

FEBRUARY 2021

# Story Monsters Ink



The Literary Resource for Teachers, Librarians, and Parents

## RUBY BRIDGES

INSPIRES A NEW GENERATION OF CHANGEMAKERS

IN THE STUDIO WITH  
**BRIANNE FARLEY**

**SHANI M. KING**  
INSPIRES KIDS TO BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES

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INTRODUCING BETWEEN THE PAGES: A VIRTUAL AUTHOR VISIT VIDEO SERIES

**THE BOOK BUG**  
ALICE MCGINTY: SAVE TIME FOR STORIES





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Story Monsters Ink is published by  
Story Monsters LLC  
Postal mail may be sent to  
Story Monsters Ink  
4696 W. Tyson St., Chandler, AZ 85226  
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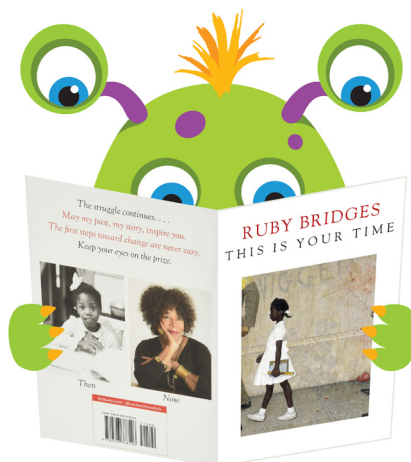
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# RUBY BRIDGES

## INSPIRES A NEW GENERATION OF CHANGEMAKERS

by Melissa Fales

Sixty years after her historic walk up the front steps of the newly desegregated William Franz Elementary School in New Orleans, Ruby Bridges has released a new book, *This Is Your Time*. It's a direct message from the Civil Rights icon to young people at a time when America seems as polarized and plagued with racial tension as it was then when she, at just six years old, needed a crew of federal marshals to escort her to and from school every day due to the many threats of violence against her.

“I wrote *This Is Your Time* after witnessing George Floyd lose his life and wondering what young people must be thinking,” Bridges said. “I wanted kids to understand how I was feeling and what I was seeing. To me, the country looks a lot like what I was seeing when I was six... It’s disappointing to see how far apart we are and how we are still so divided in so many ways.”

Bridges, who travels to schools across the country to share her story with today’s children, says she wrote *This Is Your Time* for those students who would have questions about Floyd’s death. “For 25 years now, I’ve been working with young kids,” says Bridges. “One thing I know is that racism doesn’t have a place in their hearts. As adults, we are responsible for passing it on to our children. Our babies aren’t born disliking one another because of their skin color. Racism is a grown-up disease, and we need to stop using our kids to spread it.”

Eager to speak to the younger generation about what was happening, Bridges was stymied by Covid-19 restrictions. “Everything was locked down because of the virus,” says Bridges. “There were no school visits. I didn’t know how I

could reach them.” After much thought, Bridges decided to arrange her remarks in the form of a letter. “I thought maybe it would be published in a publication like *USA Today* or *The New York Times*,” she says. “When I decided to do a book instead, I kept it in the form of a letter. *This Is Your Time* is an open letter to today’s youth and I wrote it from my heart.”

The book features black and white photographs from the tumultuous 1960s, including one of Bridges taken on November 14, 1960—that momentous day she attended her new school for the first time. “I thought the photographs would help spread the message,” Bridges says. “I wanted to tell young people, ‘Don’t be afraid. We’ve been through this before. We’ll get through this again.’” Young people often get a bad rap for being history-averse, but Bridges says that hasn’t been her experience in her work with kids. “My story is history,” she says. “When children meet me and learn that I’m the little girl in that photo, all grown up, they want to know my story. My story resonates with them because it’s the story of a child. They want to understand.”

Bridges was too young at the time to comprehend the magnitude of her enrollment at the previously all-white







## RUBY BRIDGES

### THIS IS YOUR TIME



together.” Now, she says, it’s the younger generation’s turn to act. “I want them to understand that this, too, will pass, but not without their help,” she says. “Each and every one of us needs to do what we can in order to move this country forward. I want young people to understand that they can make a difference. I want them to feel they have a responsibility to make a difference. If I could do something at the age of six that made a difference, other kids can too.”

There’s been a recent resurgence of interest in Bridges’ story, thanks to a striking image created by artist Bria Goeller. Goeller’s piece juxtaposes an image of Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris, striding confidently forward, with the shadow of the young Bridges as she was famously portrayed in Norman Rockwell’s 1964 work, *The Problem We All Live With*; a little girl requiring the protection of armed guards just to get to school. “I was blown away when I first saw it,” Bridges says. “It made me feel proud, and it made me feel proud of Kamala Harris. It’s a stark reminder that all of us are standing on the shoulders of others who have come before us; others who paved the way and made a difference.”

**“EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US NEEDS TO DO WHAT WE CAN IN ORDER TO MOVE THIS COUNTRY FORWARD. I WANT YOUNG PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THEY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. I WANT THEM TO FEEL THEY HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. IF I COULD DO SOMETHING AT THE AGE OF SIX THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE, OTHER KIDS CAN TOO.”**

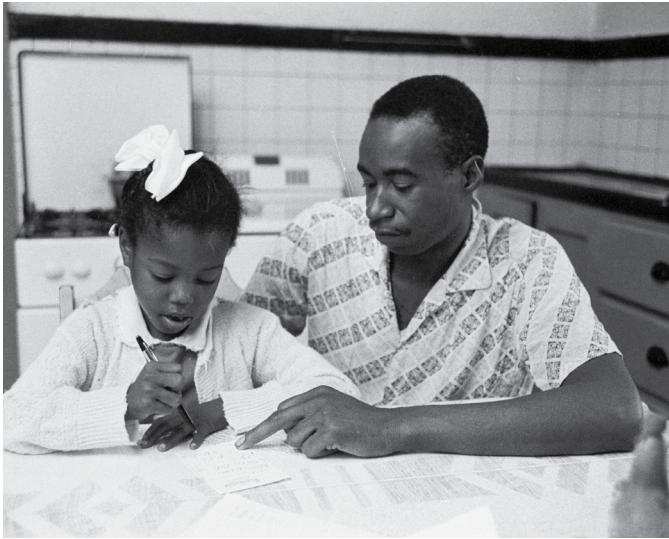
school. She liked her teacher, Barbara Henry, but had no idea that Henry was the only member of the faculty willing to teach a black student. She remembers the marshals who, along with her mother, accompanied her to and from school every day for six months, but she didn’t know who they were or why they were there. Noticing the press and the large crowds, Bridges assumed it was Mardi Gras. “It was a hard situation to explain to a six-year-old,” she says. “What protected me was the innocence of a child.”

Looking back, Bridges acknowledges the lasting impact her actions as a first-grader had on American racial relations. “That walk I took to school allowed us to go to school together, eat at restaurants together, and play sports together,” says Bridges. “Yes, it was hard, but we came



U.S. marshals escort Ruby Bridges from William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans in November 1960. AP Images.





Ruby and her father, Abon Bridges (1960).  
Copyright Paul Slade/Getty Images



Ruby Bridges speaks to children around the world.  
From the author's collection.



Ruby Bridges delivers commencement address at Rhode Island College (2019).  
Copyright The Providence Journal/Kris Craig.

Bridges says she experienced a similar feeling when President Barack Obama invited her to the Oval Office in 2011 and they stood together, gazing at Rockwell's original painting, then on display at the White House. Obama took that opportunity to acknowledge that if it wasn't for the brave actions of Bridges and other Civil Rights activists, he might not have been elected president. "The way I felt at that moment was exactly how I felt when I saw that picture of me and Kamala Harris," Bridges says. "It stirred up all of the same emotions."



*This Is Your Time* is written for a younger audience, but Bridges says she thinks it's a good read for adults, too. She thinks parents who have been struggling to explain the violence and turmoil happening across the country to their children will find it especially timely. "I hope it inspires young people and maybe some older ones as well," says Bridges. "My story is a story about hope, and the one thing we all need right now is hope."

Despite the recent scourge of violence and discrimination in America over the past year, Bridges points out that some good has come out of such unrest. "Activism is cool again," she says, adding that getting involved is one of the concepts she promotes in *This Is Your Time*. "I tell kids they need to use the talents they have to make the world a better place," says Bridges. "You don't need to have much to make a difference. If there is one thing you need to have, it's the passion to want to make a difference. That's all it takes."

For more information about Ruby Bridges, visit [RubyBridges.com](http://RubyBridges.com). ●







## IN THE STUDIO WITH

# BRIANNE FARLEY

by Melissa Fales

The latest book to feature the whimsical illustrations of Brianne Farley is *No Buddy Like a Book*, written by Allan Wolf. *No Buddy Like a Book* is about all the magical places, real and unreal, that readers can explore with a book and a good imagination. “It’s a really unusual story in that it doesn’t have a plot, or any characters,” says Farley. “As an illustrator, it meant that the door was wide open. It was an invitation to create my own story. I usually love parameters, but this was fun because there was so much to play with in that book.”

**F**arley studied English as an undergraduate, focusing on creative writing. “I thought I wanted to be an editor,” says Farley. “But then I did an internship at a small publishing company and I didn’t like it at all. Ironically, I ended up working in publishing anyway.” By the time Farley enrolled at Savannah College of Art and Design, where she earned an MFA in illustration, she had narrowed down her focus to picture books. “It seemed like a great way to combine two things I love: storytelling and narrative artwork,” she says.

While still in grad school, Farley wrote and illustrated a version of what would become her debut picture book, *Ike’s Incredible Ink*, about a procrastinating inkblot. “It wasn’t too far off from the version that was eventually published,” she says. “I sent it off to an agent at the beginning of my last semester and then we waited and waited.” In the meantime, Farley graduated and took a job as a designer for Random House Books for Young Readers. “One night I got home from work and I had all these emails about my book being sold,” she says.

Farley worked at Random House for just over four years as an administrative assistant and as a freelance designer, for two different imprints. “I felt like a double agent while I was there,” she says. “I was working as a publisher by day and writing and illustrating by night.” Farley said the experience was invaluable, plus it gave her a glimpse into what goes into getting a book published. “I saw how long the process takes and how hard the editors worked at editing and designing and how much work they put into making a book the best it can be,” she says. “It was great to have that insight and an appreciation for how much work goes into a book.”

In 2013, *Ike’s Incredible Ink* was published to much acclaim. It received the Marion Vannett Ridgway Book Award Honor and was featured in *The Original Art*, an annual exhibit held by the Society of Illustrators highlighting the year’s best children’s book illustrations. Farley also wrote and illustrated her 2016 book, *Secret Tree Fort*.

Much of Farley’s work has been illustrating books written by others, such as the *Charlotte the Scientist* series by Camille



I visit any world I wish  
and never leave my chair.  
There is no buddy like a book  
to make me feel I'm there.

Andros. “Both of the *Charlotte* books were weirdly prophetic,” says Farley. The first one, *Charlotte the Scientist is Squished*, released in 2017, is about a rabbit who is stuck at home with all her siblings. “And *Charlotte the Scientist Finds a Cure* (2019) is about an epidemic where the characters need to quarantine and wear masks,” says Farley.

Farley did the illustrations in Carrie Finison’s 2020 book, *Dozens of Doughnuts* and was particularly disappointed that the pandemic canceled all the school visits for the book because she knew there would have been treats involved. “It’s one of the small tragedies of the last year,” she says. “I was so excited to do school visits and eat a ton of doughnuts with the kids. I feel like I really missed out.”

Despite the dearth of doughnuts, Farley is proud of the illustrations in *Dozens of Doughnuts*. It’s about a bear named LuAnn who makes doughnuts by the dozen. “Every time she bakes a new batch, a new friend comes over,” says Farley. “It’s an adorable book, and it’s very sneakily about math.” Young readers can help LuAnn split up the doughnuts among her friends or they can practice counting the doughnuts on each plate. “If you don’t notice it’s a math book, it doesn’t matter,” says Farley. “It can just be a cute story. But if you want it to be a math book, it can be about addition or division.”

**“WHEN YOU’RE CREATING THE ILLUSTRATIONS FOR SOMEONE ELSE’S WORDS, YOU FIND YOURSELF PUSHING YOUR OWN BOUNDARIES OF WHAT YOU MIGHT BE DRAWN TOWARDS OR THINKING ABOUT. I THINK IT HELPS YOU GROW AS AN ILLUSTRATOR.”**

*No Buddy Like a Book* is about the power of imagination. Farley’s illustrations demonstrate how engrossing and all-encompassing a good book can be, and how books can help us use our imagination to explore the world around us. On one page, a girl is calmly reading a book while seemingly perched on an elephant’s back, surrounded by other jungle animals. In another, an intrepid reader is shown riding a yak and reading a book at the top of a snowy mountain. “I got to work in a lot about some of my favorite things like space and

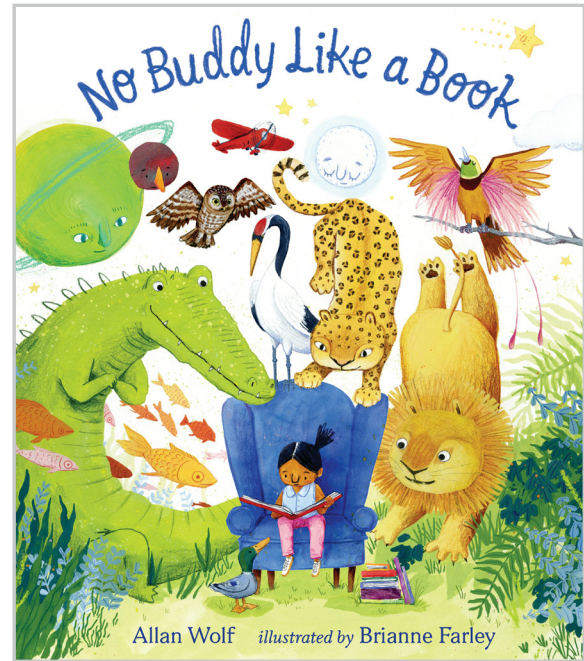


travel and animals,” says Farley. “Because Allan left things so open with the text, I felt I could get really detailed with the illustrations.”

Farley says when she writes and illustrates a story, she enjoys the freedom to play around with the text and pictures. “If something’s wrong, you can change either one because you’re in charge of both,” she says. “It’s all yours. It’s your baby. It comes completely from your head. And that’s a great feeling, but it’s also a little more intimidating for that reason.”

However, Farley says she loves the opportunity to illustrate for other authors, too. “When you’re creating the illustrations for someone else’s words, you find yourself pushing your own boundaries of what you might be drawn towards or thinking about,” she says. “I think it helps you grow as an illustrator.”

For more information about Brianne Farley and her work, visit [briannefarley.com](http://briannefarley.com). ●



# SHANI M. KING

INSPIRES KIDS TO BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES

by Melissa Fales • photo by Donielle Nardi

Shani Mahiri King's latest children's book, *Have I Ever Told You Black Lives Matter*, is a tribute to the accomplishments of over 100 notable African Americans and a celebration of their contributions to America and the world at large. "I was motivated to write this book because I want my son and daughter to understand their history, especially now with the Black Lives Matter movement," says King. "This book isn't just for black kids. It's for all kids. It's important for all kids to learn about these people and their achievements and to realize that everyone has value."







