

2023

# GREAT BOOKS

FOR YEAR-ROUND

*Giving*

FOR KIDS



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# Are you looking for the perfect gift to give to a child?

## May we suggest a book?

The Youth Services staff has chosen the titles in this gift guide from books published over the past year. Each book has been selected for its timeless quality and lasting kid appeal. Each listing includes a summary of the book, the writer and/or illustrator, and the age range for which the book is most appropriate.

While we put the list out each year in time for holiday shopping, we hope you will refer to it year-round to help you decide which books to buy for birthdays, baby showers, and other occasions.

The guide is a wonderful tool to help you select books that will be read, re-read, and treasured by the children who receive them as gifts at any time of year!

Books make great gifts!

— *Youth Services Staff*  
*Warren-Trumbull County Public Library*  
*November 2023*

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*To borrow a title listed in this guide, visit any Warren-Trumbull County  
Public Library location, the Bookmobile, or the library website at  
[www.WTCPL.org](http://www.WTCPL.org).*

## Picture Books

### ***Beneath***

**By Cori Doerrfeld**

*For ages 4-8*

A sweet tender story for anyone who has had a bad day or a broken heart and thinks no one will ever understand. A child and his grandfather take a nature walk to heal and discover there is always more under the surface of what we see.

—Suggested by Miss Jill

### ***Beatrice Likes the Dark***

**By April Genevieve Tucholke; illustrated by Khoa Le**

*For ages 4-8*

Beatrice and her sister are two completely different people. Beatrice prefers the quiet solitude that night provides, while her sister prefers the hustle and bustle of the day. Each sister learns how to appreciate the other's interests while acknowledging that they prefer their favorite times of day. A great tale for siblings who might be opposites of each other.

—Suggested by Miss Tawnee

### ***Bunnies in a Boat***

**By Philip Ardagh; illustrated by Ben Mantle**

*For ages 3-6*

If you like adorable bunnies, quiet days at the beach, or absolute total chaos, this is the book for you! Join this silly group of bunnies as they ride around Sunny Bay in an out-of-control speedboat. Children will enjoy looking at the pictures noticing all the little details while chanting "Bunnies in a boat! Bunnies in a boat!" as you read this together.

—Suggested by Miss Crystal

### ***Enough Is...***

**By Jessica Whipple; illustrated by Nicole Wong**

*For ages 5-8*

In a culture that screams, "More, newer, bigger, better!" it can be difficult to hear the soft, gentle whisper of enough. A child grapples with the difference between wants and needs as she notices the allure of consumerism all around her. Flashy advertisements and the new clothes and toys that her friends buy have her wondering if she has enough. She finds her answer when she realizes that enough isn't a number of things that can be counted, but rather finding contentment in having just what you need.

—Suggested by Miss Taylor

### ***Evergreen***

**By Matthew Cordell**

*For ages 4-8*

Evergreen is a squirrel who is afraid of many things. Many, MANY, things. When Evergreen is tasked with bringing her Mama's soup to sick Granny Oak, she must be brave. And brave she is. Evergreen solves problems, meets other animals, and finds courage she didn't know she had, all in the name of soup delivery! Hand this one to readers who love a little adventure in their picture books.

—Suggested by Miss Nicole

### ***How Does Santa Go Down the Chimney?***

**By Mac Barnett; illustrated by Jon Klassen**

*For ages 4-8*

This book seeks to answer the question that matters the most to some children this time of year, just how does Santa get down the chimney? It is a great read for anyone that has questions regarding Santa Claus and his magic from silly questions to logical ones like what about all the dogs Santa meets? Your whole family will be laughing as they think about the different questions for years to come!

—Suggested by Miss Crystal

### ***I Am Picky: Confessions of a Fussy Eater***

**By Kristen Tracy; illustrated by Erin Kraan**

*For ages 3-6*

PICKY EATERS UNITE! A silly, cute story for all those picky eaters. "I WANT what I WANT." A humorous twist with vivid illustrations about fussy eaters. This raccoon family will have you convinced that it is okay to be choosy.

