old Mango channels her inner Beyoncé to become the lead in the school play, surprising everyone, including her bullies and her ex-best friend.

Lawrence, Mike *Star Scouts*; written and illus. by Mike Lawrence. First Second, 2017. $14.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 4-6
Fans of Hatke’s *Zita the Spacegirl* and Pittman’s *Red’s Planet* will find another intergalactic heroine to root for in Avani, who is incidentally scooped up by a mysterious spacecraft and finds herself in a summer camp for aliens in this clever graphic novel.

With insightful observations and quiet but clever humor, Lolly narrates his life after his brother’s death as he navigates the gangs of New York city and finds solace by building large-scale Lego kingdoms.

Noyes, Deborah *Ten Days a Madwoman: The Daring Life and Turbulent Times of the Original “Girl” Reporter Nellie Bly*. Viking, 2016. $18.99; paperback $8.00; e-book $10.99 Gr. 5-8
This fascinating biography of a woman who snubbed the norms of her time as an investigative reporter will delight aspiring journalists and any reader looking for an exciting “you are there” read.
**NOYES, DEBORAH** *The Magician and the Spirits: Harry Houdini and the Curious Pastime of Communicating with the Dead;* illus. with photographs. Viking, 2017. $18.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 6-9

Noyes looks past the showman’s performances and into his efforts to debunk spiritualism; with plenty of photographs, info-packed side bars, and a clipped pace, this is a gem for Houdini buffs and aspiring ghostbusters.

**PEREZ, CELIA C.** *The First Rule of Punk.* Viking, 2017. $16.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 4-7

A familiar story of preteen angst and rebellion is made memorable through Malú's distinct narration as she attempts to make sense of middle-school drama, unfair family decisions, and her identity as a Mexican American.

**PHelan, Matt** *Snow White;* written and illus. by Matt Phelan. Candlewick, 2016. $19.99 Gr. 4-6

The gritty graphic novel that resets Snow White and her story in 1920s New York will find a welcome home with fairy-tale fans who have outgrown the Disney version but still find the tale compelling.


A time traveling ship, an epically evil villain, and a thrilling race against time all come together in Pullman’s graphic novel debut.

**SCOTT, VICTORIA** *Hear the Wolves.* Scholastic, 2017. $16.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 5-8

In this thrilling survival story, Sloan must lead a group of neighbors through the Alaskan wilderness to safety after a violent blizzard knocks out their power and leaves them stranded.

**Siy, AlexandrA** *Voyager’s Greatest Hits: The Epic Trek to Interstellar Space;* illus. with photographs. Charlesbridge, 2017. $18.99 Gr. 4-8

Siy enthusiastically guides readers through the development of spacecraft Voyager I and Voyager II from conception to execution, providing both history and science in an accessible, streamlined text with just the right amount of humor.
Two parallel storylines, one told in text, the other in illustrations, follow lonely Ella as she befriends the girl she finds in an abandoned, dilapidated orphanage; even the most veteran readers of scary stories will find chills here.

Quiet, poignant magic pervades this story about an island where orphans arrive as babies and leave when older to make room for new inhabitants—until one girl resists the tradition and endangers the island.

STEWART, TRENTON LEE  *The Secret Keepers*; illus. by Diana Sudyka. Tingley/Little, 2016. $18.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 5-7
Fans of the Mysterious Benedict Society series will be thrilled by Stewart’s latest story, offering up a bit of dystopia, a bit of maritime mystery, a bit of magic, and centered on a lonely kid who deserves the good that finally comes to him.

TELGEMEIER, RAINA  *Ghosts*; written and illus. by Raina Telgemeier. Graphix/Scholastic, 2016. Gr. 4-6 $24.99; paper ed. $10.99; e-book $10.99
In this spirited but emotive graphic novel, Cat worries over her sister’s struggle with cystic fibrosis as the residents of her new town prepare for the Day of the Dead celebrations.

TOOR, RACHEL  *Misunderstood: Why the Humble Rat May Be Your Best Pet Ever*. Farrar, 2016. $17.99 Gr. 6-9
Rats are gross, right? Well, not according to Toor, and she uses a series of personal anecdotes and scientific research to try to convert the rat-averse into potential rat-lovers—or at least rat conservationists.

UNSWORTH, TANIA  *Brightwood*. Algonquin, 2016. $16.95; e-book $9.99 Gr. 4-7
Eleven-year-old Daisy has never stepped foot outside the sprawling, crumbling estate of Brightwood Hall, but when her mom goes missing, Daisy is forced to reckon with her family’s tragic past.

WADSWORTH, GINGER  *Poop Detectives: Working Dogs in the Field*. Charlesbridge, 2016. $17.95 Gr. 4-7
There are dogs, there is poop. You know who to give this to.

The compelling narrative voice of this poetry collection addresses readers directly, inviting them to imagine themselves into the ground-breaking role of the first black U.S. military pilots.