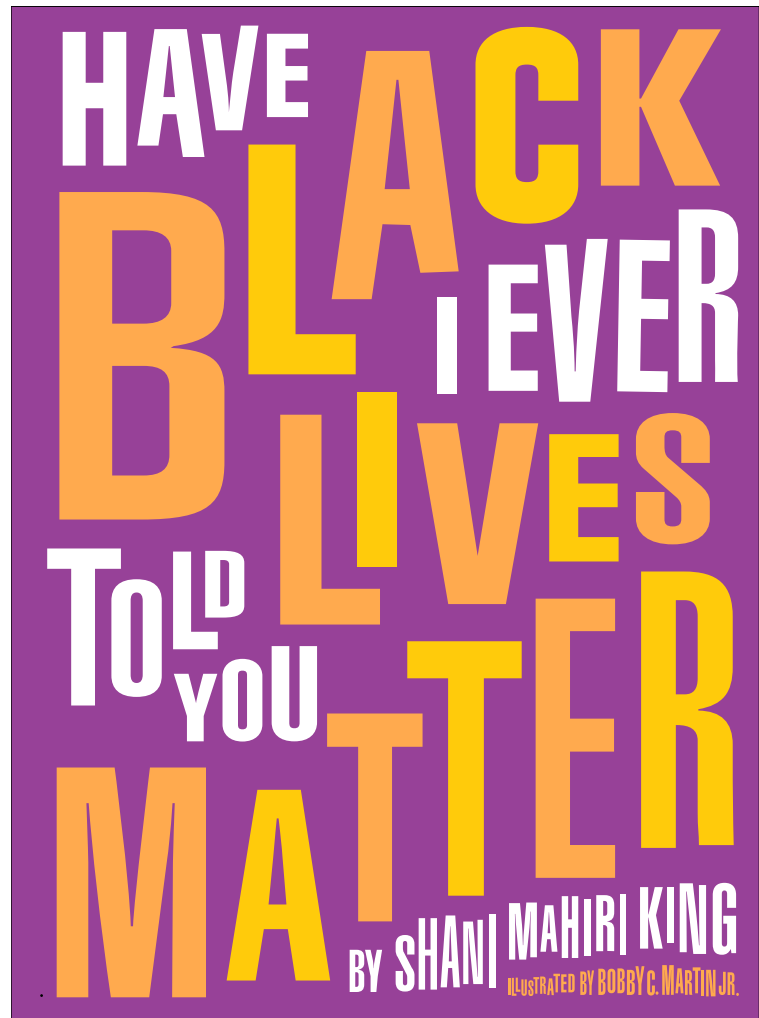
**K**ing is a law professor at the University of Florida Fredric G. Levin College of Law. He credits his mother, a dedicated social worker, with instilling in him a sense of responsibility to help those in need. In high school, King was active with the Big Brothers program and in between college and law school, he worked at a high school in Boston where he saw students living in poverty, a severely underpaid staff, and a lack of students going on to college. “I’ll never forget that experience,” King says. “When I went to law school, I remembered what I saw at that school and I focused on children and educational law.” After four years of private practice, King worked at Legal Services for Children, Inc. in San Francisco, where he helped kids with immigration, foster care, and guardianship. Today, King serves as the director of the University of Florida’s Center on Children and Families. He’s also an associate director of the university’s Center on Race and Race Relations.

To King, writing books for children is one more way to encourage and support them. His first children’s book, *Have I Ever Told You*, about the uniqueness and dignity of every child, was released in 2019. “*Have I Ever Told You* and *Have I Ever Told You Black Lives Matter* are similar in the sense that the motivation comes from the same place,” says King. “They’re both based on conversations I want to have, or do have, with my kids. *Have I Ever Told You Black Lives Matter* was inspired by what was going on in the country. Because their mommy and I talk about politics sometimes, I figured my kids would hear things. I wanted to make sure they felt important. I wanted to empower them. Basically, my books are a love letter to my children.”

In *Have I Ever Told You Black Lives Matter*, King shines the spotlight on a carefully culled collection of black men and women who have achieved greatness in different areas, such as Barack Obama, Oprah Winfrey, Chadwick Boseman, and Louis Armstrong. Narrowing down those to be included proved to be King’s biggest challenge with the book. “As a general matter, I wanted to have extremely broad representation in every field and endeavor, so the breadth and depth of African American achievement was clear,” says King. “I also considered geographic and gender diversity. Sometimes, I would turn to colleagues who have studied African American history for years and know more than

I do... I’m indebted to them for their suggestions.”

King set out to reach young readers in a unique way. “As parents and educators, we know that sitting down and reading a textbook to our children just isn’t effective,” he says. He broke the book into two distinct parts. The first is a narrative about black history. The second half includes a biography about each of the book’s heroes. “Each biography includes a quote from that person,” says King. “That was important to me because it allows the kids to meet these famous people where they are and get to know them in their own words.” King says he hopes some of the more inspirational quotes will stick







and failures and still managed to make their mark on the world. “I wanted to drive home the point that these people were once kids, too, and, just like the kids reading the book, some of them led lives that weren’t perfect,” he says. “I wanted to give readers an opportunity to connect with these people, not as famous adults, but as kids. They overcame obstacles because they believed in themselves.”

It was King’s publisher who floated the idea of using a graphic artist instead of a traditional children’s book illustrator, with stellar results. “I knew Bobby C.

“I WANTED TO DRIVE HOME THE POINT THAT THESE PEOPLE WERE ONCE KIDS, TOO, AND, JUST LIKE THE KIDS READING THE BOOK, SOME OF THEM LED LIVES THAT WEREN’T PERFECT. I WANTED TO GIVE READERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH THESE PEOPLE, NOT AS FAMOUS ADULTS, BUT AS KIDS. THEY OVERCAME OBSTACLES BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED IN THEMSELVES.”

with young readers long after they’ve put the book down. “For example,” he says, “James Baldwin wrote ‘The place in which I’ll fit won’t exist until I make it.’ A kid might read that quote, relate to it, and then remember it 15 years later. Some of the most exciting things can be learned through firsthand sources; reading a letter they wrote or watching footage of them. It’s important to provide kids access to that.”

King presents these trailblazers and innovators as humans who had flaws

Martin, Jr., had done some relatively high-profile stuff for *The New York Times Magazine* and *The Atlantic*,” says King. “I was familiar with his work but had never thought about him in the context of a children’s book. His work is unique. It’s reminiscent of cut paper, which is a powerful and whimsical way to present things. You need something that is different and fun to catch kids’ eyes.”

One of the best things about *Have I Ever Told You Black Lives Matter*, touts King, is that it can serve many different uses. “It

can be a read-aloud book for parents,” he says. “It can serve as a reference book for Social Studies teachers, as a starting point, or a blueprint for teachers to plan a lesson on black history or as a resource for kids who want to do projects and presentations.”

King believes it’s especially important to support children as they navigate through the pandemic. “Right now, I’m motivated to use whatever sort of ability I have to help children, and one of the ways I can do that is writing children’s books,” he says. He is considering writing other *Have I Ever Told You* books. “There are so many different ways to tell American history, depending on what perspective you take,” he says. “I want to diversify the canon. And I’m not just talking about race. There are many kinds of diversity to consider.”

King hopes that the black achievers highlighted in *Have I Ever Told You Black Lives Matter* will reinforce a sense of confidence and worth in black children. “It’s important for children who are often underrepresented to learn about their history and for them to see themselves in literature,” says King. “Too often, I think these kids end up feeling like they are invisible. Too often they end up feeling that they don’t matter. I want them to know that they do.”

For more information about Shani M. King, visit [shanimking.com](http://shanimking.com). ●





ONE TO WATCH:

# KYLA CARTER

by Melissa Fales • photos by Melissa Cohen

Kyla Carter is currently starring as C.J. Suki in the new DreamWorks animated series *TrollsTopia*. Carter, a 14-year-old singer, dancer, and actress, says she strives to be a positive role model, just as her idol, Shirley Temple, was for her fans during The Great Depression.



For Carter, Shirley Temple epitomizes everything she wants to be in an entertainer. “Shirley Temple has been so influential to me,” she says. “Between all the songs and the dancing and the movies, she’s always so much fun to watch. And when she was done with performing, she became an ambassador to help make the world a better place. I can’t think of anyone better for me to look up to.”

Carter was about four years old when she saw a TV commercial for a complete set of Shirley Temple movies on DVD. “I remember I called my parents in to see the ad and told them I absolutely needed those DVDs, she says, adding that she must have watched those old shows at least a thousand times. “Seeing her singing and dancing was a turning point for me,” says Carter. “I realized that I really wanted to do that too.”

It wasn’t long before Carter’s parents enrolled her in signing classes, then dancing classes, and eventually acting classes. She took a singing class at the local theater where she learned the song, “Seasons of Love” from the musical, *Rent*. “It’s not an appropriate song for a four-year-old, but I was singing it all the time,” says Carter. “My parents noticed how much

I loved to sing and realized how important it was to me.” From that point on, Carter’s parents made her interest in performing a priority. “I’ve never looked back,” she says. “I chose this route and I still love it.”

Not only does Carter enjoy being an entertainer, she’s also really good at it. She appeared in Nickelodeon’s animated series *Wallykazam!* as Hattie the Witch and portrayed young Nora Durst in HBO’s *The Leftovers*. She spent 18 months touring with a Broadway production of *The Sound of Music*. “Playing Gretl von Trapp was really my breakout role,” she says, adding that she also played Marta and was the understudy for the role of Brigitta. “We performed in 70 cities in 26 states,” says Carter. “I wouldn’t trade that experience for the world. I got to travel across the United States. It’s cool to look back and say, ‘I remember that theater’ or ‘I remember that coffee shop.’ I learned so much and I saw so much, and I gained so much experience. I think it’s so awesome that I have all those memories. They will always stick with me.”

Shortly after that tour concluded, Carter portrayed Susan Waverly in a Broadway production of *White Christmas*. “White





## “MY WHOLE MISSION IS TO SPREAD POSITIVITY AND TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO BE THEMSELVES, NO MATTER WHAT.”

*Christmas* was another amazing learning experience for me,” she says. “That was a much shorter tour, but I got to meet so many amazing people. I got the chance to play a lead role. I learned how to be present on stage.” Carter hopes there will be more Broadway shows in her future.

In addition to appearing as CJ Suki in *TrollsTopia*, Carter also voiced the character in Netflix’s *Trolls: The Beat Goes On!* “CJ is the niece of DJ Suki,” says Carter. “She’s nothing like me. I love that I get to be someone so totally different. CJ is really funky and cool and out there. She’s a lot more chill and laid back than I am. I tend to worry about things a lot more. She is so much fun to play. And it’s good to push past your boundaries and stretch a little.”

The soundtrack of season four of *Trolls: The Beat Goes On*, includes Carter singing “Because You’re You,” an original song written for her. “I was so excited because singing is my first love,” she says. Fans of that song (and there are over 33,000 of them just on YouTube) will be happy to hear that Carter will be releasing some original music later this year.

Carter says she enjoys both acting in person and voice acting. “I don’t think I could pick one over the other,” she says. “I was originally a stage actor and I think having that type of background really helps with my voice acting. But when I’m in the recording booth, it’s hard for me to be still.

I’m constantly getting told to stop moving around. I can’t help but want to act out my lines, just like I would on the stage.”

While Covid-19 affected many of her plans, Carter found a bright side to the pandemic. “During quarantine, with Broadway gone and the whole industry on pause, boredom caught up with me,” she says. “I started writing music again. I wrote songs to sing. I started playing the guitar and the piano again and that really helped me to get through the most challenging parts of Covid-19.” Carter says she was excited to see how her music would evolve. “I was making that transition from being a Broadway performer to this totally different world of becoming a music artist,” she says.

“I needed to figure out what type of artist I wanted to be. I needed to figure out what I wanted to sound like. I think I’ve finally settled on it.” Hinting that her sound is a blend of pop and folk music, Carter will be releasing the fruits of her quarantine labor soon. “I’m really excited for everyone to hear what I’ve been working on,” she says.

Creating a weekly podcast was another way Carter passed the time during quarantine. *Kyla’s Korner*, available through most podcast platforms, is featured on *The Mark White Show* which airs on Radio Alabama’s KIX 96.3 FM/100.3 FM. Carter says *Kyla’s Korner* was key in stoking her creativity. “I started doing the podcasts in April and it really helped me write music,” says Carter. “I would write a segment and then write a song about it. I love it because it’s one more way for people to hear my message.” That message is simple. “My whole mission is to spread positivity and to encourage people to be themselves, no matter what.”

For more information about Kyla Carter and her music, visit her website at [kylacarter.com](http://kylacarter.com), follow her on Instagram @kyladacarter and subscribe to her YouTube channel. ●





# Good things can come from new experiences!

A new year means a fresh start! Share the Fairy Queen's "Get-to-do" list with reluctant preschoolers and kindergartners to jumpstart the adventure of learning, meeting new friends, and starting new adventures.

Parents - do you have a little one reluctant to start Preschool? American Book Fest Parenting and Family suggests "I Don't Want to Go to Preschool, the Fairy Queen Calls."

With a little fairy dust, your reluctant preschoolers will be ready to join the fun!



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MORTON SALT

would never lead  
the back in a line  
The Chef



# THE TINY CHEF

## SHURVES UP A PICTURE BLOOK OF WESHIPEES

The Tiny Chef, a small herbivore with an enormous heart, goes on a quest to find his missing recipe book in this irresistible debut picture book from the creators of @TheTinyChefShow. Story Monsters had to find out more and asked The Tiny Team...

### Who is the Tiny Chef?

From his humble garden tree stump, an herbivore named The Tiny Chef creates the world's tiniest dishes for the world's tiniest cooking show. There's never a dull moment with The Chef as his spirit, charm, and cleverness help him deal with the unpredictable nature of life in a tiny kitchen. More than anything, the Tiny Chef is always truly himself as he finds ingenious ways to work tiny. The Tiny Chef believes that children should learn how to cook and is hopeful that kids watch his cooking program. In his free time, The Chef enjoys playing endless games of Uno and he loves to play his tiny banjo.

### Are there any recipes he loves that kids can try making at home?

Oh yes! In his book *The Tiny Chef and da Mishing Weshipee Blook* (which you can buy here: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/612056/>) there is a FABULOUS Blegaful Shew (Vegetable Stew) recipe, so be sure to check that out!!

Also there is a wonderful audio book narrated by the one and only Ru Paul here: <http://bit.ly/tiny-chef-audio>.

The Tiny Chef plans to share many more recipes in the future for the tiny and big chef in all of us like the one here for blana bwa! On our site, [thetinychefshow.com](http://thetinychefshow.com) we also have a page with some of Chef's recipes.

### Does he have any tips for beginner chefs?

Yes, to always cook with love and have fun while doing it. And of course patience, and quality ingredients. He also likes to say "Nevo shudge a pie bly ets cwust" which is a bit controversial.

### Where can we find videos of The Chef?

Currently on YouTube and Instagram!

[www.youtube.com/thetinychefshow](http://www.youtube.com/thetinychefshow)

[www.instagram.com/thetinychefshow/](http://www.instagram.com/thetinychefshow/)

### What can The Tiny Chef tell us about the upcoming big-screen project with Imagine Entertainment and Kristen Bell?

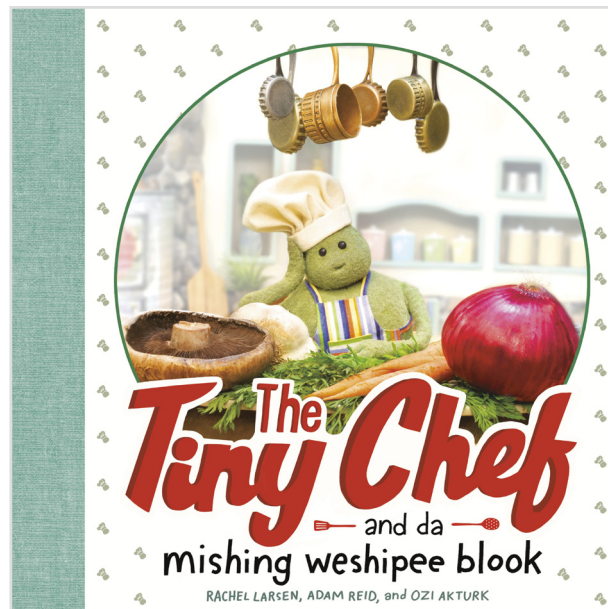
We try not to overwhelm The Tiny Chef with "big deal news" since we are dealing with such a sensitive and expressive being. The Tiny Chef is aware we are working hard to get him on global platforms in big ways but mostly we don't worry his little heart with what a big deal it all is. The team wants him

just focusing on the things he loves, like cooking. We do think he will be thrilled to have his very own cooking show on TV. There are some big tiny things to look forward to!