—Suggested by Miss Jill

### ***In Every Life***

**By Marla Frazee**

*For ages 0-8 years*

Adapted from a call and response poem commonly read during Jewish baby naming ceremonies, Marla Frazee has created a picture book that simply and thoughtfully recognizes our shared humanity. Our lives are made up of hope and hard work, of sadness and comfort, of love and wonder and mystery, the simplest of joys and the most difficult, inexplicable sorrows. The text is accompanied by Frazee's signature pencil and gouache illustrations that are somehow both delicately soft and stunningly bright. Applicable to anyone in any season of life, but would make an especially excellent gift for a new baby's collection.

—Suggested by Miss Taylor

### ***In the Neighborhood***

**By Rocio Bonilla**

*For ages 3-7*

This picture book takes you to a neighborhood where everyone is a stranger. Sure, there are houses, but the people inside haven't met each other. They just make assumptions about one another. When the Internet goes out one day, the neighborhood comes together and proves that looks can be deceiving. The moral of this story—get to know your neighbors. Turns out, community is a lovely thing.

—Suggested by Miss Nicole

### ***La Guitarrista***

**By Lucky Diaz; illustrated by Micah Player**

*For children in grades K-3*

Canta finds a guitar in the trash and suddenly she is one step closer to her dream of becoming a rock star! Even with a broken guitar, she doesn't stop following her dreams in this encouraging story. It is an empowering tale of community and the power of music!

—Suggested by Miss Samantha

### ***The Nature Journal: A Backyard Adventure***

**By Savannah Allen**

*For ages 4-8*

Young Tim loves exploring the outdoors. He observes, collects, and records everything in his nature journal. One day, his dad is too busy to check out Tim's latest findings. So, naturally, Tim explores and dreams while he waits. This is a great book to share with the budding naturalist in your life. It will make them (and you) appreciate a love of nature and time spent together.

—Suggested by Miss Nicole

## ***Rain***

**By Cynthia Rylant; illustrated by Lisa Congdon**

*For ages 3-5*

Storms can sometimes be scary, but not in this story! In this book, we get to see just how relaxing and fun the rain really can be for everyone in a joyous, calm village surrounded by different folks and animals from all walks of life. This book shows how the rain really can connect everyone.

—Suggested by Miss Samantha

## ***Ruffles and the New Green Thing***

**By David Melling**

*For ages 2-7*

Ruffles the puppy has returned for this third installment of trials faced by a young dog (and many young children). The protagonist loves countless things, such as fetching, digging, and sleeping, but the new thing that shows up in his food dish (appearing to be a stalk of broccoli) might just be too much for Ruffles. With the help of his pal Ralph, Ruffles finds the courage to try something new, with delicious results.

—Suggested by Miss Amber

## ***The Skull: A Tyrolean Folktale***

**By Jon Klassen**

*For ages 6-9*

Otilla is wandering alone in the woods when she comes across a large dark house in the woods. Inside she finds not a person or cute little animal, but a talking skull. Instead of running away in fear, Otilla quickly befriends the skull who showed her kindness inviting her in from the cold. When she learns the skull is in trouble, she is quick to come up with a plan to protect it even if it means taking on a headless skeleton. This spooky read with a happy ending is perfect for fans of the TV show “Wednesday,” and it is perfect for fans who enjoy reading folktales.

—Suggested by Miss Crystal

## ***Very Good Hats***

**By Emma Straub; illustrated by Blanca Gomez**

*For ages 2-5*

Most of us would like to think that we have a good understanding of what a hat is, but this picture book delightfully inspires the reader to broaden their definition. Take a stroll through cheery, bright paper collage illustrations depicting everyday scenes of unexpected hats. Raspberries and acorns make good hats for your fingertips, bubbles in a bubble bath make a nice temporary hat, and even bowls make decent hats, so long as they are empty. Houses have hats (roofs) and pots have hats (lids). Hats are everywhere if you look around and use your imagination!

—Suggested by Miss Taylor

## ***Woo Hoo! You're Doing Great!***

**By Sandra Boynton**

*For ages 5-8*

Are you looking for a book that offers encouragement? Want to tell someone how well they're doing? Do you REALLY love overly enthusiastic chickens? This is the perfect book when celebrating someone's achievements or just to pep them up. A must for fans of Sandra Boynton's board books who need a little encouragement.

