

Allie, First at Last

Angela Cervantes

Scholastic, 2016

208 pages

SUMMARY:

Allie Velasco is the least awarded person in her family. She is an obsessed fifth grader determined to win first place...at anything. Every member of her family is known for something. Allie tries and tries and it's through failure that she learns that winning isn't everything it's cracked up to be. She learns valuable lessons in empathy and friendship.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Hello Universe*, Erin Entrada Kelly
- *The First Rule of Punk*, Celia C. Perez
- *Saving Baby Doe*, Danette Vigilante
- *Becoming Naomi Leon*, Pam Munoz Ryan
- *Designed By Lucy*, Courtney Sheinmel
- *Moving Target*, Christina Diaz Gonzalez

WEBSITES:

Angela Cervantes, <http://www.angelacervantes.com/>

This website is all about Angela, her books, her blog, her appearances, and her shop. It also has teacher resources for her books.

BOOKTALK:

Who doesn't want to be good at something and win first place? Well, let me tell you about Allie Velasco! Allie comes from a family of overachievers who are constantly winning accolades and awards. But not Allie. Never Allie. Will she win the science fair? The writing contest? She is determined to win...at anything. The lessons she learns far surpass the accolades and trophies that she could ever win. Find out in "Allie, First at Last."

Prepared by:

Shannon Fennell, Sandlapper Elementary School, sfennell@richland2.org

As Brave As You

Jason Reynolds

Caitlyn Dlouhy/Atheneum, 2016

432 pages

SUMMARY:

Spending part of his summer away from Brooklyn scooping poop at his grandparent's house isn't eleven-year-old Genie's idea of a good time. His parents send him and his big brother Ernie to Virginia for a month. Once in Virginia the boys have to deal with a long list of chores every day and a Grandpop who is blind and maybe crazy. Grandpop never goes outside, locks himself in a room filled with birds, and has a crazy idea about how to celebrate Ernie's birthday – at least it's crazy to Ernie, who wants no part of it. Genie doesn't think it's crazy at all. He thinks Ernie isn't brave enough. But what does it really mean to be brave?

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *The Watson's Go to Birmingham - 1963*, Christopher Paul Curtis
- *Gone Crazy in Alabama*, Rita Williams-Garcia

WEBSITES:

Jason Reynolds. <http://www.jasonwritesbooks.com/> This is the author website. It includes information about the author, a list of his books, and information about events and appearances.

Simon and Schuster. <http://www.simonandschuster.com/books/As-Brave-As-You/Jason-Reynolds/9781481415910> This website features excerpts from the book; one that visitors can read and an audio excerpt read by the author. It also has a reading group guide with discussion questions and extension activities; as well as other titles by the author.

TeachingBooks.net <https://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?tid=49471&a=1> This website features a compilation of information from a variety of sources with information about the author, book guides, lesson plans, author interviews and any awards that the author has received.

BOOKTALK:

Eleven-year-old Genie Harris and his older brother Ernie are leaving their home in Brooklyn to spend a month of their summer in North Hill, Virginia. The boys are staying with their grandparents while their parents figure out the future of their marriage. When they arrive Genie, who takes his notebook full of questions with him everywhere, makes two startling discoveries: his grandparents don't have Internet access and his Grandpop is blind. Genie has lots of questions about Grandpop's blindness and their family history. Grandpop answers many of Genie's questions, unlike the other adults in his life. The two grow close and Genie begins to think that Grandpop is the bravest man he's ever seen. Genie begins to question that bravery when he learns that Grandpop never goes outside, and has a secret room that he likes to go into. Disaster strikes when Grandpop pushes Ernie to fire a gun to celebrate his fourteenth birthday, as part of a family tradition, and Genie begins to wonder what being brave really means.

Prepared by:

Victoria Smith, Reidville Elementary School, victoria.smith@spart5.net

Full of Beans

Holm, Jennifer

Random House Books for Young Readers, 2016

208 pages

SUMMARY:

In depression era Key West, Beans Curry lives a hard-scrabble life, collecting cans to make pocket money and running the streets making mischief with his friends. When a New Deal government representative arrives and announces big plans to turn Key West into a tourist destination, Beans intends to cash in.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Turtle in Paradise*, Jennifer Holm (Full of Beans is its prequel)
- *Bud, Not Buddy*, Christopher Paul Curtis
- *A Long Way From Chicago*, Richard Peck
- *Maniac Magee*, Jerry Spinelli

WEBSITES:

FloridaTrend, <http://www.floridatrend.com/article/7494/a-new-deal-experiment-transforms-key-west?page=2>

This archived article details the transformation of Key West. Additional websites and resources compiled by the author are provided at the end of the book.