### What are some of The Tiny Chef's biggest goals and aspirations as he becomes a world-renowned chef?

To spread his plant-based recipes far and wide and inspire kids and adults everywhere to discover the joy of cooking. We also feel The Tiny Chef is naturally so empathetic and kind that hopefully that example rubs off on all of us "Mother Cheffers" who adore him.

Fankyiu, Lub you byeeeeeee, Story Monsters!



## BLANANA BWED

### Prep Time | 1 ½ hours

Translated for human proportions by Chef Lou  
@lauralouiseoates

Dense and moist and with the perfect crumb, "Blanana Bwed" can be consumed alone or smothered in your favorite jam. Depending on what he has on hand The Tiny Chef loves to fold in his favorite nuts or chocolate chips.

### Ingredients:

4 medium ripe bananas  
½ cup granulated sugar  
¼ cup almond milk (or whichever vegan milk you have on hand)  
¼ cup neutral flavored oil  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
2 cups all purpose flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
½ teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
Tiny Chefs favorite additions (choose one)  
½ cup chopped walnuts  
½ cup chopped pecans  
½ cup mini chocolate chips

### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350F. Spray a 9x5 loaf pan with nonstick spray. Lightly dust the sides with flour.

Peel the bananas and add to a large mixing bowl. Mash the bananas with a fork. The texture should be smooth and chunky. Add the sugar, almond milk, oil and vanilla. Stir gently until the ingredients are well combined.

Sift in the flour. Add in the baking powder, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. Stir the ingredients well, but be careful not to over mix. If you are adding any tasty additions now is the time. Add to bowl and fold in gently.

Transfer the batter to your prepared pan.

Bake for about 50 minutes. The "bwed" should be golden brown on top. To check if it is done you can use the toothpick test. Poke the center of the loaf with a toothpick, if it comes out clean the loaf is cooked; if it's slightly sticky it needs a bit longer. Remove from the oven and let cool for 10 min.

Store covered on the counter for up to 3 days or in the refrigerator up to 1 week. ●



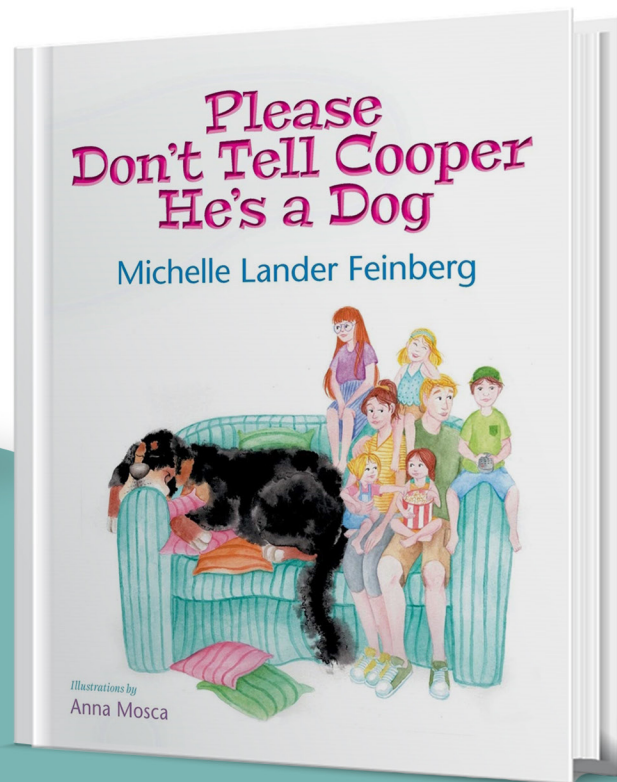
# A DOG LOVERS' MUST-HAVE!

Dogs are people too! At least, that's what Cooper the rescue dog believes! This hilarious, delightful dog adventure helps to teach young readers about kindness to animals and pet adoption. Children will also learn about a few European places as they follow Cooper on his solo adventure!

*"An engaging, lighthearted tale of a beloved canine." - Kirkus Reviews*

*"A grand selection for storytime, Please Don't Tell Cooper He's a Dog is also written at a level that will enable young readers to enjoy reading it on their own. It's most highly recommended."*

*- Jack Magnus for Readers' Favorite*



[www.cooperthedog.com](http://www.cooperthedog.com)

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and [BarnesandNoble.com](http://BarnesandNoble.com)

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# RANSOM RIGGS

## PENS THE FINAL CHAPTER OF HIS PECULIAR SERIES

In the ten years Ransom Riggs has been writing the #1 *New York Times* bestselling *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* series, over ten million copies of the books have been sold. As popular as the series of decidedly different young people and their most unusual headmistress has been, Riggs has decided to bring it to a conclusion in his new book, *The Desolations of Devils' Acre*.

**T**he *Desolations of Devils' Acre* was many years in the making," says Riggs. "I spent a decade in this world, building and tending to the characters, and it's a bittersweet thing to finally bid them goodbye. I'm going to miss them. But I've tried to give them the send-off that they, and the readers who've stayed with me all this time, deserve."

Riggs released the first book, *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* in 2011. "The idea of a world populated by kids with powers that are somewhere between super-abilities and disabilities had been rattling around my head for years," he says, having assigned children abilities including levitation, invisibility, and, in the case of one boy, internal beekeeping.

Many of Riggs' interests contributed to the creation of the series. "I had just graduated from film school and was looking for ways to tell stories in a visual way," he says. "I was writing screenplays and making short films." Riggs had also started collecting old photographs from flea markets and second-hand stores. "At some point, there was this aha moment where I realized the strange-looking people in the photos I was gathering could be the kids with strange powers I had been imagining," says Riggs. "I wanted a character from 'our' world to discover them, and I loved the idea of the photos being the vehicle of that discovery, as well as a mystery to be unraveled. Everything else—time loops, headmistresses who shapeshift into birds, invisible monsters with python-like tongues—all grew from those seeds."

The vintage photos Riggs incorporates into the pages add to the *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* series' eerie appeal. "Many were lent to me by other photo collectors: people who've been searching for cool old pictures for 10, 20 years, and have amazing stuff," says Riggs. "Working them into the story was great fun, and a big challenge. Sometimes I would come across a photo I really liked as I was writing, and I would find a way to change the story a bit in order to work the photo in. Other times I knew I needed the story to go a certain way, so I went looking for photos of specific types of people or events to fit what I had already written. So, it was a strange, organic process where the photos influenced what I wrote and what I wrote also influenced the kinds of photos I was looking for."

The plot of the *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* books follows protagonist, Jacob Portman, whose grandfather tells him disturbing stories of scary monsters and of a mysterious group of specially able children. Riggs says he didn't base the character of Jacob on himself. "I had him grow up in the little town in Florida where I'm from, because I felt trapped there as a kid and dreamed of an extraordinary life elsewhere, as he does, and I liked the contrast between sunny, unmagical suburbs and the mysterious, fog-benighted world of the peculiars in Wales," Riggs says. "I wish I were as brave as Jacob is! He transforms from being a mild-mannered wimp in the first book to action-hero adjacent in the final few."

Over the last few years, Riggs started to think about how the saga of *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* would end. "By 2019 I knew where I wanted to leave the characters and





RANSOM RIGGS

THE #1  
NEW YORK TIMES  
BESTSELLING  
SERIES



THE DESOLATIONS OF DEVIL'S ACRE

THE SIXTH NOVEL OF

MISS PEREGRINE'S

PECULIAR CHILDREN





a satisfying and exciting climax to a story that's grown exponentially over the years," he says. "The whole peculiar world is at stake, locked in battle against ruinously powerful forces bent on dominating them. Anything could happen and going into the writing of *Desolations* I truly didn't know how it would end. I think my readers will be surprised, too, when they finally turn the last page. It's the longest book in the series, clocking in at over 500 pages, and stocked full of vintage found photos, like the others. I'm proud of it."

For now, Riggs is holding his fans in suspense as to his next project. "I'm working on something fun I can't talk about yet, but which I think will make *Peculiar Children* fans happy," he says. Looking back on the last ten years, Riggs says he's not sure why his unusual series was so popular. "I really thought a book filled with old black and white photos marketed to teenagers would fail instantly," he says. "I was writing a story I thought would've entertained *me* as a teenager ... I figured what I would've liked as a teen had nothing to do with what teenagers today would want to read. I'm grateful to have been wrong about that."

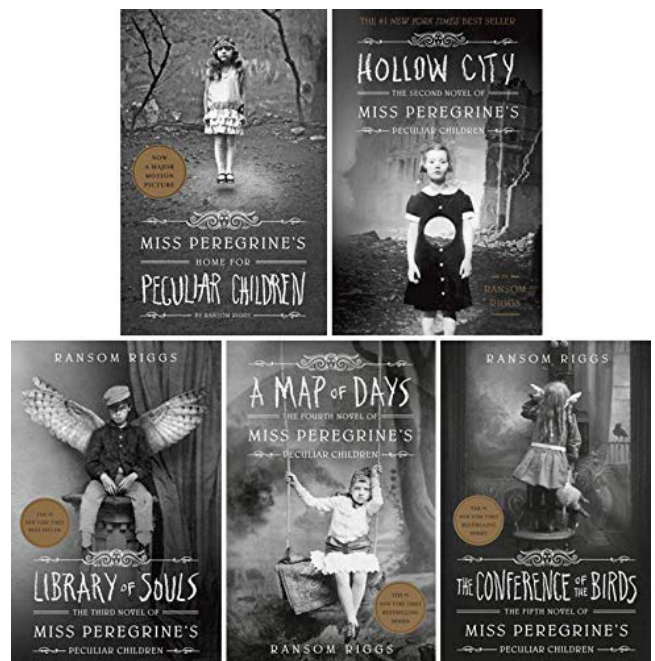
For more information about Ransom Riggs and his books, visit [ransomriggs.com](http://ransomriggs.com). ●

**"IT'S BEEN A LONG, WILD RIDE, AND I'M DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO ALL MY READERS FOR STICKING WITH ME AND THIS STORY ALL THESE YEARS. *MISS PEREGRINE* WAS MY FIRST NOVEL, AND NOW, TEN YEARS AND SEVEN BOOKS LATER, I'VE GROWN INTO A MORE CAPABLE, CONFIDENT WRITER THAN I EVER WAS."**

how I wanted the story to end, but I had no idea, going into the writing of *Desolations*, how I was going to get there," he says. "That's the fun part of writing. You wall yourself into a narrative maze and have to write your way out of it."

When it came time to write *The Desolations of Devil's Acre*, Riggs admits, it was emotional. "Writing that last chapter, especially, I found myself getting misty-eyed," he says. "It's been a long, wild ride, and I'm deeply grateful to all my readers for sticking with me and this story all these years. *Miss Peregrine* was my first novel, and now, ten years and seven books later, I've grown into a more capable, confident writer than I ever was. A decade of impassioned feedback from fans—both positive and negative—played a big role in making me the writer I am today. I owe them a lot."

Riggs is excited to share *The Desolations of Devil's Acre* with those fans. "It's the last book in the latest *Peculiar Children* trilogy, the culmination of 10 years' work, and, I hope,





# GO "BETWEEN THE PAGES" WITH AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR ALANE ADAMS



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## LAUNCHING JANUARY 2021





## HAVE I TOLD YOU ABOUT SOPHIE RAE?

**Y**ears ago, I swore up, down, and sideways—and every other way—that one day, far, far, far into the future, I would definitely *not* be one of those grandmothers who talks about her grandchildren all the time.

**Well, I lied!**

Sophie Rae, who was born on September 4, 2020—a perfect day in an otherwise not-so-perfect year—is the topic of at least 50 percent of what I talk about these days. I show photos, share videos, and spend hours digging through her mother’s baby clothes (which survived a few decades of spring cleanings) to see which would look cute on her. I tell endlessly fascinating (to me!) Sophie stories—about her naps, her bath time, the preverbal noises she makes, her gestures, her squirming, her smiles: I am sure it gets a bit much. But in addition to the pure joy of having Sophie Rae in our lives as the newest beautiful member of our family, watching a real baby grow and change and learn day by day—and develop into a *reader*—is a perfect living, breathing (and adorable!) study in what I do every day in my professional life’s work at Scholastic. (Not that I feel the need to justify myself—ha!)

It is endlessly fascinating to me to watch Sophie Rae grow and change literally every day. As a working mother when my own children were newborns and infants, I was probably too close (or too exhausted!) to really see the speed of child development over the first six months of life. It’s incredible to me now to look at the photos from when Sophie was first born (just before Labor Day) to now (just before Valentine’s Day) and observe her growth from a little swaddled bundle to a fully expressive baby.

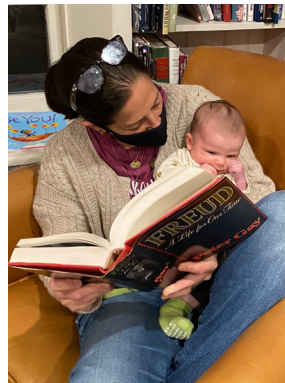




Today, Sophie is engaged and responsive and alert and communicative. She is totally huggable—even when she is crying and fussy and needs a diaper change. She is an open book. She puts it all out on the table: she is responsive, has no bias, no prejudice, no preconceptions. She is completely available and ready to consider whatever her parents and family members (and yes, her grandmother) put in front of her. And she is—already!—becoming a reader.

To my immense delight, she already responds with smiles and gurgles and squirms to books and reading time. Her parents read to her every night and every day. Every masked friend and family member who comes into our Covid bubble wants to read to Sophie Rae. She is alert and attentive and so engaged; she grabs for the books and is even beginning to try to turn the pages.

During the day, Sophie seems open to pretty much any book any of us wants to read with her. *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz, *The Icky Bug Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta (illustrated by Ralph Masiello), and *Alma and How She Got Her Name* by Juana Martinez-Neal are a few of her favorites. With the exception of Sigmund Freud (that was a goofy experiment one fussy afternoon) Sophie Rae is eager to “read” a wide range of books on all subjects with all kinds of art and stories in different formats and shapes and sizes.



But the crazy—and fabulous—thing is that Sophie Rae, just four and a half months old, already has her bedtime favorites. Well, more accurately, one favorite: *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown (illustrated by Clement Hurd). You can see her dad and mom trying to read her a different book before bed—she is decidedly not happy.



Then watch as *Goodnight Moon* begins: “In the great green room, there was a telephone and a red balloon...” She calms right down....

Since 1948—around the time Sophie’s grandmother’s grandmothers were reading to their own children—Scholastic Book Clubs has been partnering with classroom teachers in every school in the country (and with the pediatric literacy nonprofit organization [reachoutandread.org](https://reachoutandread.org) to offer kids from all backgrounds monthly colorful flyers filled with affordable, age-appropriate titles that inspire and empower them to choose the books they want to read and keep proudly as their own.

Scholastic celebrated its 100th birthday last year, and this milestone—and the role Scholastic plays in helping all kids learn to read and make sense of the world—was featured in a wonderful segment on *CBS Sunday Morning*. You can watch it [here](#).



As you now know, I spend 50 percent of my waking hours talking about Sophie Rae (and probably dreaming about her too!). But the other 50 percent of the time, I talk about the longevity of Scholastic Book Clubs and the powerful role it plays in developing literacy for all children. The secret is that Scholastic Book Clubs inspires children to express their individuality through the books they choose to have read to them, then read independently and claim as their own. When kids have access and are empowered to choose the books they want to read, they are more likely to become lifelong readers. I see it in my professional life, and I see it happening before my eyes with Sophie Rae, who is already communicating to us—loud and clear—about what she wants to read.