—Suggested by Miss Nicole

## Beginning Reader

### ***Bug Catchers***

**By Megan Litwin; illustrated by Shauna Lynn Panczyszyn**

*For ages 5-7*

Dirt and Bugsy live side by side, sharing not only a fence but also a profound friendship and a common passion for capturing insects. When an unexpected rain shower graces their neighborhood, inspiration strikes like lightning, and they embark on a mission. Their minds whirl with excitement as they hatch a plan: to construct a shelter for their beloved bugs, ensuring that they remain snug and dry during the storm. Together, with a shared determination, they scavenge for materials and meticulously piece together a bug barn, offering a protective haven for their insect companions.

—Suggested by Miss Carrie

### ***I See a Bat***

**By Paul Meisel**

*For ages 4-7*

Geisel Honor Winner Paul Meisel is back with his highly expressive pooch protagonist for another short and easy-to-read adventure. Utilizing less than fifteen different words and illustrations that show exactly what the simple sentences describe, this book takes readers through a pet dog's nocturnal activities. Perfect for beginning readers on some of their very first forays into reading.

—Suggested by Miss Amber

### ***Worm and Caterpillar are Friends***

**By Kaz Windness**

*For ages 5-7*

Worm and Caterpillar share an inseparable friendship, the kind that makes them feel as if they're two peas in a pod. While Worm appreciates their similarities, Caterpillar harbors a premonition of an impending transformation. Suddenly, Caterpillar vanishes for a period, only to return as a graceful Butterfly. The question looms: Will Butterfly and Worm's cherished friendship endure despite this profound change?

—Suggested by Miss Carrie

## Chapter Books

### ***The Fort***

**By Gordon Korman**

*For children in grades 5-8*

From the bestselling author of "Restart" comes a story of five middle-school friends who discover an underground bomb shelter after a hurricane wreaks havoc on their town. As they transform the shelter into their secret refuge, the boys are faced with the challenge of sharing their deepest secrets to keep it safe, especially when one of them needs protection from an abusive home situation.

—Suggested by Miss Carrie

### ***Grounded For All Eternity***

**By Darcy Marks**

*For children in grades 3-5*

Growing up is tough, growing up in the suburbs of Hell is even tougher. For Mal and their friends, things are going to get worse when they end up in Salem, Massachusetts, on Halloween with a soul on the run. Can these friends get home and recapture the soul before their parents notice, or are they all about to be “grounded for eternity?” Great for readers who are into the spooky that’s not too spooky and readers who really loved the “Sabrina the Teenage Witch” and “Wednesday” TV programs.

—Suggested by Miss Tawnee

### ***Iceberg***

**By Jennifer A. Nielsen**

*For ages 8-12*

A great middle grade introduction to the Titanic. This story is informative, fascinating, and historically real, but not too intense for young readers. A sad but hopeful ending.

—Suggested by Miss Jill

### ***The Lost Library***

**By Rebecca Stead and Wendy Mass**

*For children in grades 4-7*

In the tranquil town of Martinville, a mysterious little free library guarded by a big orange cat appears overnight. Eleven-year-old Evan, with his friend Rafe, selects two weathered books from it, unaware that this will change their lives. The books reveal a connection to a long-buried town secret. “The Lost Library” is a timeless story narrated by a spectral librarian named Al, an aging cat named Mortimer, and Evan. It explores embracing one’s true self, choosing one’s path, and the profound influence of a cherished book and the librarian who provided it.

—Suggested by Miss Carrie

### ***Sisters of the Lost Marsh***

**By Lucy Strange**

*For children in grades 4-8*

Could the sinister characters described in a handwritten tome actually inhabit Hollow-in-the-Marsh? Does “The Curse of the Six Daughters” have reality behind it? Can Willa Fernbsy summon her courage, strength, and smarts to put the pieces together and rescue her sisters from frightening fates? “Sisters of the Lost Marsh” is a finely fashioned rural gothic folktale that will chill readers to the bone and inspire them to seek their own adventures and truths no matter what society and life may throw their way.