BOOKTALK:

Beans Curry needs to make money. He collect cans for cash but only makes pocket change. He can't ask his folks for money; it's the Depression and they can hardly scrape by. The whole town of Key West is suffering. Beans can't resist an offer to work for the local criminal, Johnny Cakes. The money is better. He knows it's wrong and dangerous, and if he got caught would let everybody down.

Meanwhile, a man from Washington has come to transform Key West into a tourist destination. It seems impossible, but as buildings turn from drab to colorful with new coats of paint, Beans sees new opportunities for business. Will his life turn around? Will good fortune come to Key West?

Prepared by:

Beth Johnson, Langford Elementary, ejohnson@richland2.org

Garvey's Choice

Nikki Grimes

Wordsong, 2016

120 pages

SUMMARY:

Garvey is interested in astronomy, science fiction and reading. His father has always wanted him to be athletic. Garvey, not being able to live up to his father's expectations, comforts himself with food and his weight suffers. Though he is kind, smart and funny he is the target for bullies and often feels alone. Garvey's life changes when he joins the chorus. He begins to accept himself, and becomes hopeful that he can reach his father through music.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Husky*, Justin Sayre
- *The Sweetest Sound*, Sherri Winston
- *The Crossover*, Kwame Alexander

WEBSITES:

Nikki Grimes, <http://www.nikkigrimes.com/>, This is the author website. It includes information about the author, a list of her books, information for aspiring writers, a blog, a photo gallery and her touring schedule.

TeachingBooks.net, <https://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?aid=374>, This website features a compilation of information from a variety of sources with original content created by TeachingBooks.net, as well as information about the author, book guides, lesson plans, author interviews and any awards that the author has received.

BOOKTALK:

Have you ever been compared to one of your siblings? Well Garvey is always being compared to his sister Angie, by their father. Garvey loves astronomy, reading science fiction, and listening to music, but his father constantly pressures him to be an athlete. He can't accept that Garvey isn't interested in sports and he can't accept Garvey. Eating is Garvey's way of dealing with his father's disapproval and as a result he is overweight; and that makes him a target for bullies at school. Garvey is persuaded, by his friend Joe, to join the school chorus. It is there that he not only finds something that he's good at, but he also learns to accept himself. Could music be the thing that connects Garvey and his father? Read Garvey's Choice by Nikki Grimes to find out?

Prepared by:

Victoria Smith, Reidville Elementary School, victoria.smith@spart5.net

Ghosts

Raina Telgemeier

Graphix, 2016

256 pages

SUMMARY:

Catrina and her family are moving to the coast of Northern California because her little sister, Maya, is sick. Cat isn't happy about leaving her friends for Bahía de la Luna, but Maya has cystic fibrosis and will benefit from the cool, salty air that blows in from the sea. As the girls explore their new home, a neighbor lets them in on a secret: There are ghosts in Bahía de la Luna. Maya is determined to meet one, but Cat wants nothing to do with them. As the time of year when ghosts reunite with their loved ones approaches, Cat must figure out how to put aside her fears for her sister's sake - and her own.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Mighty Jack*, Ben Hatke
- *Snow White: A Graphic Novel*, Matt Phelan
- *Drowned City: Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans*, Don Brown
- *The Great Pet Escape*, Victoria Jamieson
- *Dragons Beware*, Jorge Aguirre
- *Lost in NYC: A Subway Adventure: A Toon Graphic*, Nadja Spiegelman

WEBSITES:

Located on Raina Telgemeier webpage at <http://www.goraina.com> you will find links on where to buy the books as well as information about the title. Her website also provides links to her other books, her blog, her appearances, reading guides, and more.

At Goodreads, https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/25903764-ghosts?ac=1&from_search=true you can find information and reviews on this title from other readers as well as lists of similar reads. Goodreads is a free website for book lovers. Imagine it as a large library that you can wander through and see everyone's bookshelves, their reviews, and their ratings. You can also post your own reviews and catalog what you have read, are currently reading, and plan to read in the future.

BOOKTALK:

Cat, a tween, has to leave her friends and move to Bahía de la Luna for her sister Maya who has cystic fibrosis. The threat of death and the potential of ghosts are ever present for the very energetic and outgoing Maya. The spirits of the people we love, as in Dia de Los Muertos, are ever present in this coastal town. Telgemeier has Cat confront her fears about death and the world of spirits adding depth and relatability to the story. Ghosts is a lively tale that celebrates family and traditions, and acknowledges death as a part of life.