You can bet I will continue showing up with more and more fabulous books of all kinds on all topics (except for Freud!) to see what books Sophie engages with. Some she will like to hear once and that's it. Some she will reject altogether. And

some, like *Goodnight Moon*, will be on repeat on her bedtime playlist! It's all part of the journey to becoming a reader. As a grandmother, I am truly blessed and deeply inspired to be part of Sophie's journey to becoming a reader. As President and Reader in Chief of Scholastic Book Clubs, it is my job and my calling to make those magical, life-changing reading journeys an inalienable right of literacy for all children.

And as you can imagine, I am going to keep talking about it. Thank you for listening!

XX,  
Judy ●

**Judy Newman** is President and Reader-in-Chief of Scholastic Book Clubs. For more information, visit [judyneumanatscholastic.com](http://judyneumanatscholastic.com).

## A BOY WITH AN ALIEN POWER...

The destinies of a 12-year-old boy and an alien man become inextricably linked as they go on the run from government agents and a shapeshifting enemy.

However, one question hovers above their unlikely friendship: why did aliens come to Earth in the first place?

Discover the THE ALIEN SKILL SERIES: an Amazon bestselling, award-winning science-fiction series for teens.

"Solid aliens-crash-to-earth tale."  
(Amazon reviewer) ★★★★★

"An extremely timely message for today's readers."  
(Amazon reviewer) ★★★★★

"Wouldn't I just love to have the skill!"  
(Goodreads reviewer) ★★★★★

"Government agents hunting down a boy with alien powers; how cool is that!!!"  
(a *Wishing Shelf* reader) ★★★★★

LANDING  
MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup>



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# The CONJURERS

Siblings Emma and Alex tumble into a secret world where magic is real and skilled illusionists can perform actual tricks—for better or worse. Perfect for fans of the Magic Misfits and Land of Stories series.

“Part A Series of Unfortunate Events, part Tony Abbott’s *The Copernicus Legacy*, this adventure has impressive tricks up its sleeve.”  
– Booklist

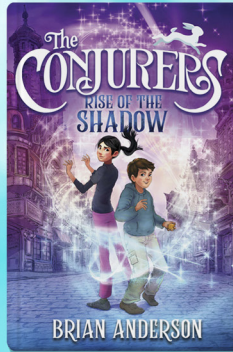
“Middle grade fans of magical mysteries will enjoy this exciting and well-paced series debut.”  
– School Library Journal

 theconjurersnovel

 dogeatdoug

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Available on Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, and most major retailers



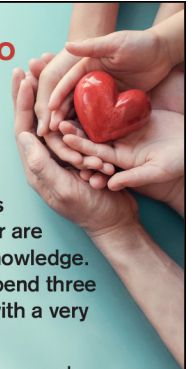
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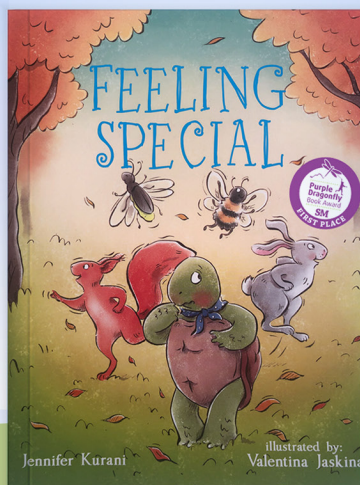
*With the wave of a wand...*

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## Heartwarming picture books that teach children that everyone is special in their own way!



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 JenniferKurani

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# TEACHING TOOLBOX: ACTIVITIES FOR HOME

by Larissa Juliano

I wanted to share with all of you some of the activities that I have encouraged my at-home learners to do if they have “extra” time. Many parents seek out additional work depending on how quickly their child is completing their asynchronous assignments, and others are perfectly content with the work that comes home each week and feel that it is enough!

**W**hen I Zoom call with my other group of students each morning, I remind them of various activities they can complete at their home or daycare. This comes in really handy if a parent or student is seeking out more ideas for their children.

So many families are already coming up with some wonderful and creative ideas for their kids due to the different school schedule this year. Personally, as a working mom and teacher, I don't have the time to do all the amazing Pinterest activities that I keep saving! So hopefully these ideas will bring a few fresh thoughts to your classroom or home learning time. If you would like a copy of this document I created, please feel free to email me and I will gladly share it with you!

Please also share with us your favorite at-home activities with students and children. Use the hashtag #teachingtoolbox for a possible feature in a future column!

## READING AND WRITING ACTIVITIES:

### Scavenger Hunt in your backyard!

This is a favorite. Change this up depending on what season it is. Fall, winter, etc. I have found some really cute ones for taking a walk in the neighborhood and going on a winter wonderland walk.

**Make your own mini book using paper, pencil, colored pencils. What will you write about? Don't forget the cover!**



My children and students go crazy for making their own books! Sometimes I give them ideas, and other times I let them surprise me! We are starting to work on using words like first, then, next, and last to reinforce the pacing of their book.

**Write down your sight words on a hopscotch board. Play!**

I always stand by the method of “say it, spell it, say it” when it comes to sight words. I have found that my learners who need some extra practice with their sight words retain them better when we spell it ... then as they master them, we just say the word!





## Go on a BOOK hunt in your house! How many books can you find with:

- » Animals on the cover
- » Colorful letters in the title
- » People on the cover
- » Wrap around cover
- » Books with the same author and illustrator



Read these books this week with a grown-up and draw a picture of your favorite one!



Find a magazine and cut out pictures of things that start with letters of the alphabet! Glue them on paper and write the ABC word next to it.

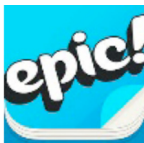
This is a great way to go through old magazines, and also give children another immersion into text. I have really loved finding blank notebooks at the dollar store to support their word and letter finding!

## Draw and label a picture for our classroom art wall!



Children's work should be displayed as much as possible! I know it can get cluttered, so I try to take it down and put fresh work up every other month. Such a sense of pride and also helps them feel like their class (or home) is really their "place."

## Epic



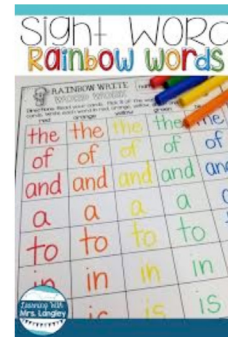
This is a fantastic app that I recommend for all families! Thousands of beautiful children's books that can be read, listened to, or read to them. Some fantastic phonics videos to accompany topics as well.

## Starfall "Reading"

One of my all-time favorite websites for children in early elementary ages. Books to read online, amazing printables, and very cute phonics based videos.



## Rainbow Write your sight words:



## Check out Uniteforliteracy.com and read some books about animals!



**Larissa Juliano** is a first grade teacher in upstate, New York. She enjoys being her three children and husband, hiking in nature, savoring home-cooked food, and writing children's books. Larissa's latest book, *Grandpa's Workshop* (Clever Publishing) inspired by her beloved dad is available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and her author website [larissajuliano.com](http://larissajuliano.com). Larissa appreciates the support and love from her colleagues and fellow Story Monster friends as she pursues her writing passion.



INTRODUCING

# BETWEEN THE PAGES:

A VIRTUAL AUTHOR VISIT VIDEO SERIES

by Alane Adams

**A**s a children's author and literacy champion, my favorite part of my job over the past few years has been traveling to schools all over the country and performing a 45-minute author talk where I introduce kids to what it is an author does and how books get created. So far, I've visited over 300 schools in 30 states, visiting over 100,000 kids. The kids LOVE the talk and are fascinated by

how authors create stories, but it was difficult to scale up the number of visits because there was only one of me, and so many schools on my waiting list! When the pandemic occurred and all travel ground to a halt, it was the perfect time for me to reassess how to make my author talk scalable so that even more kids could be reached and inspired to discover a love of reading.



Right away the idea of creating a video of my assembly appeared, but it was challenging to capture the energy of a live talk and maintain a level of interactivity with the kids. I wanted it to be just as fun on video as it is in person! The first step was to hire a first-rate team that could do the work in the midst of a pandemic.

Over many Zoom calls, the first breakthrough the team made was rather than make one continuous video, we would break the talk down into individual segments, each one leaving off with a question that the students could work on in class before tuning into the next video. That solved the first issue of maintaining a level of interaction with the students while not overloading them with information all at once.

In addition, teachers could use the time guidelines provided to plan their classroom activities and play all the videos in a day or spread them out over the week. This provides maximum flexibility for the teacher and keeps kids' attention levels high.

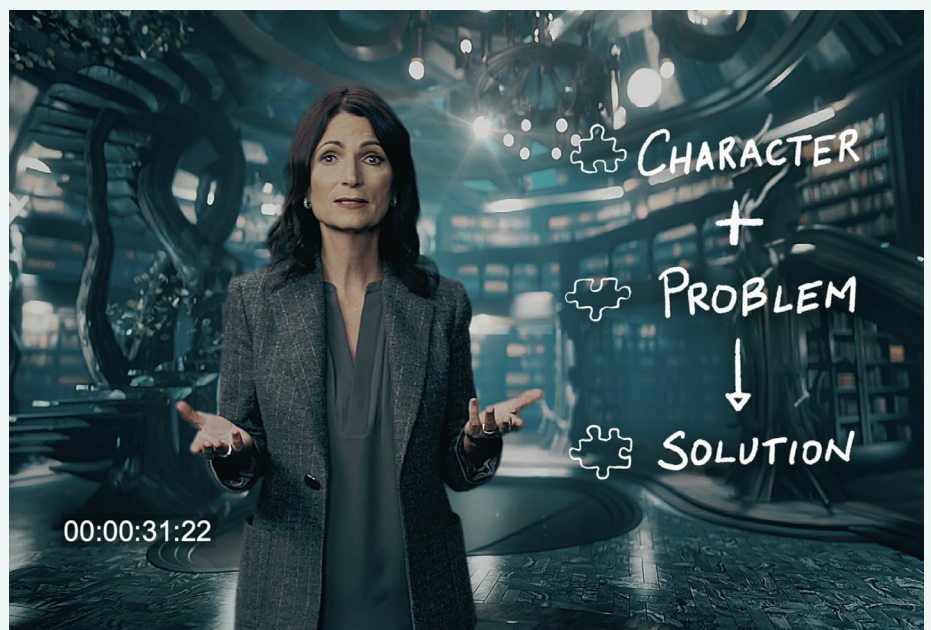
The second big problem we had to tackle was how to make the talk have the same level of excitement as an author visiting in person. Our team wanted to create a background for the video that would evoke a sense of magic and draw kids into the setting of this imaginary talk I was giving.

After many months of work, we developed a 3-D model of a library interior that captures a deep sense of magic while setting the background firmly among books. But placing the setting in a magical

background wasn't going to be enough to really capture and hold kids' interest, so we began designing graphics to help illustrate and really bring the talk to life. Using wiggly line art and comic book-style graphics, we integrated animation into each segment of the series.

We filmed the series over two days using Covid-safe protocols.

The filming was all done against a green screen with a fantastic team of dedicated sound engineers, camera techs, makeup artists, and production crew that were as excited about the project as I was. Once the filming was complete, the hard part was rendering all the video against the 3-D backdrop, integrating the animation, and composing a custom music score





to bring the series to life and provide sound effects. The final product is a five-part video series, each one lasting 4-6 minutes each, with a teacher's guide and set of worksheets for lower to upper grade levels. The series is perfect for grades 2-8 but can easily be watched by any grade.

Thousands of man-hours went into making *Between The Pages* and I'm so grateful to the team at Binary Pulse and Clarke Creative who worked tirelessly to make this series truly one of a kind that I hope will be shown in schools around the world.

Funding for the series has been provided by my literacy foundation, The Rise Up Foundation, so that there is no cost to schools to use this animated and entertaining series in their classes.

To bring *Between The Pages* to your classroom, head over to [AlaneAdams.com/BetweenThePages](http://AlaneAdams.com/BetweenThePages) and sign up today to be notified of the official launch coming in late January. ●



**Alane Adams** is an author, professor, and literacy advocate. She is the author of the *Legends of Orkney* fantasy series for tweens and picture books for early-grade readers. [alaneadams.com](http://alaneadams.com)



# Join Jazzy and Kettle on an adventure of discovery, friendship, and **FUN!**

"Absolutely wonderful children's book! Two appealing young folks manage to 'see tomorrow'! Don't miss this one if you have little people who want inspiration!"

- Bestselling Author, Naomi Wolf

"A great diverse read that explores themes of friendship, racial and gender equality, and respect. Such a great book for young readers ages 5-8, where friendship and exploration collide."

- Kimicia Byrd, M.Ed.,  
Primary School Teacher

"Celebrating racial and gender equality, Jazzy and Kettle is unreservedly recommended for family, elementary school, and community library collections."

- Midwest Book Review



[www.jazzyandkettle.com](http://www.jazzyandkettle.com)

Available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble,  
and Archway Publishing

   @PatrickSDuffy

# WINTER

READING GUIDE

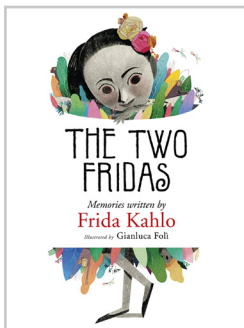


## **Small or Tall, We Sparkle After All**

by Aditi Wardhan Singh

All Shreya wants for her birthday is to become taller. Diversify your library with this body-positive, own voice children's book about confidence and kindness, to others

and yourself. Multi-award winning author Aditi Wardhan Singh uses mythology and concepts to help elementary aged kids understand the science of growth and how every size has its advantages. Lesson plans and free creative writing printables for the *Sparkling Me* children's books available on [RaisingWorldChildren.com](http://RaisingWorldChildren.com).



## **The Two Fridas**

Gianluca Foli

*The Two Fridas* is a celebration of Frida Kahlo, her culture, and the magical, joyful, secret-filled friendship she shared and later captured in her painting. Children will be encouraged to explore their own imaginary worlds, open up conversations, and build on their own creativity.

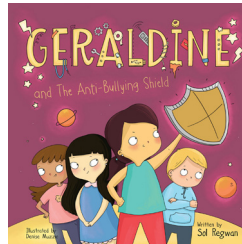


## **Shhh**

by Fred Paronuzzi

An almost wordless book filled with nothing but the many sounds of day. Page after page, each illustration is crowded with all the noises and activity happening during a little one's daily routine. Toddlers will delight in recognizing the

onomatopoeia and find comfort in the moral of the story that comes at the special moment when you can switch off all the noises and enter a completely different world.



## **Geraldine and the Anti-Bullying Shield**

by Sol Regwan

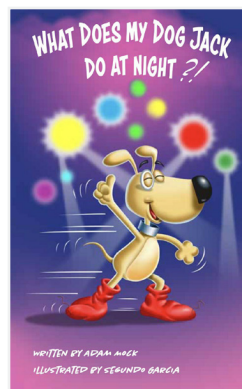
Geraldine is an energetic, spirited second-grader with a passion for inventing. When the class bully picks on Geraldine and her friends one too many times, Geraldine devises a plan to teach him a lesson. She and her friends work together to create something that shows the bully exactly what he looks and sounds like when he picks on other kids.



## **I Miss You Most**

by Cassie Hoyt

Love knows no distance. *I Miss You Most* helps children through the heartache of distance by showing them how to hold their loved ones near. Whether exploring the seas as pirates or twirling like ballerinas, imagination can bridge even the greatest distance. Because time with those you love is the most magical thing of all!