—Suggested by Miss Amber

## **Graphic Novels**

### ***Batcat***

**By Meggie Ramm**

*For children in grades 2 and up*

The main character of this middle-grade graphic novel is exactly what their name implies: part bat and part cat. Batcat is perfectly content being a batcat and living alone in their oak tree on Spooky Isle, until a ghost moves in and begins to “haunt” the tree house. To deal with the ghost problem, Batcat seeks the assistance of the island witch and is sent on a mission to collect ingredients for a spell. Batcat gathers much more than ingredients on the mission, learning about their thoughts, feelings, and ideas about their own identity. An excellent book for children and tweens who appreciate whimsy and gentle adventure.

—Suggested by Miss Amber

### ***A First Time for Everything***

**By Dan Santat**

*For ages 10 and up*

In “A First Time for Everything,” Dan Santat recounts in this graphic novel memoir a trip he took to Europe as a middle schooler. From navigating friendships, German punk rockers, French table manners, and first love, Santat fondly remembers the awkwardness of the middle school years with warmth and humor. This graphic novel is recommended for all readers in the throes of middle school and all lovers of good graphic novels.

—Suggested by Miss Amanda

### ***Meesh the Bad Demon***

**By Michelle Lam**

*For children in grades 4-6*

For readers who enjoy fantasy graphic novels, I want you to meet Meesh, a demon that loves all things colorful and fairy like, and who feels like an outcast compared to the other demons at school. She lives in Mount Magma, Home of the Demons, Land of the Lava, where she goes to middle school and lives with her grandma. When tragedy strikes the town, only Meesh must journey the fairies of Plumeria city to find help. There she finds that demons are the bad guys and there is no one willing to talk to a demon. Will Meesh have to save her grandma and the town of Mount Magma on her own or will she form unlikely friendships just in time to save the day?

—Suggested by Miss Crystal

### ***Scurry***

**By Mac Smith**

*For children in grades 3-5*

The sun and the humans are gone and for this group of mice that spells trouble. They used to rely on the humans for food and shelter and it's becoming clear that they have to do something in order to keep surviving. Poison, traps, and feral cats all threaten the mice's attempts at survival. Can they find food? Or will they vanish like the humans? Great for readers who loved the Warrior series and its offshoots.

—Suggested by Miss Tawnee

### ***Tegan and Sara: Junior High***

**By Tegan Quin and Sara Quin; illustrated by Tillie Walden**

*For children in grades 5-8*

Identical twins Tegan and Sara have always been close, but now that they are moving to a new town and school at the beginning of junior high, they need each other's support more than ever. The twins navigate puberty, first crushes, queerness, and learning just how very different they are. As they forge their individual personalities, the sisters find common ground through music. In a middle grade graphic novel loosely based on their life, the famous Canadian indie pop duo explores the joys and struggles of the tween experience.

—Suggested by Miss Taylor

## **Nonfiction**

### ***Animals in Pants***

**By Suzy Levinson; illustrated by Kristin & Kevin Howdeshell**

*For ages 5-7*

I interrupt this recommendation to bring you this brand-new information—“Take Heed. Don't put a goat in overalls. Really. I mean it.” This silly collection of poems features the latest in animal fashion from track suits to pantaloons! The animals model their favorite type of pants in brightly colored illustrations that only add to the poems. You and your reader will enjoy saying these silly rhymes while laughing at the illustrations before you go have your own living room fashion show!

—Suggested by Miss Crystal



***Cut!: How Lotte Reiniger and a Pair of Scissors Revolutionized Animation***

**By C.E. Winters; illustrated by Matt Schu**

*For ages 7-10*

Did you know one of the pioneers of animation was a woman? In this colorful biography, learn the story of Lotte Reiniger and the pair of scissors that changed animation forever. From youth to adulthood, follow alongside Lotte to see her process and where she came to be.