Prepared by:

Lauren Black, Cayce West Columbia Branch Library, lblack@lex.lib.sc.us

Hamstersaurus Rex

Tom O'Donnell

Harper, 2016

256 pages

SUMMARY:

He disappeared just seconds after Sam named him Hamstersaurus Rex. Okay, well Dylan suggested the name to the class, but Sam thought it up. Such was Sam's life in 6th grade. Trying to keep a low profile from the class bully didn't always work out, especially while you are hunting down a missing hamster. Things wouldn't have been too bad except the hamster mutated. Mutated, as in grew scary and growled and crazed over junk food. Even though Sam found Hammie, he decided to hide him and lie to his friends. Sam tells his side of the story in his crazy adventures with Hamstersaurus Rex in this humorous science fiction tale.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Dragonbreath* series, Ursula Vernon
- *House of Robots*, James Patterson
- *Marty Pants*, Mark Parisi
- *Dinosaur Boy*, Cory Putman Oakes
- *Fuzzy Mud*, Louis Sachar

WEBSITES:

Author's website <http://www.tomisokay.com/> Follow Tom O'Donnell's blog and more.

How to Care for a Hamster, <https://www.wikihow.com/Care-for-a-Hamster>. Learn all the basics of proper hamster care.

BOOKTALK:

Class pets are awesome! Have you ever wished for a mutant one that could destroy your enemies? What powers would it have? What would you tell it to do? Would it obey you? 6th grader, Sam Gibbs, thought Hamstersaurus Rex could help solve his problems but it didn't turn out to be that easy. Be careful what you wish for, you never know what might happen with a mutant class pet.

Prepared by:

Shannon Ryan, Lake Carolina Elementary Upper Campus, sryan@richland2.org

**Heroes Two Doors Down:
Based on the True Friendship Between a Boy and a Baseball Legend**

Sharon Robinson
Scholastic Press, 2016
202 pages

SUMMARY:

Stephen Satlow lives in Brooklyn, New York and loves the Dodgers. He enjoys spending time with his dad talking about the Dodgers and listening to the games on the radio. He is a normal eight year old who deals with teacher challenges and changes in the neighborhood. When an African American family is rumored to be moving into his Jewish neighborhood, he dreams about Jackie Robinson being the one to move in. Stephen cannot believe his dream is coming true when he finds out that Jackie Robinson's family is moving in down the street from him.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Testing the Ice, A True Story About Jackie Robinson*, Sharon Robinson
- *The Lost Boy*, Tim Green
- *QBI*, Mike Lupica
- *Roller Girl*, Victoria Jamieson
- *The Crossover*, Kwame Alexander

WEBSITES:

Baseball Hall of Fame- Jackie Robinson, <https://baseballhall.org/hof/robinson-jackie> , The career, stats, and impact of Baseball Hall of Famer, Jackie Robinson are highlighted on this website.

Biography.com, <https://www.biography.com/people/jackie-robinson-9460813>, Biography.com highlights the events of Jackie Robinson's life, military service, baseball career, and the role he played in Civil Rights Movement.

Kids Discover, <https://www.kidsdiscover.com/shop/issues/jackie-robinson-for-kids/> , This link allows you to read the Jackie Robinson edition of Kids Discover online. There are some resources that you can download for free, and you can also purchase a print copy of the magazine.

BOOKTALK:

What would you do if you found out that your hero was going to be moving in down the street from you? Eight year old Stephen can't believe it when he finds out that Jackie Robinson is going to move a few doors down from him. Not all of the neighbors are happy to find out that an African American family is moving in to their mostly Jewish neighborhood, but Stephen's dad has taught him that change is good. Will Stephen be able to talk with his hero, Jackie Robinson? Read the book, *Heroes Two Doors Down: Based on the True Friendship Between a Boy and a Baseball Legend* to find out what happens when Jackie moves in to Stephen's neighborhood.

Prepared by:

Traci Nelson, Aiken Elementary School, tnelson@acpsd.net

Isabel Feeney, Star Reporter

Beth Fantaskey

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016

336 pages

SUMMARY:

Life in 1920's Chicago was gangster tough. Even the gangsters died. As a newsgirl, Isabel Feeney, gets a first look at the news every day but wishes she was a crime reporter. On a fluke, Isabel miraculously arrives first at the murder scene of a famous mobster and decides she will be the one to solve the crime. Everyone is against her; the police, other reporters, and other gangsters. Isabel follows the clues, questions the facts and puts her life in danger. Will Isabel be able to solve the murder and get the adults to listen or will she become another victim of the Chicago violence?

