

Adult Fiction

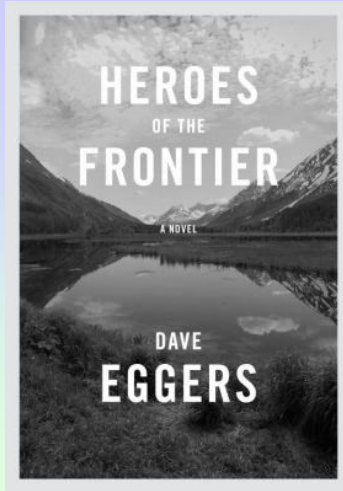
Heroes of the Frontier

Dave Eggers

Josie is on the run with her children. She's left her husband, her failing dental practice, and the rest of her Ohio town to explore Alaska in a rickety RV.

With his trademark insight, humor, and pathos, Dave Eggers explores this woman's truly heroic adventure, all the while exploring the concept of heroism in general. Brilliant, unpretentious, and highly readable.

~Alan's and Leslie's pick



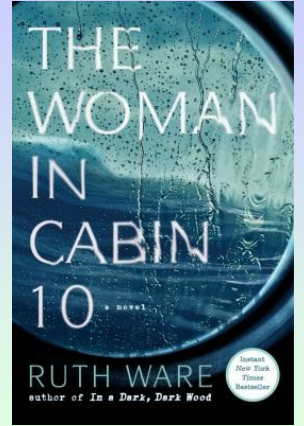
The Woman in Cabin 10

Ruth Ware

When travel journalist Lo Blacklock is invited on a boutique luxury cruise around the Norwegian fjords, it seems like a dream job. But the trip takes a nightmarish turn when she wakes in the middle of the night to hear a body being thrown overboard.

Brit Ruth Ware has crafted her second gripping, dark thriller in the Christie tradition. This page-turner toys with the classic plot of "the woman no one would believe" with incredible language and fun twists. Also a terrific, unabridged audiobook.

~Alan's pick



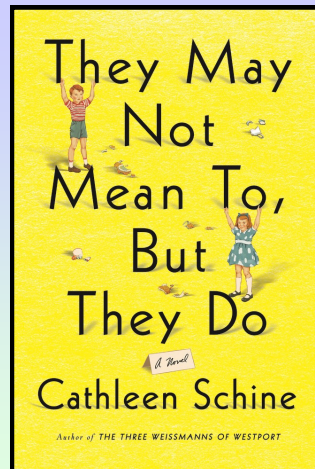
They May Not Mean To, But They Do

Cathleen Schine

When Joy Bergman's husband dies, her children are shocked that she doesn't agree with their ideas for her. The book's title is from a Philip Larkin poem, and this funny and compassionate look at the Bergman family brings Larkin's poem to life.

Schine captures the reality of aging, as well as how difficult it is for families to communicate — even when they love each other.

~Eileen's pick



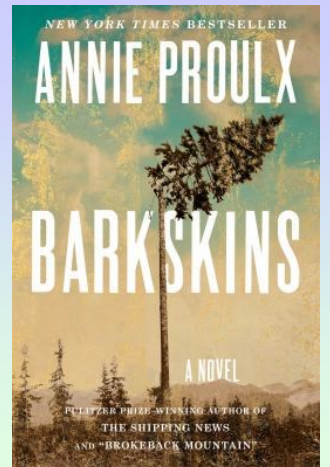
Barkskins

Annie Proulx

Spanning hundreds of years, this ambitious work tells the often brutal story of the Canadian and New England lumber industry and all those whom it enriched or displaced.

Annie Proulx's writing never ceases to thrill me. The weaving together of the stories of multiple characters and the reader's gradual realization of the impact one person's fate can have on future generations is simply amazing.

~Elizabeth's pick



Pond

Claire-Louise Bennett

Very hard to describe, Pond is made up of connected short stories: musings on both the beauty and the hassles of everyday things, the tiresomeness of town life and the meddling of neighbors, laziness, broken things, and the gorgeousness of fruit.

Why is this so good? It's just beautifully written and I couldn't put it down. I felt like I was completely in the narrator's mind, and her observations on life and nature never failed to keep me entertained.

~Elizabeth's pick



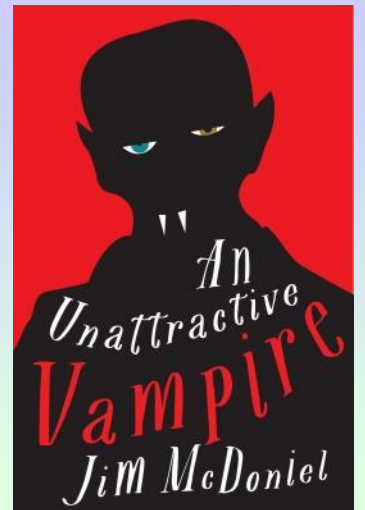
An Unattractive Vampire

Jim McDoniel

After a 300-year slumber, vampire Yuric Bile wakes to a world where the modern undead are beautiful, young and hiding in plain sight on TV shows. With help from two humans, he decides to track down and show the glamorous undead how a real monster behaves.