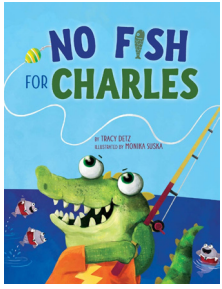


## **What Does My Dog Jack Do At Night?!**

by Adam Mock

Have you ever wondered what our pets do when we are not around? One little boy might just have the answer. *What Does My Dog Jack Do At Night?*, a new title from author Adam Mock and illustrator Segundo Garcia, brings to life the dreams of a child and his ideas of what goes on when we are not watching. Jack may seem like a normal dog, but he might just have a few tricks up his collar.

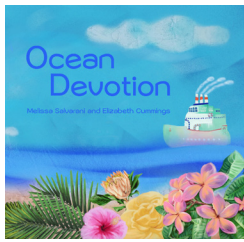




### **No Fish for Charles**

by Tracy Detz

Meet Charles, a big croc who loves chilling on rocks and fishing from the back of his canoe. With dreams of fried fish for dinner, he decides to skip school one day to try his luck and cast his reel. But when Charles encounters a school of clever fish and his outing suddenly becomes anything but chill, he realizes that going to school is always the smartest option.



### **Ocean Devotion**

by Elizabeth Mary Cummings

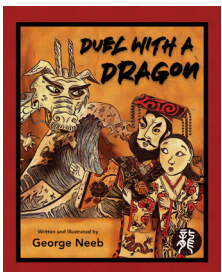
A nonfiction narrative about the plastic island in Hawaii told through the eyes of children. This beautifully illustrated picture book is designed to delight young children with its adorable characters whose love of nature inspires them to take action and save the ocean from pollution. With an alphabetical glossary at the back of the book as well as reflective activities readers will find learning about environmental issues both interesting and empowering.



### **Allie's Movie Adventure**

by Deborah Smith Ford

*Allie's Movie Adventure* takes place on a movie set, and the action is that seen through the eyes of a child. Young lass Allie Jean Anderson finds herself working on set as a script girl. She's committed to not only being part of the film crew, but to singing as a cast member as well. She sings with professional vocalist Prana Songbird. *Love Song and Power* is the film, and it's another exciting summer vacation Allie won't soon forget.



### **Duel with a Dragon**

by George Neeb

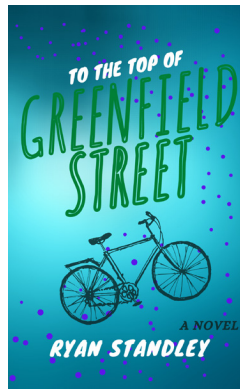
No one expects a shy princess to rescue a mighty emperor! When her stubborn father angers a powerful dragon, Moon Lily must race against time to end this duel with a dragon! Travel back to Ancient China to meet the first emperor and his family. Illustrated in the style of silk paintings, with early Chinese calligraphy, this story will engage young fans of art, history, folklore and dragons! eBook and paperback available on Amazon.com.



### **Grandpa's Workshop (Clever Family Stories)**

by Larissa Juliano

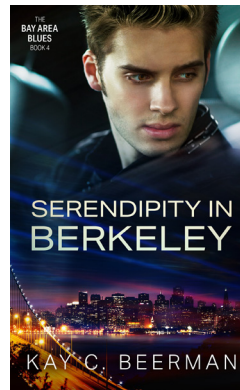
Explore Grandpa's Workshop and discover delights and surprises around every corner. When Grandpa and his grandson spend the afternoon in his wood-smelling shed, they scan the shelves and organize the workshop, sorting nails, screws, and other trinkets. And, no workshop is complete without a sparkly, sticky spiderweb to marvel at. Larissa Juliano's joyful word play begs to be read aloud to toddlers sitting on laps ... and dreaming of busy days in Grandpa's workshop.



### **To the Top of Greenfield Street**

by Ryan Standley

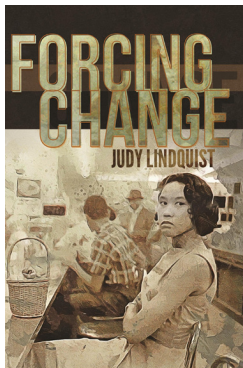
After tragedy strikes, shy Eric, 15, starts over in a small town, meets mischievous kids, and excels at his first job. But once he lands his first kiss, he's attacked by a jealous friend. Eventually, Eric finds exactly what he needs on Greenfield Street, but how long will it last? This gripping novel speaks to teens in the midst of heartache, and adults who never forgot theirs. Literary Titan Gold Award. "Five stars!" - Readers Favorite.



### **Serendipity in Berkeley**

by Kay C. Beerman

Detective Sam Crawford rescued Alex Wallace, later a medical examiner, in a tragic accident ten years ago, but she disappeared without a trace. The Law of Serendipity has a way of appearing at the most fortuitous of times. After the lost soulmates are finally reunited as the result of a mysterious murder, they find the killing is part of a much larger and devious criminal plot. 2020 Royal Dragonfly Book Award Honorable Mention winner.

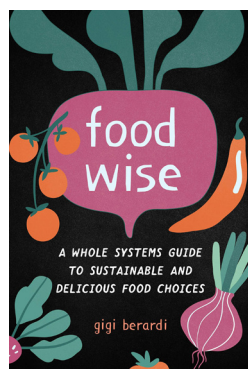


### **Forcing Change**

by Judy Lindquist

Fifteen-year-old Margaret Jefferson is being arrested at a sit-in at a lunch counter. The Civil Rights Movement has found its way into her hometown, and Maggie feels a deep need to be a part of it. *Forcing Change* is the poignant story of one young woman's journey to find herself and her strength, as

she joins the struggle for equality during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's. Her endeavors and trials are as relevant now as they were then.

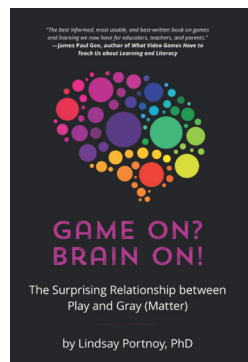


### **FoodWISE**

by Gigi M. Berardi

What does it really mean to eat "healthy?" *FoodWISE* is a personalized tour through our entire food system, from farm to plate—food choices that are Whole, Informed, Sustainable, and Experience-based. It makes weighty nutritional and environmental problems accessible, understandable,

and hopeful. Unusual in its depth and breadth, *FoodWISE* is one part memoir, one part research science, one part cookbook. Award-winning author Gigi Berardi is a free-lance writer and college teacher. Find her at [gigiberardi.com](http://gigiberardi.com).

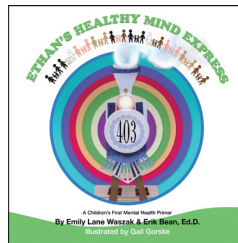


### **Game On? Brain On!**

by Lindsay Portnoy, PhD

The research is clear: human beings are born to play. In *Game On? Brain On!*, Lindsay Portnoy unpacks how games and playful experiences invite engagement and deep learning. Using cognitive science to explore how play helps students acquire and maintain critical skills, Portnoy shows how inviting games into

the classroom results in big gains for everyone. She shares how intentional planning creates more equitable access to powerful learning for all children. Through relatable vignettes, ready-to-use examples, and informative "Level Up" toolboxes, Portnoy empowers each of us to teach a better way—through play!

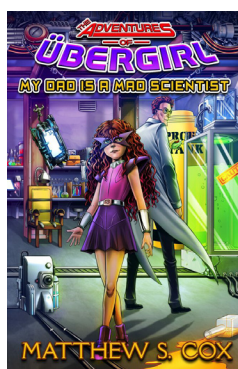


### **Ethan's Healthy Mind Express**

by Emily Lane Waszak & Erik Bean, Ed.D.

*Ethan's Healthy Mind Express* was created to take readers on a rhyming journey to promote better mental health and embrace

Atypical (neurodiverse) socialization and inclusion needs. It also provides tips to avoid areas of the Internet leading to isolation or danger and contains 19 handcrafted brilliant paper illustrations. Selected for presentation at the 2021 Literacy & Language Summer Institute: National Council of Teachers of English. Available at [tinyurl.com/mentalhealthtrainbook](http://tinyurl.com/mentalhealthtrainbook). Lessons including an interactive crossword visit [healthymindexpress.org/lesson-plans](http://healthymindexpress.org/lesson-plans).

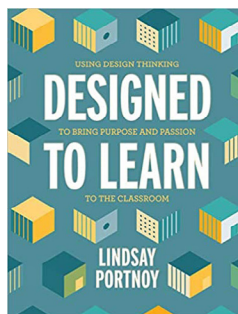


### **My Dad is a Mad Scientist**

by Matthew S. Cox

Saving the world isn't easy. It's even harder when you're only 9. Seemingly benevolent aliens litter the Earth with gigantic crystals to save its magnetic field. Kelly discovers her wildest fantasy comes to life: she's gone from bullied nerd to superhero and adopts the name Übergirl. However, she has one

major problem: Her dad's turning into a mad scientist. It's difficult to be a hero, especially when your father's a bad guy. 2020 Readers' Favorite Gold Medal winner!



### **Designed to Learn**

by Lindsay Portnoy, Ph.D.

Students become attentive, curious, and passionate about learning when they see its relevance to their lives and when they're empowered to use learning to solve problems that matter. Design thinking infuses the meaning students crave by

prompting learners to consider: "I've learned it. Now what am I going to do with it?" Equipped with the strategies and supports in the award-winning book *Designed to Learn*, educators will ensure learning is visible, student-centered, and measurable—by design.



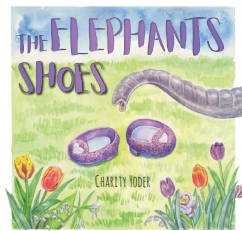


### **Jazzy and Kettle**

by Rick Quinn

Jazzy and Kettle, two curious children in a new neighborhood, meet, become friends, and decide to go on an adventure into the woods. They find flowers, birds, and other wildlife, all with their own springtime jobs. Their adventure gets them in a tough situation, but that's

where they make their most important discoveries: about themselves! They come to understand friendship, the fun of exploration, and how to overcome their fears. They triumph!

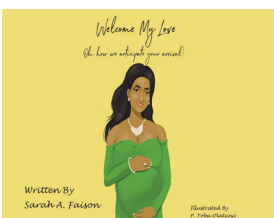


### **The Elephants Shoes**

by Charity Yoder

Inspired by her own life experiences, author Charity Yoder's book *The Elephants Shoes* is a children's book about love, loss, and healing. We all make decisions in our life—some that

make us happy, and some that we regret. Charity believes that everyone, even young children, can better learn how to cope with the sometimes-painful outcome of their choices. This is a beautiful story about the power of connection and how to move on with an open and compassionate heart.

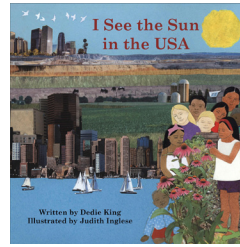


### **Welcome My Love**

by Sarah A. Faison

Welcome My Love is perfect for expectant mothers and family to read aloud to precious little ones while in the womb to familiarize

them with voices of their loved ones and to enhance the bonding experience. Around week 25 of pregnancy, ears are developing, and they can hear sounds. Reading welcoming words stimulates an interest in sounds. It's never too early to start telling your baby how loved they are. Also, a perfect book for baby celebrations.



### **I See the Sun series**

by Satya House

Explore the world! Life in different countries seen from a child's point of view. Each of the 10 bilingual picture books in this award-winning series focuses on one country and

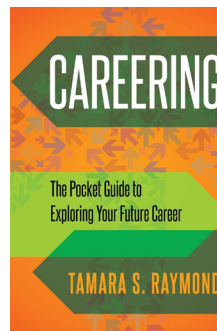
one day in the life of one child with a story told from the child's perspective. Learn about different cultures, family life, and languages in a way that is sensitive to each culture. Age-appropriate (5+) country facts, a glossary for extended learning, and more are included in each book. Titles include *I See the Sun in...* *Nepal, China, Afghanistan, Russia, Mexico, Turkey, Myanmar (Burma), India, USA*, and the most recent, *Botswana*. [satyahouse.com](http://satyahouse.com)



### **Fearless Felicia**

by Angela Hanimyan

Felicia wakes up each morning and notices her feelings. Sometimes she feels happy, but sometimes she feels sad or angry. How can Felicia help herself feel calm and at peace? She starts by thinking of a place that makes her feel calm. She listens to her body. She uses her breath. She knows she can do it.



### **Careering: The Pocket Guide to Exploring Your Future Career**

by Tamara S. Raymond

The award-winning *Careering* pocket guide offers a seamless step-by-step process to help teens avoid career traps. Topics include exploring career options; networking effectively; applying for jobs; developing interview skills; and transitioning at a new

job. Engaging workbook format lets students write plans, interests, and aspirations. Also offers advice on college immersion programs, summer camps, competitions, seasonal/entry-level jobs, internships, and even social media use—so it won't hurt their chances of finding work. [TheCareeringBook.com](http://TheCareeringBook.com).

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reviewed by Nick Spake • Grade B+



After *Man of Steel*, *Batman v Superman*, and *Suicide Squad*, the DCEU seemed to die out before it even started. At this cinematic universe's darkest hour, though, Patty Jenkins' *Wonder Woman* rose as the hero we all needed. On the heels of several *Dark Knight* wannabes, *Wonder Woman* captured the optimism of Richard Donner's *Superman*. Epic, romantic, and above all else fun, it reminded us how inspiring a superhero movie can be.

*Wonder Woman 1984* is also in the vein of Donner's *Superman*, delivering an all-around crowd-pleaser. That said, the original *Superman* wasn't without its goofy, nonsensical moments. You know, like spinning the world backward to reverse time. *Wonder Woman 1984* doesn't have any plot holes as glaring

as that, although this sequel is admittedly sillier than its predecessor. Even with these head-scratching instances, the film still manages to turn in a compelling love story with colorful action and another strong performance from Gal Gadot.

The film kicks off with two rousing action sequences, the first of which flashes back to Diana's childhood. After seeing a young Diana compete in an obstacle course that would make *American Ninja Warrior* blush, we jump ahead to 1984, where Wonder Woman stops a mall robbery. The mall local sets a lighthearted, retro tone for the film, although it

thankfully doesn't go overboard with the nostalgic references. Being set in the 80s, the villain is naturally a greedy businessman who mistakes his own "greatness" for insecurity. Pedro Pascal channels Gene Hackman's Lex Luthor as Maxwell Lord, who seeks to solve his financial woes with the wish-granting Dreamstone.

Before Maxwell gets his hands on the Dreamstone, it crosses paths with Diana and a nerdy scientist named Barbara (Kristen Wiig). Wishing to be like Diana, we see Barbara evolve from an awkward bookworm, to an alluring bombshell, to an apex predator. Although Wiig sounded like an unconventional choice for the role, her transformation as Barbara is surprisingly convincing. We have no trouble believing her as the timid geek,

but Wiig also sells it as a woman slowly losing her humanity. Of course, when Barbara literally loses her humanity and becomes the villainous Cheetah, it's hard not to start humming "Jellicle Songs for Jellicle Cats."

Diana, meanwhile, wishes for Steve Trevor (Chris Pine) back in her life. Over six decades after perishing in World War I, Steve returns to Diana, albeit in another man's body. The chemistry between Gadot and Pine is the best element of the film. It's funny, cute, and even emotional seeing Steve react to a modern world with Diana holding his hand every step of the way. If you've watched *Justice League*, however, you know this romance isn't meant to last. Diana is presented with a moral dilemma that leads to the most powerful moment in the film. Unfortunately, it's followed by some of the film's wackier scenes.

Like the first film, *Wonder Woman 1984* suffers from an overreliance on CGI during the third act. Where its predecessor balanced things with a sense of gravitas, however, this film's climax has one too many errors to stick the landing. It's hard to discuss these problems without going into spoiler territory, but *How It Should Have Ended* has plenty to chew on. Overall, though, *Wonder Woman 1984* is a wonderful sequel. It's passionately made, draped in comic book visuals, and empowering without being on the nose. It also works in the best superhero movie cameo this side of Stan Lee, which will hopefully be elaborated on in *Wonder Woman 3*. ●

**Nick Spake** has been working as a film critic for ten years reviewing movies on his website: [nickpicksflicks.com](http://nickpicksflicks.com).