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Lantern Sam and the Blue Streak Bandits*, Michael D. Beil
- *The Gallery*, Laura Marx Fitzgerald
- *NewsPrints*, Ru Xu
- *Compass South*, Hope Larson

WEBSITES:

Activity Guide and Discussion questions from author, Beth Fantaskey

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/586167cd5016e161401f8eb5/t/587b9a3015d5db2c4ba8e8ab/1484495410204/IsabelFeeneyActivityPacket.pdf>

Author's website <https://bethfantaskeyauthor.com/> Learn about the author and more.

Timeline of 1920's Chicago,

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_organized_crime_in_Chicago#1920s, see a list of some of the real events that happened in Chicago during the 1920's.

BOOKTALK:

Have you ever wanted something so bad you were willing to break all the rules to make it happen? Have you ever wanted to prove someone wrong who told you no? You are not alone. Isabel Feeney is out to prove that she has what it takes to be a reporter, but not just any reporter, a crime scene reporter. What rules does she break? How much danger is she really in? Will the criminal get her before she can solve the crime? Can she solve the crime and win a real job as a reporter? Read, *Isabel Feeney, Star Reporter* to find out if Isabel is smart enough to outwit the criminals and get a job.

Prepared by:

Shannon Ryan, Lake Carolina Elementary Upper Campus, sryan@richland2.org

Like Magic
Elaine Vickers
HarperCollins, 2016
272 pages

SUMMARY:

A move to a new town triggers a visit to a library for three different ten-year-old girls. Each girl is struggling with changes. As they individually visit their library, they are intrigued by a unique treasure box that has a hidden compartment. It captivates Grace, Jada, and Malia as they start to leave items in the box. As traumatic events unfold, they find solace in the trinkets left and found in the box. The curiosity of the box leads the girls to seek out one another and slowly develop friendships in the most unlikely way.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *All the Answers*, Kate Messner
- *11 Birthdays*, Wendy Mass
- *The Key to Extraordinary*, Natalie Lloyd
- *Clatter of Jars*, Lisa Graff

WEBSITES:

Visit the *Like Magic* webpage at <https://www.harpercollins.com/9780062414311/like-magic> on the HarperCollins Publisher's website to find a summary, reviews, and the book trailer. Visit Elaine Vicker's website at <http://www.elainevickers.com/> to learn more about the author, information about other books she has written, resources, and more.

BOOK TALK:

Have you ever gone through a hard time? Have you ever felt lonely or worried? Have you ever had a friend move away, made a cross country move, or had a brand new sibling? In *Like Magic*, Grace, Jada, and Malia are each going through a rough patch. Hazel, the local children's librarian, notices this and shares a magical treasure box with each of the girls. Read more to find out how the treasure box helps the girls.

Prepared by:

Calli Collins, Lambs Elementary School, mary_collins@charleston.k12.sc.us

A Long Pitch Home

Natalie Dias Lorenzi
Charlesbridge, 2016
256 pages

SUMMARY:

Just before Bilal turns ten, his father disappears for three days. When he returns, Bilal's life is uprooted when his family suddenly moves to live with relatives in Virginia, leaving his father behind. Over the course of the next year, Bilal discovers that his father has been falsely accused of a crime and must stay in Pakistan until he can clear his name, while the rest of the family starts over in a new country. Bilal must learn a new language, a new culture and a new sport. At home, he's a great student and a cricket star, but in the US, he's in remedial classes and, even worse, no one has even heard of cricket. He starts baseball camp and even though he's the worst player on the team, Bilal finds a friend who understands how much he misses his father and he may also even discover a way to set his father free.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Save Me a Seat*, Sarah Weeks
- *Flying the Dragon*, Natalie Dias Lorenzi

WEBSITES:

Natalie Lorenzi, <http://natalielorenzi.com/>, Author's website with additional information about this book and her other publications.

BOOKTALK:

Ten year old Bilal feels alone in a strange place. His family has had to leave Pakistan, leaving his beloved father behind, and move in with his aunt and uncle in Virginia. His mother and sister seem to be adjusting well, but Bilal has trouble with the language, the food, even the sports! His cousin signs him up for baseball camp, but baseball is nothing like his beloved cricket and he's the worst player on the team. If he's willing to take the risk, however, baseball may be his best chance for a new best friend and an opportunity to reunite with his father. Can he step out of his comfort zone in time? Read *The Long Pitch Home* to find out!