WEISSMAN, ELISSA BRENT, ed.  *Our Story Begins: Children’s Authors and Illustrators Share Fun, Inspiring, and Occasionally Ridiculous Things They Wrote and Drew as Kids*. Atheneum, 2017. $16.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 4-7
Aspiring writers will revel in this collection that offers snapshots of the artistic starts of twenty-six writers and illustrators for youth; each entry includes a childhood picture, a reminiscence, and a sample of his or her beginning efforts.

WINDSOR, M.L.  *Jack Death*; illus. by Chris Ewald. Creston, 2016. $12.99 Gr. 4-6
The offspring of Death and the child of Mother Earth take on a whole bunch of bad guys in this opener to a new series.

To use Hilo’s favorite word, this is an “outstanding” story of a boy from another realm who crashes to earth and proceeds to run around in silver underwear and eventually save the day.

Fans of Jacqueline Kelly’s Calpurnia Tate books and of Rita Williams-Garcia’s trilogy about the Gaither sisters will find a worthy companion in African American Zoe as she tries to save her family’s plant nursery.
**Alexander, Kwame** *Solo* by Kwame Alexander and Mary Rand Hess. Blink/HarperCollins, 2017. $17.99 Gr. 8-12
In free verse, seventeen-year-old Blade narrates his struggles with his identity as a musician coming up underneath the shadow of his rock star father, as an adoptee searching for his African birth mother, and as a boy defining what masculinity will mean to him.

**Alonge, LJ** *Blacktop: Justin*. Grosset & Dunlap, 2016. Paperback $6.99 Gr. 8-12
A winning combination of interest and accessibility, this follows Justin and the ragtag team he creates to challenge the Ghohttown ballers who threaten to rule the courts in his Oakland neighborhood.

Readers follow three girls—one from 1919 England, another from 1934 Oklahoma, and finally one from 2065 Kansas—through journal entries and letters in this hopeful but heartbreaking account of humanity’s end on Earth and its ultimate rebirth in a new world.

**Anderson, Natalie C.** *City of Saints & Thieves*. Putnam, 2017. $18.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 7-10
Set in Kenya, this fast-paced crime drama has street smart Congolese refugee Tina pairing up with the son of her wealthy former employer to find her mother’s murderer; the twists and turns of their path will stump even the savviest fans of crime fiction.

Wonder Woman is the epitome of the kick-butt female warrior, and Bardugo does her justice with aplomb as the book follows Diana and her journey into the mortal world with Alia, a human girl fated to bring about the end of humanity.

**Beauvais, Clémentine** *Piglettes*; written and translated from the French by Clémentine Beauvais. Pushkin, 2017. $13.95 Gr. 8-12
In this saucy French import, three girls who have “won” their school’s unofficial Pig Pageant for the ugliest girls turn the tables, making an unexpected bicycle trip to Paris that garners the attraction of social media; readers will feel inspired by their bold, cheeky confidence in the face of haters.

**Bennett, Jenn** *Alex, Approximately*. Simon Pulse, 2017. $17.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 8-12
Fans of rom-coms will absolutely delight in this modern update on the *Shop Around the Corner*; as coworkers at a kitschy theatre, Porter and Bailey share a deep animosity toward each other, while their online avatars share a deep love for old movies. Romance, swoons, and sighs ensue.

**Brown, Box** *Tetris*; written and illus. by Box Brown. First Second, 2016. Paperback $19.99 Gr. 5-12
Brown applies his considerable talents and expertise to explore the intriguing cultural background to the classic game in this trim, effervescent graphic novel history; gamers, get ready to level up.
**Cashore, Kristin** *Jane, Unlimited.* Dawson/Penguin, 2017. $17.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 8-12
The different effects of Jane's decision around a single moment play out in five sections (much like a sophisticated “make you own adventure” set up); fans of nearly every genre will find something to love in Cashore’s multilayered story.

**Córdova, Zoraida** *Labyrinth Last.* Sourcebooks Fire, 2016. $17.99; e-book $8.99 Gr. 7-10
A reckless act lands Alejandra, her girlfriend, and an annoyingly broody guy in the land of Los Lagos, filled with fire forests, terrifying saberskins, grisly giants, and the Devourer; hand this to the reader looking for a engaging diverse otherworldy adventure.

**Croll, Jennifer** *Bad Girls of Fashion: Style Rebels through the Ages;* illus. by Ada Buchholc and with photographs. Annick, 2016. $24.95; paperback $16.95 Gr. 7-10
Lady Gaga draped in meat, Pussy Riot fans holding forth in a rainbow of balaclavas, and Madonna’s—well, all of Madonna’s getups—are fodder for this treat of a book that looks at fashion history and legend.

**Elliot, David** *Bull.* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017. $17.99 Gr. 9-12
Reveling in the mythology’s violence and lust, Poseidon narrates in free verse with a hip-hop cadence, while other characters—Minos, Theseus, and Asterion himself—add their poetic takes in this sometimes bawdy, sometimes heartrending retread of the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur.