## When magic meets therapy...

Follow the adventures of Claire and her cat Archie! One day, they find a magic wand which gives them a chance to change their lives. Claire and Archie go on the amazing journey of self-exploration and self-reflection.

Based on the concept of therapeutic exercises for children and parents to practice at home.

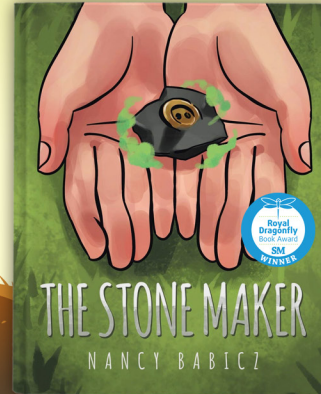
A must-have tool to teach the importance and value of emotional regulation and intelligence with coping and adapting skills for children and parents.



Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or [BarnesandNoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com).

## What is the secret of the stone?

The villagers whisper bizarre stories about the Shadowy River and the Dark Forest beyond. Legend has it that whoever crosses the river either never comes back or never comes back the same. On this day, an invitation from a strange boy and an escalating sibling argument may magically alter two brothers' bond forever. Can it be recovered? A mysterious stone holds the key. Discover a great page-turner for young readers or bedtime story for younger kids.



Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

# No More Trash Floating in Our Home!

Dogfish is enjoying a beautiful day in the ocean when suddenly he sees his friend Turtle with a straw stuck in his snout! After he calls his friends to help, they all discover that ocean pollution is a BIG problem!

Join Dogfish and his friends as they learn more about pollution and what they can do to help. *Dogfish Saves the Ocean* is a fun, colorful book that teaches children about pollution, and taking care of our oceans. We can ALL make a difference!



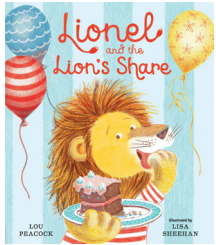
[www.fineeyemedia.com](https://www.fineeyemedia.com)

 [dogfishbook](https://www.instagram.com/dogfishbook)

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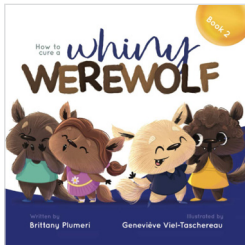
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# BOOK REVIEWS



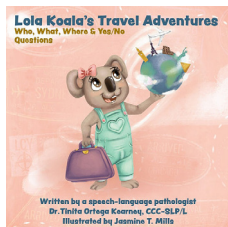
**Lionel and the Lion's Share**  
by Lou Peacock, Lisa Sheehan (Nosy Crow) Reviewer: Darleen Wohlfeil  
Lionel has seemed to translate the clutching sensation of “mine” into a reasonable idea that he deserves the best and most of every occasion. He

is a lion after all, and everybody knows, a lion gets the best share. The illustrations and approach of this basic and most necessary lesson, holds a winning reception. Being thoughtful and sharing is an early concept necessary to building satisfying relationships, from the playground all the way to the office. (Ages 2-5)



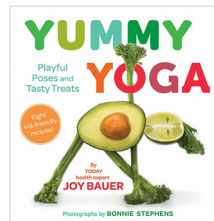
**How to Cure a Whiny Werewolf**  
by Brittany Plumeri, Genevieve Viel-Taschereau (Once Upon A Page Press) Reviewer: Darleen Wohlfeil

This adorably illustrated story will capture the hearts and interest of every young helper. They are sure to quickly spot and overturn those whiny moments into feel-good manners for all. A fun engaging tale to better us all! (Ages 2-6)



**Lola Koala's Travel Adventures**  
by Dr. Tinita Ortega Kearney, Jasmine T. Mills (Independently Published) Reviewer: Dr. Dawn Menge

This is an excellent resource for speech and language development in learning to answer “Wh” questions. Who, where, and what are the beginnings of comprehension skills in young readers. It also enriches adventure and educational knowledge of other countries. Lola Koala travels to an unknown destination and the reader has to guess where she is. I love this concept and will be using it in my classroom. (Ages 2-6)



**Yummy Yoga: Playful Poses and Tasty Treats**

by Joy Bauer, Bonnie Stephens (Harry N. Abrams) Reviewer: Christine Irvin  
Have you ever seen an avocado do the Triangle Pose or a banana do the Plank Pose? Health expert Joy Bauer shares

some easy yoga poses, as well as some kid-friendly recipes as an introduction to practicing yoga and eating healthy food. Photographer Bonnie Stephens has brought even more fun to the mix by putting fruits and vegetables into yoga poses. The result is a visual delight. There are also instructions at the back of the book for how to do each pose illustrated in the book. (Ages 3-5)



**Just in Case You Want to Fly**

by Julie Fogliano, Christian Robinson (Neal Porter Books) Reviewer: Christine Irvin

Funny and sweet, told with lyrical text and bright, unexpected illustrations, *Just in Case You Want to Fly* is a celebration of heading off on new adventures—and of knowing your loved ones will always have your back when you need them. The simple text and kid-friendly illustrations make this a perfect book for the younger set. (Ages 3-7)

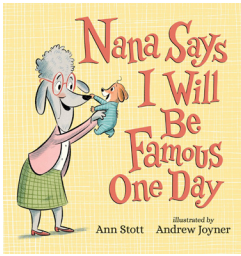


**Two Brothers, One Tail**

by Richard T. Morris, Jay Fleck (Philomel Books) Reviewer: Darleen Wohlfeil

Friendship indeed is often a mirrored experience. This simple rhyme paints the sweet bond between a boy and his dog. One heart, one joy is genuinely shared by two. (Ages 3-7)

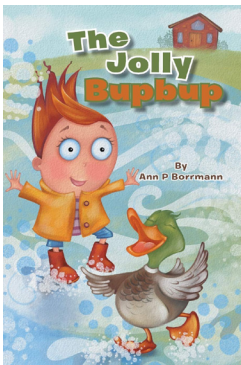




### ***Nana Says I Will Be Famous One Day***

by Ann Stott, Andrew Joyner  
(Candlewick) Reviewer: Christine Irvin

Nana cheers the loudest at her grandson's basketball game. She dances in the aisles at the spring concert. She yells at the umpire that he needs to get his eyes checked when he doesn't call the strikes her grandson pitches. But when this go-go-go grandmother takes a tumble trying to get a front-row seat at the basketball game, it's her grandson who roots her on in her recovery. Delightful illustrations and a story young children can relate to makes this book a winner for everyone. (Ages 3-7)

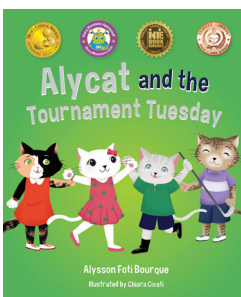


### ***The Jolly Bupbup***

by Ann P. Borrmann (Tellwell Talent)  
Reviewer: Denise Bloomfield

The Bupbup is small and jolly and has lived all her life in the wood field. But a dreadful thing happens in the wood field and the jolly Bupbup goes on an unexpected adventure. A simple yet engaging story for little ones with fun words like "jelly middles!" Great as a stand-alone, but I think it would

also make a terrific series. Children and reclusive tea-drinkers alike will love it! (Ages 3-8)

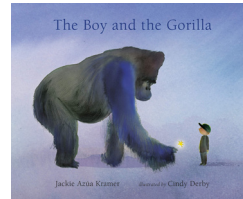


### ***Alycat and the Tournament Tuesday***

by Alysson Foti Bourque, Chiara Civati  
(Mascot Books) Reviewer: Darleen Wohlfeil

Lucky charms and talismans make for fun and exciting reading, but Alycat helps her brother realize that his success was in him all along! His lucky ball didn't make him the

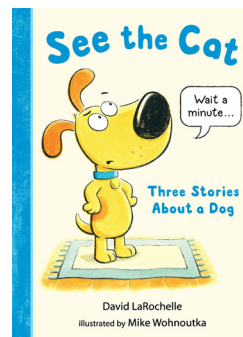
athlete he is; it was his dedication and hard work! These adorable cats bring home a valuable lesson that is sure to strengthen and encourage young readers as they find their focus in life. (Ages 4-7)



### ***The Boy and the Gorilla***

by Jackie Azúa Kramer, Cindy Derby  
(Candlewick) Reviewer: Christine Irvin

Grief can be a heavy burden. When a little boy loses his mother, he feels the weight like a gorilla that is always there, always around. Slowly, the boy is able to open up and share his grief. The book combines text that tackles the many questions young children ask when dealing with the loss of a loved one with emotionally engaging illustrations. (Ages 4-8)



### ***See the Cat: Three Stories About a Dog***

by David LaRochelle, Mike Wohnoutka  
(Candlewick) Reviewer: Darleen Wohlfeil

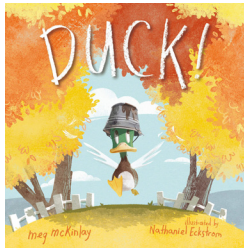
This funny book will encourage your young reader with its easy format. They will identify, recognize, and easily sound out the words with confidence. All the while, snickering and chuckling at a poor dog's plight. The book has somehow confused him with a cat. Can he clear up the confusion before the story ends? A fun confidence-booster! (Ages 4-8)



### ***The Rhythm of the Rain***

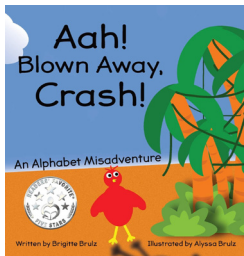
by Grahame Baker-Smith (Templar)  
Reviewer: Darleen Wohlfeil

As a young boy plays in his favorite mountainside pool, he is awakened to the cycles of life. He follows the raindrops as they mingle and flow with the sparkling stream. Thirsty animals drink their fill. Lands and crops are nourished as the waters pass through, finally, merging with the ocean. On warm sunny days the droplets rise up in steam and form into clouds, happy to start all over again. A story about the details that keep our beautiful world alive. (Ages 4-8)



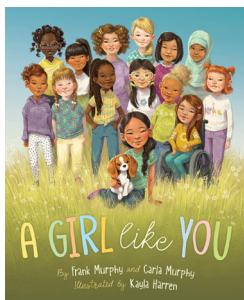
**DUCK!**  
by Meg McKinlay, Nathaniel Eckstrom (Candlewick) Reviewer: Darleen Wohlfeil

I love this book. Its appearance is bright and colorful, and entices me in for more. Communication is the strongest tool in our life equipment box! It can open many doors for us, or seal them shut. Duck has great intentions and heartfelt motivations, but all are lost for lack of communication. All too late, he learns a more effective way he could have gotten his intentions across to his companions. This is a perfect reminder and opportunity to teach our children early the art of communication. (Ages 4-8)



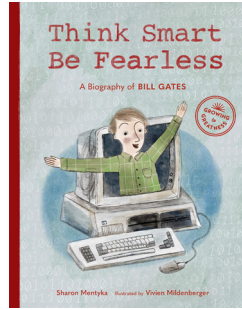
**Aah! Blown Away, Crash! Crash! An Alphabet Misadventure**  
by Brigitte Brulz, Alyssa Brulz (Indy Pub) Reviewer: Darleen Wohlfeil

Young children will become familiar with the alphabet as they read the easy flow of this book. The quick and few words on each page keep the young reader engaged, and learning becomes easy. A website is also provided to find free helpful resources and fun activities to go along with the reading experience. (Ages 4-8)



**A Girl Like You**  
by Frank Murphy, Carla Murphy, Kayla Harren (Sleeping Bear Press) Reviewer: Christine Irvin

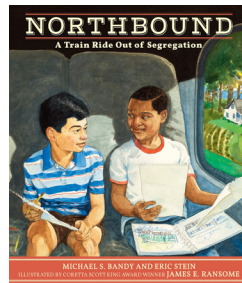
No matter your age, no matter your ethnicity, no matter your abilities, you are unique. This book provides an uplifting, positive view of girls, with a message of hope and inspiration for all. (Ages 5-7)



**Think Smart, Be Fearless: A Biography of Bill Gates**

by Sharon Mentyka, Vivien Mildenberger (Little Bigfoot) Reviewer: Christine Irvin

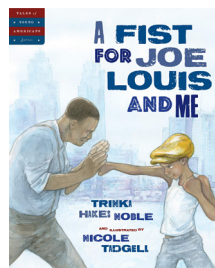
How do fearless ideas begin? Travel along with young Bill Gates on his life's journey full of curiosity, discovery, hard work, and most important, fearlessness—the inability to see limits. The book invites young readers to pursue their passions and awaken a sense of ambition and responsibility for others as they grow. The author includes a timeline of events in Bill's life as well as a glossary of terms used throughout the text. (Ages 5-9)



**Northbound: A Train Ride Out of Segregation**

by Michael S. Bandy, Eric Stein, James E. Ransome (Candlewick) Reviewer: Christine Irvin

Based on author Michael Bandy's own recollections of taking the train as a boy during the segregation era, this story of a child's magical first experience is intercut with a sense of baffling injustice, offering both a hopeful tale of friendship and a window into a dark period of history that still resonates today. A must-have for the home library and classroom. (Ages 6-9)

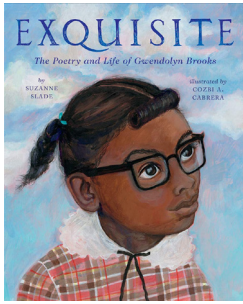


**A Fist for Joe Louis and Me**

by Trinkia Hakes Noble, Nicole Taddgell (Sleeping Bear Press) Reviewer: Darleen Wohlfeil

This is a great story of hope, unity, and friendship that lifts us through our darkest times. Times when people come together and find their strength in the success of others. In the backdrop of Hitler's Nazi Germany taking over Europe, Joe Louis's amazing first round knockout of his greatest opponent German boxer Max Schmeling gave hope to all Americans facing such a dark hour in history. Louis struck a blow for mankind, and little Gordy learned the meaning of standing up for a friend. (Ages 6-9)

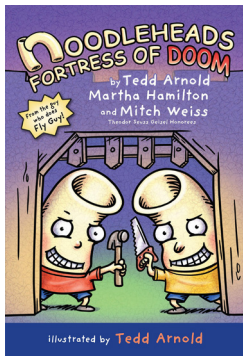




**Exquisite: The Poetry and Life of Gwendolyn Brooks**

by Suzanne Slade, Cozbi A. Cabrera (Harry N. Abrams) Reviewer: Christine Irvin

This picture book biography explores the intersections of race, gender, and the ubiquitous poverty of the Great Depression—all with a lyrical touch worthy of the subject. Gwendolyn Brooks was the first Black person to win the Pulitzer Prize, receiving the award for poetry in 1950. The author uses lyrical phrases and occasional rhyme schemes to tell this inspiring story. Included in the end matter of the book are a timeline of events in Brooks' life, as well as sources used for her story. (Ages 6-9)



**Noodleheads Fortress of Doom**

by Tedd Arnold, Martha Hamilton, Mitch Weiss (Holiday House) Reviewer: Christine Irvin

Brothers Mac and Mac are noodles, made of hollow pasta. As such, they are empty-headed, but they still have some big ideas. After a trip to the library, where they checked out a joke book and a fantasy novel, they have decided to build a Fortress of Doom.