Prepared by:

Charlotte Evans, Ebenezer Avenue Elementary School, cevans@rhmail.org

The Lost Cipher

Michael Oechsle
Albert Whitman & Company, 2016
259 pages

SUMMARY:

Lucas Whitlatch's summer is going to be very different. He's being sent to Camp Kawani, a camp especially for kids who have lost a parent, and Lucas has lost both. It's while he's at camp, however, that he learns of a treasure that could change everything.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Framed*, James Ponti
- *Journey's End*, Rachel Hawkins
- *Turn of the Tide*, Rosanne Parry

WEBSITES:

Mr. O's Art Room, http://mrosartroom.blogspot.com/?_sm_au=iMVDMRwMtQ3RvwQj This blog is a window into Mr. Oechsle's art classroom at Hillsborough Elementary School. Visitors can see the artwork that his students have created and learn more about the artwork and inspiration behind it.

BOOKTALK:

Everything feels like its going wrong lately, and Lucas Whitlatch just needs a break. He lost his mother years before and only recently lost his father in the war overseas. Not only that, but his home, which has been in the family for generations, is in danger of being sold. He will have to leave his mountain. The mountain his father asked him to protect while he was gone. Now he's going to Camp Kawani, a camp for kids who have lost a parent. Little does he know that while at camp, he's going to make friends who share similarities, face danger unlike any he's ever known, and become part of a local legend. Could he be the one to solve the lost cipher and find a treasure unlike any found before? To find out, read *The Lost Cipher* by Michael Oechsle.

Prepared by:

Nikki Mock, Clearwater Elementary School, nmock@acpsd.net

Moo: a Novel

Sharon Creech
Harper Collins, 2016
278 pages

SUMMARY:

Life goes from bad to worse for 12 year old Reena and her little brother Luke after their parents decide to move from the big city to Maine forcing them to leave everything familiar behind. One of the first people they meet is an old lady who is mean to them and makes Luke cry. If that isn't bad enough, their parents loan them out to help on her farm. Told in verse this story will charm the most die-hard city slicker.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY:

- *Love That Dog*, Sharon Creech
- *Hate That Cat*, Sharon Creech
- *Escape from Silver Street Farms*, Valerie Hobbs
- *Escape from Baxter's Barn*, Rebecca Bond

WEBSITES:

Sharon Creech, <http://www.sharoncreech.com>, the author's website complete with a behind the scenes story and pictures of Zola the cow that inspired the book. This site also provides plenty of resources for an author study.

4H, <https://4-h.org/>, Learn more about the 4H clubs in your area and around the country See what 4H has to offer.

Maine: Visitors, <http://www.maine.gov/portal/visitors/>, See the beauty of Maine and the wonders that Reena and her family have in their new home state.

16 Things you Should Know about Belted Galloways, <http://www.thatsfarming.com/news/belted-galloway-cattle>, A fact filled page all about Belted Galloway cattle.

Belted Galloway, <http://www.thecattlesite.com/breeds/beef/9/belted-galloway/>, Learn even more about the history and characteristics of this special breed of cow.

BOOKTALK:

I was only joking when I told my parents we should move to Maine. I mean, what does a family of born and bred city slickers know about living in the country? More importantly, everyone knows Maine is cold. I guess my parents didn't understand the joke because now I live in Maine and I am taking care of a pig, chicken, snake and ornery cow that belong to the crotchety old lady who lives down the road. So how did I get to this place? Read *Moo*, a novel told in verse to see how I went from my home in the city to a cow farm in Maine.

Prepared by:

Patricia Wilson, North Augusta Elementary School, pwilson@acpsd.net

Sarah Pennypacker
Balzer + Bray, An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers
277 pages

SUMMARY:

Pax and Peter have been inseparable ever since Peter rescued him as a kit. But one day, the unimaginable happens: Peter's dad enlists in the military and makes him return the fox to the wild.

At his grandfather's house, three hundred miles away from home, Peter knows he isn't where he should be—with Pax. He strikes out on his own despite the encroaching war, spurred by love, loyalty, and grief, to be reunited with his fox.