**Freedman, Russell** *We Will Not Be Silent: The White Rose Student Resistance Movement That Defied Adolf Hitler.* Clarion, 2016. $17.99 Gr. 6-9
Freedman’s compelling narration ably conveys the passion and necessary recklessness that drove the five Scholl siblings to form resistance cells against the Hitler regime.

Readers who may have outgrown the Joey Pigza series, but found him to be a kindred spirit, will find both humor and poignancy in Gantos’ recounting of his teen years.

**Garber, Stephanie** *Caraval.* Flatiron, 2017. $18.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 7-10
An enchanting mix of mystery, romance, and magic, this immerses readers in the dangerous but beautiful world of the Caraval, the legendary traveling contest for wishes, where Scarlett must find her kidnapped sister by defeating the enigmatic game maker.

**Hammel, Sara** *The Underdogs.* Farrar, 2016. $16.99; paperback $7.99; e-book $9.99 Gr. 7-10
This is an entertaining old-fashioned murder mystery, full of shady characters and false leads, and only the dogged determination of narrator Chelsea and her pal Evie can track down the killer of their tennis club’s golden girl.

Readers might know about the starry nights and the severed ear, but they’ll likely be unfamiliar with the moving, intense bond between Vincent Van Gogh and his younger brother Theo, and how without Theo, there would have never been any sunflowers or poppy fields.

**Jensen, Kelly, ed.** *Here We Are: Feminism for the Real World;* illus. by Laura Palese. Algonquin, 2017. $16.95 Gr. 6-12
In this compilation, over forty writers, academics, actors, politicians, etc., contribute their ideas, concerns, and thoughts on feminism; this makes an excellent introduction to a complicated movement based on a simple concept of equality.

**Longo, Jennifer** *Up to This Pointe.* Random House, 2016. $17.99; e-book $10.99 Gr. 8-12
It’s always tempting to run away from your problems, and Harper takes that idea literally when she goes to the ends of the earth to work as a biology researcher in Antarctica after her ballet career takes an unexpected turn.

**Mabry, Samantha** *A Fierce and Subtle Poison.* Algonquin, 2016. $17.95; e-book $15.95 Gr. 8-12
Set in Old San Juan with sixteen-year-old Luke stumbling into a local legend, this is a coming-of-age story set against the mystic and the tragic, and it will likely leave a mark on readers for days.

After finding the decades-old bones in the basement of her apartment, Tiny sleuths around her urban neighborhood to find answers in the highly readable and entirely engaging book.


Dimple, ambitious go-getter and flouter of her parents' traditional Indian values, is set up in an arranged marriage with Rishi, a handsome, geeky rule follower, in this romance that has just the right blend of substance and fluff.


Oh, co-founder of We Need Diverse Books, assembles an impressive cast of writers for this collection of ten short stories, varying in genre and style, about the struggles and triumphs of adolescence.


In this breezy but informative collection, Prager offers twenty-two biographies of individuals who have challenged heteronormative assumptions; chapters are packed with direct quotes, sardonic authorial asides, and pro-love messages.


In this gripping but accessible book, Will encounters six ghosts, each somehow connected to his brother's death, that ask him to choose between dealing with his own grief or creating more for others.


Fans of Spider-Man will find a unique origin story in Reynolds' treatment of Miles Morales, a young African American who struggles with the subtle racism daily thrown his way even as he battles more overt supervillains.

Shabazz, Ilyasah X; by Ilyasah Shabazz with Kekla Magoon. Candlewick, 2015. $16.99 Gr. 8-12

This bold look at the young life of Malcolm X is a mix of fiction and nonfiction, as his daughter wrote this by blending family memory and speculation to create this compelling biographical novel.


An immersive world (complete with its own dialect) draws readers into young Wull's quest to save his father from demon possession; horror buffs, adventure seekers, and fans of folklore will all find something to like here.


Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, this story of African American Starr and her run-in with a police officer that leaves her friend dead makes the political personal as it portrays the everyday truths behind all too familiar headlines.

Turner, Pamela S. *Samurai Rising: The Epic Life of Minamoto Yoshitsune*; illus. by Gareth Hinds. Charlesbridge, 2016. $16.95; e-book $10.99 Gr. 5-10

It’s not often that “biography” and “page-turner” come together, but Turner's tale of the twelfth-century warrior Minamoto Yoshitsune is just the work to draw samurai fans from the manga and movie aisles into the nonfiction shelves.


Fans of family dramas played out over generations will find Sorrow Lovegood’s tale a page turner, as she navigates long held feuds, well cloaked secrets, and the possibility of dark magic in her family's history.


Jill Cafferty breaks the glass ceiling of professional baseball when her 90mph pitch has the Pittsburgh Pirates calling, but she struggles with her surprising newfound fame along with the unsurprising sexism and misogyny in this story that will reach well beyond sports story fans.
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