—Suggested by Miss Samantha

***Disgustingly Delicious: The Surprising Weird and Wonderful Food of the World***

**By Soledad Romero Marino; illustrated by Montse Galbany; translated by Maria White**

*For ages 7 and up*

For all the young foodies, this book covers unusual foods from all over the world. From tuna eyeballs to cheese with live maggots to fried tarantulas, readers discover unexpected delicacies. Be prepared to “eww” and “ahh” your way through the fascinating stories and facts.

—Suggested by Miss Amanda

***The Fire of Stars: The Life and Brilliance of the Woman Who Discovered What Stars are Made Of***

**By Kirsten W. Larson; illustrated by Katherine Roy**

*For ages 7-9*

This remarkable book celebrates the life of Cecilia Payne, the indomitable astronomer, with profound eloquence and artistry. Its narrative, art, and message offer an indispensable resource for parents, educators, and anyone passionate about nurturing curiosity and scientific exploration. For those who hold the universe in awe and believe in the potential of the young minds who aspire to explore it, this biography is an absolute must-read.

—Suggested by Miss Carrie

***Great White Shark***

**By Claire Saxby; illustrated by Cindy Lane**

*For ages 5-8*

Calling all shark fans! Follow a female great white shark as she goes through life. This educational and beautifully realistic illustrated unique book combines poetic narrative prose with informative facts. A great read that uncovers the mysteries around the world’s largest ocean predator.

—Suggested by Miss Jill

***How the Sea Came to Be: And All the Creatures in It***

**By Jennifer Berne; illustrated by Amanda Hall**

*For children in grades K-4*

A powerful book that shows the process of the creation of the sea using detailed and well-made illustrations. It shows the rise in volcanoes to the filling of Earth’s first oceans, all the way down to what lurks beneath the surface. It’s a fantastic informational piece with tons of new scientific details to discover. Jump right into the sea and discover what lurks beneath.

—Suggested by Miss Samantha

***Jumper: A Day in the Life of a Backyard Jumping Spider***

**By Jessica Lanan**

*For ages 4-8*

This is a book about spiders being recommended by me, a person absolutely terrified of spiders—need I say more? The story of Jumper, a cute little backyard jumping spider, takes us through a day in the life of a spider. The author weaves together facts about Jumper while also making sure the reader is completely interested in what Jumper will do next. With illustrations that offer views of the world from Jumper’s eyes, this is a book that you will find yourself picking up again and again. It may even make the spider hater in your life absolutely adore at least one spider.

—Suggested by Miss Crystal

***Kids Can Cook Anything! The Complete How-to Cookbook for Young Chefs, with 70+ Kid-tested, Kid-approved Recipes***

**By America's Test Kitchen**

*For ages 9-12*

Kid tested and approved recipes make the perfect match for your future foodie. Not only are step-by-step photos of tips and techniques provided, but QR codes to instructional videos taught by little chefs themselves. A perfect recipe for kitchen success.

—Suggested by Miss Jill

***Pluto! Not a Planet? Not a Problem!***

**By Stacy McAnulty; illustrated by Stevie Lewis**

*For ages 4-8*

Little dwarf planet Pluto couldn't be more excited to finally share his story! Once recognized as the ninth planet in our solar system, Pluto would like readers to know that he's not at all upset to no longer be considered a planet. He loves being part of our solar system family, but he's happily embraced his uniqueness as a dwarf planet and wants you to know just how special he really is! From the adorable size to the distinctive pattern of his orbit, Pluto is a positively perfect dwarf planet. A great choice for outer space fans!

—Suggested by Miss Taylor

***Wombats are Pretty Weird: A [Not So] Serious Guide***

**By Abi Cushman**

*For ages 4-8*

"Wombats Are Pretty Weird" is a delightful and educational picture book that will captivate young readers and adults alike. Abi Cushman's storytelling and artistry come together to create a book that is both fun and informative. Whether you're a child eager to learn about the animal kingdom or an adult who appreciates beautifully crafted children's literature, this book is a gem. "Wombats Are Pretty Weird" is a must-have addition to any child's library, and it is a perfect choice for parents and educators looking to inspire a love of nature in young minds.

—Suggested by Miss Carrie

*Happy Reading!*



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