Meanwhile Pax, steadfastly waiting for his boy, embarks on adventures and discoveries of his own.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Maybe a Fox*, Kathi Appelt
- *The Wild Robot*, Peter Brown
- *A Handful of Stars*, Cynthia Lord

WEBSITES:

Sara Pennypacker Books – PAX, <http://sarapennypacker.com/pennypacker-pax.htm>, brief synopsis of the book with a link to the interview with the author on National Public Radio.

New York Times Sunday Book Review – 'PAX,' by Sara Pennypacker, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/14/books/review/pax-by-sara-pennypacker.html>, detailed review of the book.

BOOKTALK:

During times of war, everyone loses something. But for Peter, he's just lost everything. He knew from the moment Pax, his beloved fox, left him that he had made a mistake. Yes, it was what his dad had told him was for the best, but that still didn't make it right. Now he is determined to find his way back to Pax no matter how difficult the journey may be. Will Peter ever find Pax? How is Pax able to survive in the wild when he has never been away from Peter? Will everything be the same as it was before the war? Read Pax by Sara Pennypacker for a journey that will leave the characters and you forever changed.

Prepared by:

Jeanette Pine, BC Grammar #1 Elementary School, jpine@lex2.org

The Peculiar Haunting of Thelma Bee

Erin Petti
Mighty Media Junior Readers, 2016
209 pages

SUMMARY:

Thelma Bee is not a typical eleven-year-old girl; she loves science. So when her father disappears into a magic world via an ancient box, Thelma has to learn to function in a mythical world with witches, ghosts and her own developing supernatural powers. Thelma begins to understand her family has been haunted for generations and she has the power to fight the evil forces trapping her father. The suspense is palpable as she confronts the demon Zachariah Understone to free her father. She may succeed, but at what cost.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Took*, Mary Downing Hahn
- *Nightmares!*, Jason Segel and Kristen Miller
- *The Night Gardener : a Scary Story*, Jonathan Auxier
- *Serafina and the Black Cloak*, Robert Beatty
- *School of the Dead*, Avi

WEBSITES:

Author's website <http://www.erinpetti.com/> Learn more about Erin Petti.

BOOKTALK:

Your father is sucked into an ancient box. A ghost taunts you. What do you do? If you're eleven-year-old Thelma, you do everything you can to rescue him, even if that means going into the box after him. How is that possible? Read more about the evil afoot in Thelma's life and her newfound powers that could change her life. Will she save her dad or get stuck in the other world forever?

Prepared by:

Shannon Ryan, Lake Carolina Elementary Upper Campus, sryan@richland2.org

Save Me a Seat

Sarah Weeks & Gita Varadarajan
Scholastic Press, 2016
216 pages

SUMMARY:

Joe and Ravi seem to have nothing in common aside from being in the same fifth grade class. Joe has lived in New Jersey his whole life, while Ravi just moved to the United States from India. Over the course of the first week of fifth grade, both boys come to find they have more in common than they thought. Chapters alternate between Ravi and Joe's perspective as the events of the week unfold.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *5 times revenge*, Lindsay Eland
- *Auggie & me*, R. J. Palacio
- *Fish in a tree*, Linda Mullaly Hunt
- *A long pitch home*, Natalie Dias Lorenzi
- *Lowji discovers America*, Candace Fleming

WEBSITES:

Save Me a Seat Overview - Sarah Weeks, <http://sarahweeks.com/books/save-me-a-seat/overview>
Sarah Weeks' website includes a summary of the book, links to purchase, suggestions for activities, and photos from classes around the country who have read the book. You can also find information about her other books at <http://sarahweeks.com/>.

Staying in Touch with Their Inner Tween: Sarah Weeks and Gita Varadarajan on "Save Me a Seat", <http://www.slj.com/2016/05/interviews/staying-in-touch-with-their-inner-tween-sarah-weeks-and-gita-varadarajan-on-save-me-a-seat>. Both authors talk about their collaborative process and what they were like at Joe and Ravi's age.

BOOKTALK:

It's the first week of fifth grade for Joe and Ravi, and nothing seems to be going as planned. Ravi, whose family just moved to the United States from India, expected to find himself at the top of the class, just like he had been back home. Joe is worried about staying out of the way of the class bully, especially since his best friends moved away over the summer and, to make matters even worse, his mom took a job in the school cafeteria. Each chapter alternates between Joe and Ravi's perspective on the same events in the class, and without ever speaking to each other, both boys start to realize they have more in common than they thought. Can they overcome their differences and become the friend they both so desperately want?