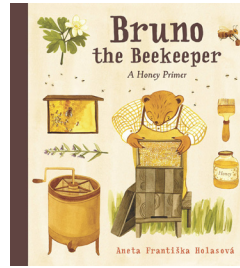
They manage to get the job done, despite their constant bickering. The book is filled with humor and insight, and is the fourth book in this easy-to-read series of graphic novels featuring these two funny characters. (Ages 6-9)



**Happystarville**

by Ase Omavuaye Otite (Ases\_Way) Reviewer: Christine Irvin

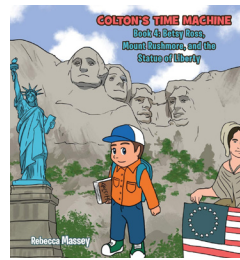
Happystarville is a magical village deep in the forest filled with wonder and surprise. Until one boy decides to disobey the King—will his actions change Happystarville forever? This book teaches great morals to young children; allowing them to see how the consequences of their actions don't just affect them—but also everyone around them. (Ages 6-12)



**Bruno the Beekeeper: A Honey Primer**

by Aneta Frantiska Holasová (Candlewick) Reviewer: Christine Irvin

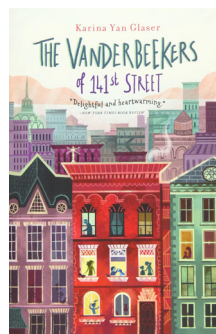
This kid-friendly story about a bear that keeps honeybees gives young readers a glimpse into where honey comes from, how it is produced, etc. The abundance of hand-drawn illustrations all have a warm, golden, honey-like color, and are sure to please any young reader. (Ages 7-10)



**Colton's Time Machine: Betsy Ross, Mount Rushmore, and the Statue of Liberty**

by Rebecca Massey (Hancock Press) Reviewer: Dr. Dawn Menge

This chapter book in the Colton's series takes Colton and his dragon friends on a history tour through three very famous monuments in the U.S. I highly recommend this series to young readers of chapter books. Colton and his dragon series encourage imagination and curiosity in their adventures. (Ages 8-11)



**The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street**

by Karina Yan Glaser (HMH Books) Reviewer: Diana Perry

The Vanderbeekers have always lived in the brownstone on 141st Street. It's practically another member of the family. So when their reclusive, curmudgeonly landlord decides not to renew their lease, the five siblings have 11 days to do whatever it takes to stay in their beloved home and convince the dreaded Beiderman just how wonderful they are. And all is fair in love and war when it comes to keeping their home. Very uplifting and a good lesson on the morals of kindness. (Ages 8-12)



### **Cookie Cutters & Sled Runners**

by Natalie Rompella (Sky Pony)

Reviewer: Diana Perry

Most kids would dread the start of middle school and the year-long Explorations project that comes with it, but Ana knows that her + her best friend Lily + their plan to write and sell their own cookbook is a recipe for success. Lily's not just the perfect

partner in culinary crime—she's also the only person in the world who understands Ana's need to wash her hands five times before picking up a spatula, and would never make fun of her for it. But Ana and Lily's plan turns into one big baking disaster when they're assigned to different partners for their projects. Young readers will love this story and get a valuable lesson on friendships. (Ages 8-12)



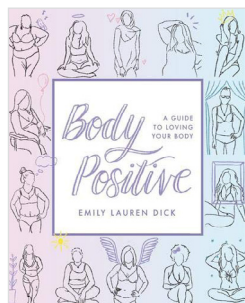
### **Marvelous Magicians**

by Lydia Corry (Thames & Hudson)

Reviewer: Dr. Dawn Menge

A great magician never reveals their secrets, but reveals the names of eight groundbreaking illusionists, both famous and lesser-known, who shaped modern magic. Through a magical blend of biography, history,

and illustration, this book spotlights an array of magicians, including one of the first female magicians, Adelaide Herrmann; African American illusionist Richard Potter, "The Handcuff King" Harry Houdini, and more. (Ages 9-12)



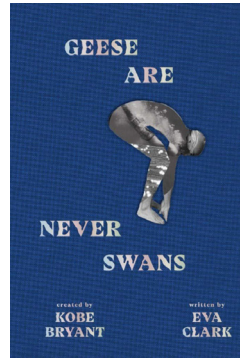
### **Body Positive: A Guide To Loving Your Body**

by Emily Lauren Dick (Familius)

Reviewer: Darleen Wohlfeil

Let's all stand an applaud! Every young girl, and some older ones that missed this message, should receive this book from someone who loves them. My thanks to every

brave woman and youthful beauty that willing stood bold and free to welcome us into a sisterhood of acceptance and self-appreciation. Leading in example, they undress the insecurities and intimidations of female development. They open and enlighten our understanding, lead us into conscious thought, and realization of false ideals and hidden agendas that break down the beauty of womanhood. Place for thoughtful reflection and discovery is provided among its pages. Truly a journaling of the greatest adventure girls will embark upon. Well done ladies! (Ages 12-17)



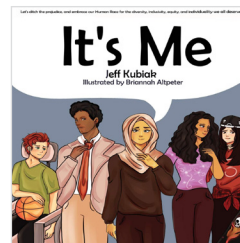
### **Geese Are Never Swans**

by Eva Clark, Kobe Bryant (Granity Studios)

Reviewer: Christine Irvin

Gus's life is about one thing: swimming. And he knows that the only coach in town who can get him to the Olympics is Coach Marks. So it seems like a simple plan: convince Coach Marks to train him, and everything from there on in is just hard work. Gus has never been afraid

of hard work. But there are a few complications... A very emotional story of how a younger brother strives to cope in his brother's shadow. (Ages 14-18)



### **It's Me**

by Jeff Kubiak, Briannah Altpeter

(EduMatch)

Reviewer: Darleen Wohlfeil

*It's Me* is dedicated to every person who has ever felt less about who they are or want to be because of someone

else's opinion, feelings, or prejudice. Let's ditch the prejudiced labeling, and embrace our human race for the diversity, inclusivity, equity, and individuality we all deserve. This book is a poetical relay passing to us the emotional understanding that can thrust us all forward to a great win. A grabbing of the baton and finishing the race with cheers of victory instead. (Ages 13-18)



### **101 Amazing Uses for Cinnamon**

by Nancy Chen (Familius)

Reviewer: Darleen Wohlfeil

Who knew? Nancy Chen knew! And passed on to us a wealth of knowledge! History, facts that will amaze, increase, and enlighten the home cook, beauty lover, health enthusiast, and home improvement master in us all! As a long time

user of cinnamon, I was impressed at how much more there was to still learn about this wonderful spice. It is packed to overflowing with great tips, uses, and recipes. A resource book you will forage through, endlessly gathering delightful morsels to enjoy. (All Ages)

To submit your book for review, email Cristy Bertini at [cristy@storymonsters.com](mailto:cristy@storymonsters.com) for submission guidelines.



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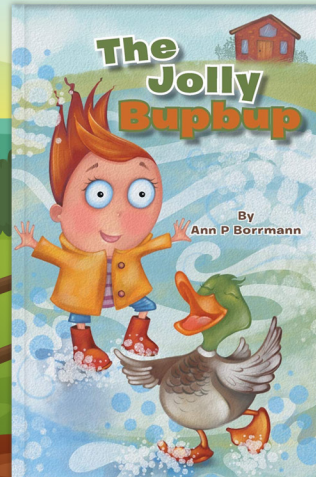
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# ALICE MCGINTY:

## SAVE TIME FOR STORIES

by Raven Howell

**A**lice McGinty’s enthusiasm for reading and writing with children, teachers, and librarians is inspiring and made obvious through her many ventures. First and foremost a writer, she’s also passionate about her role as an instructor, speaker, and workshop leader.

I’m excited to interview Small Bear from Alice’s recent picture book, *A Story for Small Bear*, and have the happy opportunity to spare a little time conversing with the author herself.

**Alice:** Thank you for having me here. It’s an honor to be featured in your column!

**BB:** What a pleasure to meet you! After reading *A Story for Small Bear*, I felt it important to share your book’s message for children to stay on track with preparations and responsibilities before they head to bedtime with a favorite story to delve into. There’s a subtle teaching tool involving management skills for both parent and child. Tell us about some of the opportunities, such as teaching, you provide the children’s community.

**Alice:** I love working with young writers and am inspired by their imaginations! I tutor, run Words on Fire Writing Camp for Teens (going on my 10th summer!), and kicked off

Words on Fire Writing Workshops, a weekly online workshop for teens.

**BB:** What are the top problems young writers grapple with?

**Alice:** As far as the most common problems I see, first it’s troubles with Show, Don’t Tell. It’s quicker to write, “She was mad.” But that’s telling. If you show it—“She screamed and clenched her fists in rage,”—it’s much more powerful because readers can see and hear the anger, like in a movie. A similar problem is writing in scenes. Scenes happen at a particular place and time, and writers use action, dialogue, and sensory detail to bring them to



life. My student might write, “The girl visited her friend.” Instead, I ask them to make it play out as a scene: “After lunch, Leslie skipped down the sidewalk to Julie’s house. When she saw Julie up in her wooden tree house, Leslie grinned and shouted, “I’m coming up!”

**BB:** Great writing advice! Let’s cut to the chase—what do you suggest to a new writer discouraged by rejections or insecurity?

**Alice:** I know it’s hard! I went through 10 years of rejections before being published. Rejections are part of the game, though (for me too, still), and we’ve got to stay in the game to succeed. How to stay confident through that? As long as you know your work is improving, you’re on the right track! Keep at it. Persevere. Your time will come!

**BB:** Wonderful words of encouragement! Tell us about your school visits.

**Alice:** I LOVE doing school visits and they’re all extraordinary because of the connection with the students. The most magical times are when I drive for hours (often through the Illinois cornfields), find the school, and walk inside to see the hallways lined with the students’ interpretations of my books. At one school they all drew breakfasts on paper plates and wrote poems about their favorite breakfast after reading my book, *Pancakes to Parathas: Breakfast Around the World* (2019, Little Bee Books, illustrated by Tomoko Suzuki) The work and preparation that the school librarians and teachers put in pays off in bushels, because the students are *invested* in the visit.

**BB:** Did you ever have a book idea sprout from one of your hobbies such as biking or dancing?

**Alice:** Interesting question! Dancing helps me with my writing because when I move physically, it frees me up and helps my thoughts flow. But more directly, my book *Thank You, World* was inspired at a swimming pool (swimming is another hobby) on a blazing hot summer day when a breeze blew by and it felt so refreshing that I said, “Thank you, breeze.” Then the book took off from there (and took almost 15 years to be accepted and published!).

**BB:** You’ve traveled and lived around the world. What’s the place most inspirational for you as a writer?

**Alice:** Oh, how I miss traveling! But even with all the travels, the most inspiring place for me is my cabin, located about 40 minutes from where I live in Illinois. It’s a beautiful retreat with woods, hills, a creek, and a bonfire circle (it’s where I hold my camp). I don’t work a lot on my books there, but I do journal—and being there feeds my soul and recharges me so I’m ready to write again.

**BB:** One of my favorite books from your catalog is *The Girl Who Named Pluto*. I found the main character, Venetia Burney, had a little in common with Harriet from *Harriet the Spy*.

**Alice:** YES! Harriet the Spy was one of my favorite book characters as a kid. She was smart and independent and—most importantly—curious. Venetia was smart and independent and curious too! She loved to learn new



things, so when she was 11 years old and heard about the discovery of the new planet, she put science and story (mythology) together and came up with the name Pluto.

**BB:** Do you choose your biography subjects or do they choose you?

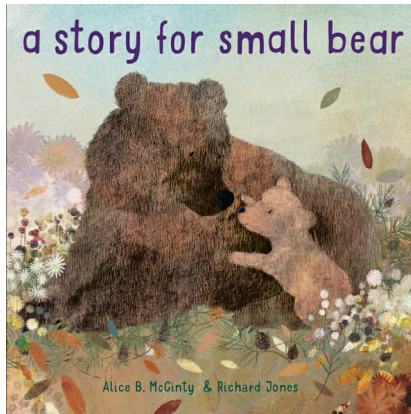
**Alice:** I choose them.

**BB:** If you had an alternative career to being an author, what would it be?

**Alice:** I used to be a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, working with kids with disabilities. I’d find some way to work with kids again, either as a teacher, a recreation specialist, or a camp director like I am now.

On that note, continuing with the upbeat and motivational mood, I’m delighted to welcome Small Bear.

After writing and publishing over 40 books, both fiction and nonfiction, it’s Alice’s Kirkus Best of 2020 Book, *A Story for Small Bear* giving a celebratory growl to the kids’ community when many parents are spending more time



at home with their toddlers and young students.

**Small Bear:** Hi everyone! It's cold outside, but I'll come out of hibernation to say hello!

**BB:** Thanks for joining us! As Alice wrote in the book, you may have wanted to dilly-dally, but you worked hard to avoid procrastination and temptations, and stuck to your mama's instructions. You were happily rewarded with plenty of time for a great story at bedtime. There are days when human children also have a lot to do and may feel overwhelmed. Would you share some tips on how to best handle those times?

**Small Bear:** I have lots of work to do, but it's hard 'cause all I want to do is play! Like Mama Bear says though, work is important. So, I do it one thing at a time. First I collect sprigs of spruce for my nest. Next, I bathe in the stream. Then, I eat berries and acorns. When I get done with one thing, I do the next. Soon it's all done and I can play! (Alice adds: You can make a list and cross things off when you get them done. That's what I do. I love crossing things off my lists!)

**BB:** Especially with recent school schedules a bit awry, how can a young student avoid delaying schoolwork?

**Small Bear:** It's hard to stop playing! But don't dilly or dally. Here's my finishing song, which you can sing when you need to finish playing to do your work. You can even change the words to make it right for you.

*No dilly, no dally. One last thing for fun.  
Save my time for stories. Now my play time's done.*

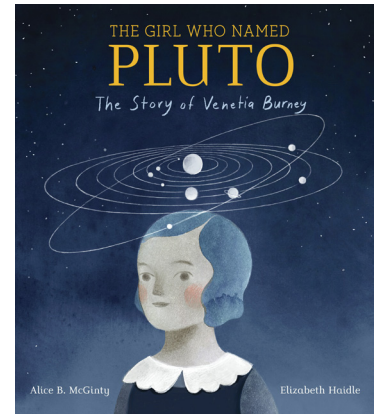
Maybe after you get your schoolwork done, you can play again!

**BB:** Mama Bear is wise and loving. How would you recommend parents help their children in creating a happy partnership?

**Small Bear:** Mama Bear knows! And guess what? She wrote down her "Bedtime Tips" to make a happy bedtime with no dilly or dally, no nagging or tantrums, and lots of time for stories!

**BB:** How can bedtime be most special for a parent and child?

**Small Bear:** With stories!



**BB:** I agree! Small Bear, we appreciate your advice and good tips for cheerier days!

**Small Bear:** You're lots of fun to talk to! Thanks for bringing Alice and I in to say hello. Now, it's time to play—and then read a story and go back to sleep!