Prepared by:

Sarah Wajda, Dacusville Elementary School, sarahwajda@pickens.k12.sc.us

Slacker

Gordon Korman
Scholastic Press, 2016
230 pages

SUMMARY:

Video game obsessed eighth grader Cameron Boxer spends every waking moment playing video games and dreaming of showing off his skills as a video game champion. However, his focus on his video game causes a near disaster when he almost lets the house burn down around him.

When his parents try to make him have more balance in his life, he creates a fake community service club to get them off his back but has no idea what the impact will actually be.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Almost Super*, Marion Jensen
- *Hypnotists*, Gordon Korman
- *Ungifted*, Gordon Korman
- *Double Dog Dare*, Lisa Graff

WEBSITES:

Gordon Korman, <http://www.gordonkorman.com>, Visit the author's website to explore other books he has written, read his blog, and learn more about Gordon Korman.

Kids Activities.net, <http://www.kidactivities.net/post/Community-Service-Ideas-for-Kids.aspx>, Explore ways kids of all ages can be involved in community service projects.

Scratch, <https://scratch.mit.edu/>, If you like video games, try creating your own and exploring coding through Scratch.

BOOKTALK:

Eighth grader Cameron Boxer is committed—to video games, that is! When Cameron's video game obsession almost causes him to let his house burn down around him, his parents force him to make some changes in his life. He creates a fake club, the Positive Action Group (P.A.G.), so he can look like he's involved in community service while continuing his video game obsession, but his plan backfires! Soon, he is caught up in actually making a positive impact on his community through P.A.G. and seeing how these changes impact him personally.

Prepared by:

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Tiny Stitches: The Life of Medical Pioneer Vivien Thomas

Gwendolyn Hooks
Lee & Low Books, 2016
32 pages

SUMMARY:

Vivien Thomas's greatest dream was to attend college to study medicine. But after the stock market crashed in 1929, Vivien lost all his savings. Then he heard about a job opening at the Vanderbilt University medical school under the supervision of Dr. Alfred Blalock. Vivien knew that the all-white school would never admit him as a student, but he hoped working there meant he was getting closer to his dream. Overcoming racism and resistance from his colleagues, Vivien ushered in a new era of medicine children's heart surgery. *Tiny Stitches* is the compelling story of this incredible pioneer in medicine.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Whoosh!: Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions*, Chris Barton
- *The Kid from Diamond Street: The Extraordinary Story of Baseball Legend Edith Houghton*, Audrey Vernick
- *Solving the Puzzle Under the Sea: Marie Tharp Maps the Ocean Floor*, Robert Burleigh

WEBSITES:

Located on Gwendolyn Hook's webpage, <http://gwendolynhooks.com> you will find links on where to buy the books as well as information about the title. Her website also provides links to her other books, her blog, her appearances, teacher guides, and more.

At Goodreads, https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/27265179-tiny-stitches?ac=1&from_search=true you can find information and reviews on this title from other readers as well as lists of similar reads. Goodreads is a free website for book lovers. Imagine it as a large library that you can wander through and see everyone's bookshelves, their reviews, and their ratings. You can also post your own reviews and catalog what you have read, are currently reading, and plan to read in the future.

BOOKTALK:

As a young boy Vivien Thomas helped his father with carpentry, valuing precision with cuts, he learned skills that would be helpful later on. By the time he was ready to go to medical school the stock market crashed and he lost all of his money. Luckily he was able to land a job as a lab assistant at Vanderbilt University. It wasn't until later that he heard his official job title was janitor. Outraged Vivien asked for the same pay as white technicians and received it. He then followed his mentor Dr. Blalock to John Hopkins University where he started his own experiments that later developed into the first open heart surgery on a child.

Prepared by:

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Towers Falling

Jewell Parker Rhodes
Little, Brown, 2016
240 pages

SUMMARY:

When her fifth-grade teacher hints that a series of lessons about home and community will culminate with one big answer about two tall towers once visible outside their classroom window, Dèja can't help but feel confused. She sets off on a journey of discovery, with new friends Ben and Sabeen by her side. But just as she gets closer to answering big questions about who she is, what America means, and how communities can grow (and heal), she uncovers new questions, too. Like, why does Pop get so angry when she brings up anything about the towers?

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Nine, Ten: A September 11 Story*, Nora Raleigh Baskin
- *I Survived: The Attacks of September 11, 2011*, Lauren Tarshis
- *Eleven*, Tom Rogers
- *Ninth Ward*, Jewell Parker Rhodes

WEBSITES:

Jewell Parker Rhodes' website on *Towers Falling*,

<http://jewellparkerrhodes.com/children/books/towers-falling/>, The author's website includes a video and audio interviews.

9/11 Memorial & Museum, <https://www.911memorial.org/>, "Teach & Learn" page includes lesson plans, interactive timelines, primary sources and a FAQ page.

9/11 Digital Archive, <http://911digitalarchive.org/>, Contains thousands of primary sources, images, first hand stories, and FAQs about 9/11.

BOOKTALK:

10-year old Deja wasn't even born yet when the Twin Towers in New York were attacked on 9/11. Yet somehow, 15 years after 9/11, Deja's life is changed by the attacks. Deja lives with her parents and two siblings in a homeless shelter in Brooklyn and goes to a school with a view of Ground Zero (where the Twin Towers once stood). As Deja's 5th grade teacher begins teaching her students about 9/11, Deja uncovers a mystery about her father and what happened on that fateful day in 2001. Why is her dad so sad and angry? And will Deja be able to handle the truth?

Prepared by:

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Weekends with Max and His Dad

Linda Urban
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016
150 pages

SUMMARY:

Max and his dad love their weekends together. Weekends mean pancakes, pizza, spy games, dog-walking, school projects, and surprising neighbors! Every weekend presents a small adventure as Max gets to know his dad's new neighborhood – and learns some new ways of thinking about home.

Acclaimed author Linda Urban deftly portrays a third-grader's inner world during a time of transition in this sweet and funny illustrated story that bridges the early reader and middle grade novel.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY ...

- *42 Miles*, Tracie Zimmer
- *Bird Lake Moon*, Kevin Henkes
- *Fred Stays with Me!*, Nancy Coffelt
- *The Totally Made-Up Civil War Diary of Amanda MacLeish*, Claudia Mills

WEBSITES:

Author's Website: <http://lindaurbanbooks.com/books/>

Design your dream bedroom: <http://www.planyourroom.com/>

Learn to play the ukulele: <https://ukuguides.com/tips/10-ukulele-tips-for-beginners/>

All about porcupines: <http://animals.mom.me/porcupines-live-america-3237.html>

Bacon-Pineapple Pancakes recipe: <https://www.thedailymeal.com/recipes/bacon-buttermilk-pancakes-caramelized-pineapple-sauce-recipe>

BOOKTALK:

Divorce is never easy, but 3rd grader Max is trying to adjust to the changes in his life. His dad has tried to make Max's bedroom in the new apartment special for Max, but Max finds the furnishings to be too babyish! Still, he decides to make each weekend with his dad an adventure: pancakes, spy games, dog walking, and new friends, young and old. The easy rapport between Max and his dad provide a platform for discussing divorce and an understanding about what it's like to live in two homes. This sweet illustrated chapter book is about making transitions, and the book itself is a nice transition from early reader books to middle grade chapter books.

Prepared by:

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Welcome to Wonderland: Home Sweet Motel

Chris Grabenstein
Random House, 2016
285 pages

SUMMARY:

P.T. Wilkie's life has never been boring. His home is the Wonderland Motel and life couldn't be sweeter...except for one little problem. There are no customers at his family owned motel and if they can't come up with the money soon, they may have to say goodbye.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*, Chris Grabenstein
- *I Funny*, James Patterson and Chris Grabenstein
- *Treasure Hunters*, James Patterson and Chris Grabenstein

WEBSITES:

Chris Grabenstein, <http://www.chrisgrabenstein.com/> This website is dedicated to the books written and coauthored by author Chris Grabenstein.

BOOKTALK:

P.T. Wilkie has lived at the Wonderland Motel all his life. His grandfather opened it in 1970 and filled it with quirky decorations and even quirkier tales. Life was good...until Disney World opened and the unique qualities of the Wonderland weren't so unique anymore. In fact they were downright tacky. Since then, grandpa has filled his motel with crazy creations to try and attract business, but sadly his efforts haven't been very successful and now the Wonderland is in jeopardy. Unless P.T. and his new friend Gloria can come up with a plan, they will lose the Wonderland to developers who want to bulldoze it to the ground. Add in two recently released prisoners, a hidden treasure, and a teacher who wants to see P.T. go down and life is most definitely not boring. Will P.T. be able to save the Wonderland? Will the mystery of the stolen jewels be solved? Will the Wonderland still sell frozen Pond Scum by the pool? To find out what happens in this wacky comedy, be sure to read *Welcome to the Wonderland: Home Sweet Motel* by Chris Grabenstein.

Prepared by:

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