[Click here for Mama Bear's Bedtime Tips.](#) ●

**Raven Howell** is an award-winning children's author and poet. [ravenhowell.com](http://ravenhowell.com)

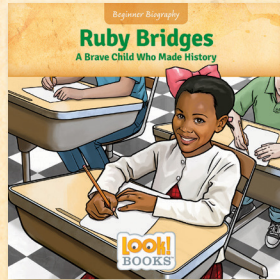
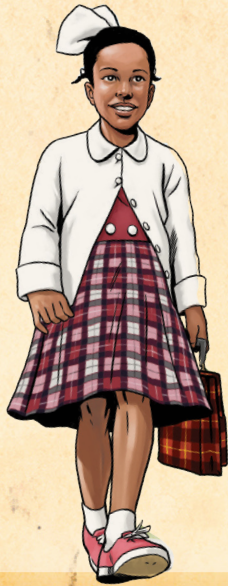




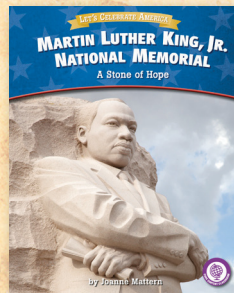
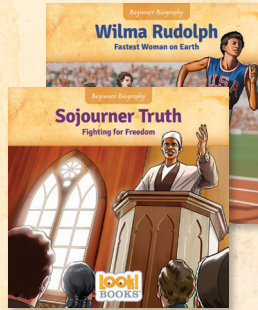
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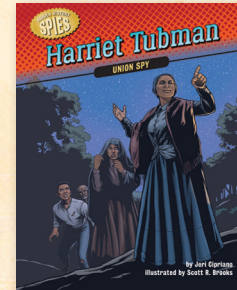
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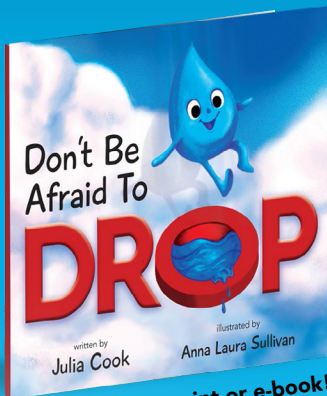
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## HEATHER DEAN BREWER

by Julianne Black DiBlasi

There are books that show up in your life to illustrate a specific moment in time. They may be literally referencing an actual event, or simply fleshing out a memory, a headspace, or emotional journey. When a tangible item bursts at the seams with that kind of visceral energy, it's worth putting on a pedestal.

**L**ove Is Powerful creates that bridge between reading an account of a child's experience and feeling it in your soul. The literal story transcends the pages with a message of peace and universal belonging that goes straight to the heart. Put as simply as possible, this is one of those books that everyone needs to read.

On its own, the Women's March event was a stirring memory for so many of us. Emotions of love, camaraderie, frustration, sadness, helplessness, and hopefulness were on full display. Drop into the eye of that hurricane one little girl and her handmade sign.

Heather Dean Brewer was kind enough to walk us through some of the backstories of her amazing picture book, *Love Is Powerful*.

**Q:** Mari is such an amazing voice and represents us all as a personification of our fears, hopes, and dreams. How does the real Mari feel about her role in the parade and the book?

**A:** I asked Mari what it felt like to be memorialized in a children's book and she said "Amazing!" Her school gave *Love Is Powerful* to all incoming kindergartners and she had the opportunity to read it to her classmates. A lot has happened in Mari's life since she participated in the Women's March, one of those things being that she was cast in the traveling Broadway production of *Once on this Island*. For someone so small, she's packed with confidence and talent. Her confidence really blossomed after the Women's March. When she shouted out "Love is powerful!" and the crowd shouted it back, that was the moment she discovered



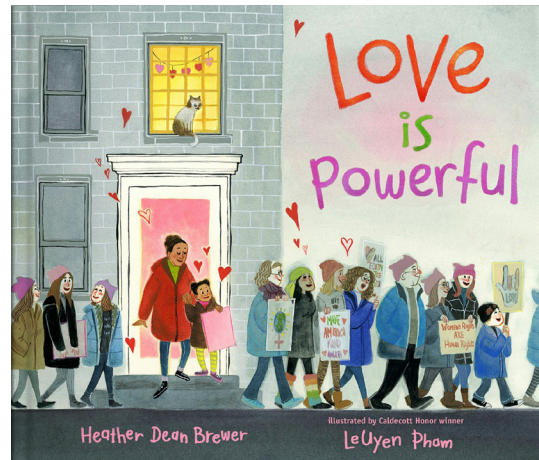
the power of her voice and she's been using it ever since. She's very conscious about using that voice for good.

**Q:** The illustrator did an amazing job portraying the power, volume, and force of the crowd without being angry or intimidating. How closely did you work with LeUyen Pham on concepts and overall emotional feel?

**A:** Not much at all, actually. Most people outside of publishing don't know that authors and illustrators rarely work together. Once an author turns in the manuscript, the publisher takes over—for the most part. I was thrilled when Candlewick selected Uyen. She's an expert at what she does and so talented. I knew she'd do a phenomenal job—and she obviously did. I had a chance to review sketches and provide feedback at one stage, but the illustrations were so delightful and moving that I only had one request. The second-story window on the front cover. It was empty and felt a bit lonely. I asked if we could add a cat.

**Q:** Was there a reason why you decided not to mention the Women's March specifically within the text?

**A:** *Love Is Powerful* wasn't primarily meant to be a historical account, so mentioning the Women's March in the text didn't seem necessary. It was also something I knew could



be conveyed through the illustrations and in the back cover copy. I wrote *Love Is Powerful* the night after the Women's March—it was one of those rare moments where the words just flow. I wanted to capture the moment in a way that would be contagious for readers. My hope was that readers would be moved from a place of thinking and caring about social justice to a place of action.

**Q:** Almost a parallel of the message “love is powerful” in a sea of voices is this book *Love Is Powerful* in a sea of titles. How are you getting the word out about it and who do you specifically want to reach?





**A:** It's been a challenge, I won't lie. People aren't browsing bookstores and bookstore events are limited to online forums. Add in pandemic fatigue, working from home while trying to help kids with virtual school, adopting a puppy, and deciding that \*this\* was the year to go back to college—there's not much energy leftover to ask people to buy my book. And I'm one of the lucky ones. This year holds an unbearable amount of stress and grief for so many. I hate to ask anyone for anything more. I've done several book readings and I love to answer kid's questions about the book or what it's like being an author. I hope to do more classroom visits next year, but it's challenging to fit into my work schedule. While many adults have reached out to let me know how much *Love Is Powerful* has inspired them, my hope is that kids will have a similar experience to Mari—they'll discover the power of their own voices. I think of that quiet kid, the one in the back of the class who's afraid to raise their hand. The child who thinks what they have to say doesn't matter—that's who this book is for.

**Q:** The jacket and endnotes make reference to real-life events and people—how are these events and people connected to you personally? Who is Mari to you?

**A:** Mari's mom and I go way back, all the way to high school. We've stayed in touch over the years and my kids are about the same age as Mari. We commiserate over parenting struggles and have bonded over the challenges of being women working in male-dominated fields. Some of the lines in the book are questions my kids asked me as I was getting ready for the Women's March. "What are you making,

Mama?" "How will the whole world hear?" I had a hard time finding the right words to share with them. Seeing Mari raised above the crowd on her mom's shoulders at the Women's March helped me answer those questions.

The first person I shared the story with was Mari's mom and she shared it with Mari. We don't chat all the time, but their friendship and encouragement have meant a lot to me.



**Q:** Mari, to me, is the story version of simple yet profound wisdom, like "Be the change you want to see in the world." What's next for you and what other concepts might you want to explore?

**A:** Absolutely, I agree. Showing up matters, speaking up matters. Currently, I'm working on a biographical picture book about a woman who was a conservationist and activist with a "booming voice that scared the bejesus out of Congress." I can't wait for readers to get to know and admire her as much as I have during my research for the book. I'd also like to explore themes of wonder and humor in nature.

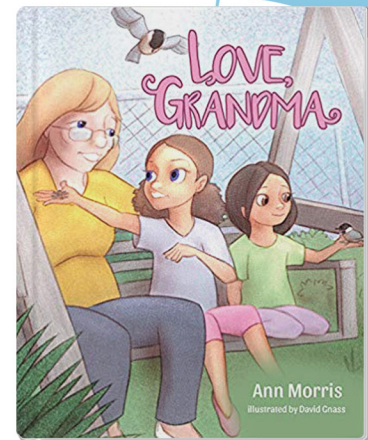
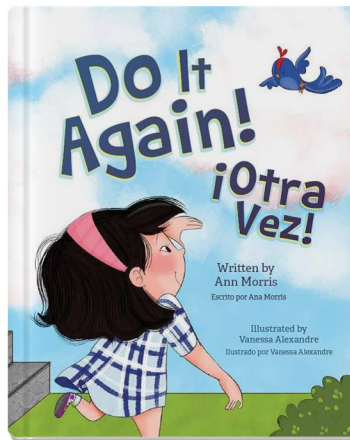
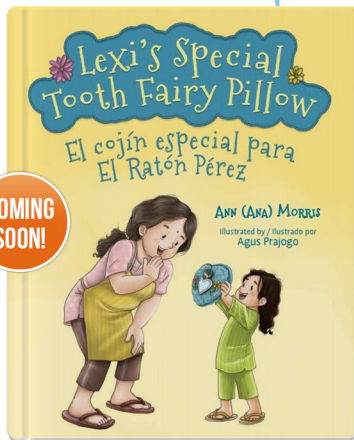
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# STORIES ARE ETERNAL...

by Olivia Amiri

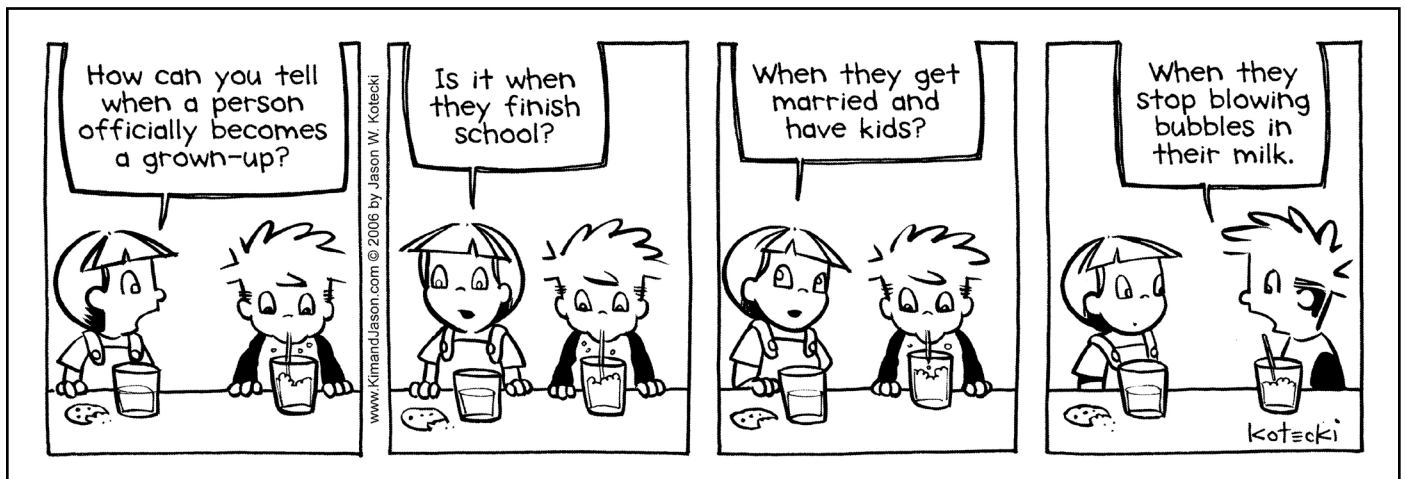
**F**or the first time ever, I was actually happy that summer was ending. I was eager to get back to school, especially Core, my favorite subject which is reading, writing and history. Whenever I write a paper about myself, the first thing I usually include is that I'm a reader first and writer second. I grew up with books, and my mom is a children's books author for multiple picture books, which I worked on with her.

I think that books are one of the things that are essential for human evolution and growth. Without them, we wouldn't have been able to document important information. Without writing and reading, we never would have Anne Frank's diary or Columbus's ships log. Last year I was asked what is eternal. My answer was two things. First, nothing is eternal, everything is impermanent, and nothing really matters. Second, nothing really matters and yet everything does, it just depends how you see the world. Then again, passing down knowledge and stories is eternal. Books are a piece of an author left behind for us to examine. They are tangible legacies.

I think that we are living through a pivotal point in history. Quarantine has changed the lives of so many people, completely shifting their daily routines and habits. I myself am an optimist and I view this as more reading time. This could be because my life wasn't majorly impacted, and I don't have a lot of responsibilities like so many people do. Maybe that's because I'm a kid. Anyway, I love literature more than anything! ●



**Olivia Amiri** 14-year-old Olivia Amiri is a little girl with big advice! Sharing insights and observations on the world around us, her message is clear: kids are still the best teachers to remind grown-ups of the simple joys in life. [livonlife.com](http://livonlife.com)





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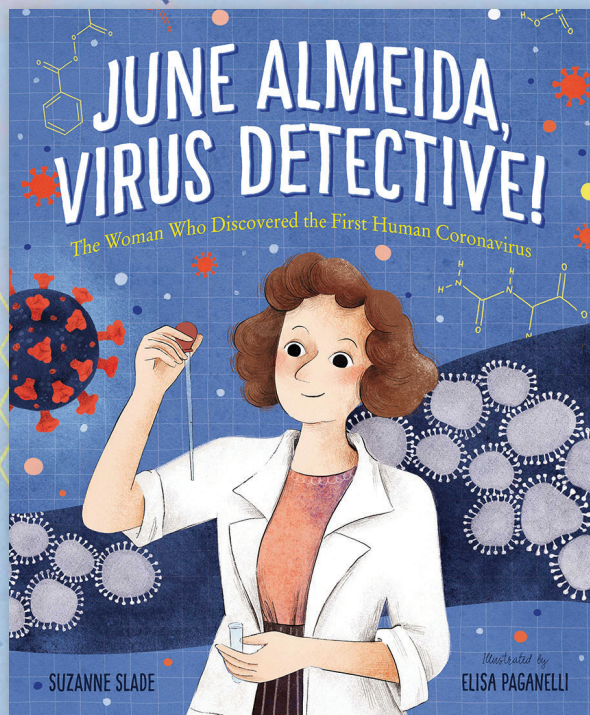


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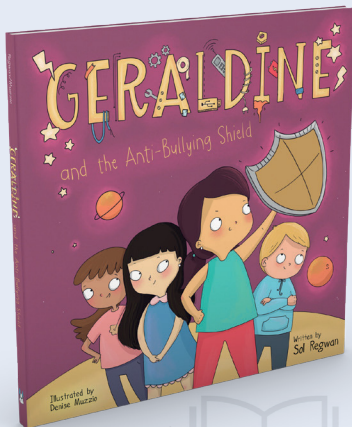
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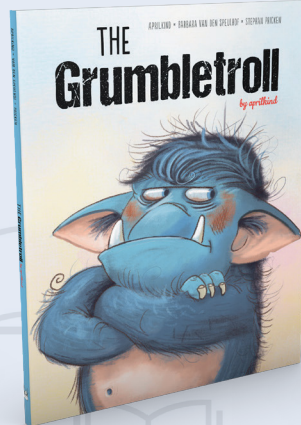
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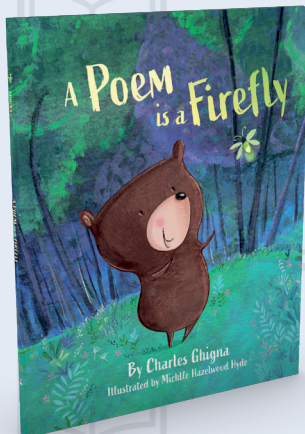
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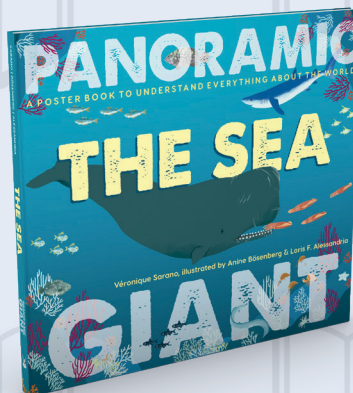
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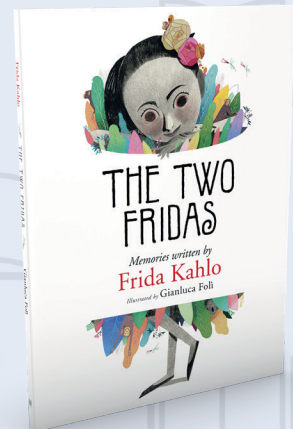
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