Mingling darkness and humor, this debut fantasy fiction is original, mighty in its depiction of cultural differences, and mostly very funny.

~Joyce's pick



Adult Fiction

Before the Wind

Jim Lynch

Growing up on the Puget Sound, the Johannssen family has sailing in their blood, but the oldest brother, Josh, is left puzzling over what caused his siblings to flee, one to Africa, the other to points unknown as a fugitive and pirate.

If you love the Puget Sound or sailing, you'll love Lynch's latest novel.

~Leslie's pick



Lilac Girls

Martha Hall Kelly

Set during WWII, we have the stories of three very different women in separate locations being told simultaneously.

The characters were very endearing.

~Linda's pick



What was Mine

Helen Klein Ross

One lie leads to another until 20 years later when the truth comes out and carefully guarded secrets are unraveled. In one impulsive moment multiple lives become altered. When shock and tragedy strike some manage to move on with their lives while others choose to live in the lie, all of which takes a toll.

An intriguing read and exposé of the human psyche.

~Margo's pick



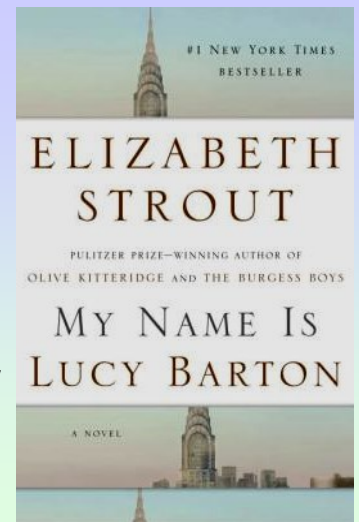
My Name is Lucy Barton

Elizabeth Strout

Lucy doesn't come from much; growing up poor has left scars and caused division. Lucy is lonely and vulnerable, missing her family, confined to the hospital for nine weeks, and then her mother unexpectedly shows up.

The genuineness with which Strout writes is familiar and comforting. I find myself coming to care deeply for her characters. The past catches up with the present in this tender heartfelt story of life and death pain and sorrow.

~Margo's pick



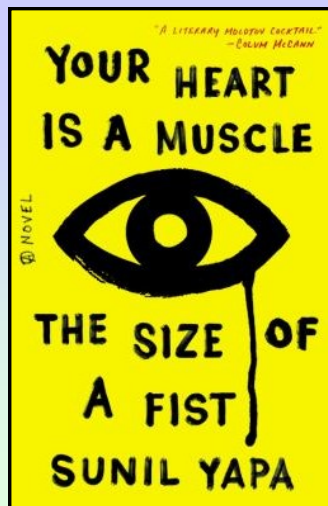
Your Heart Is a Muscle the Size of a Fist

Sunil Yapa

This book is set against the backdrop of the 1999 World Trade Organization protests in Seattle. Sunil Yapa invokes empathy and consideration for all sides involved.

Yapa's plot builds substantially, as the violence in the protests escalates, and his characters' flaws are revealed with superb timing.

~Sarah's pick



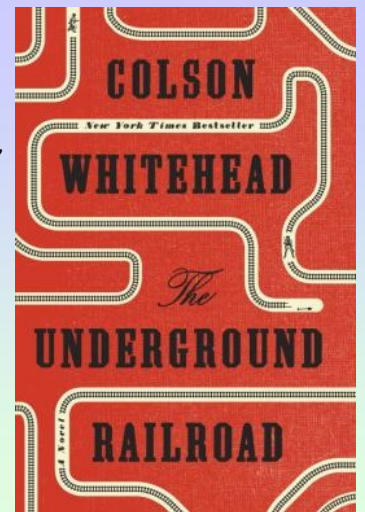
The Underground Railroad

Colson Whitehead

A fellow slave encourages Cora to run away, and they head north on a functional underground railroad, complete with tracks and cars.

Whitehead details the terrors of slavery and recounts this brutal piece of American history.

~Sarah's pick



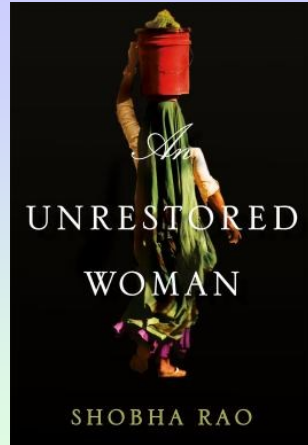
Adult Fiction

[An Unrestored Woman](#)

Shobha Rao

In 1947, the Indian subcontinent was partitioned into two countries, India and Pakistan. This collection of stories examines how this political decision forced a mass migration of humanity and how little control a person may have over his/her own destiny.

Months after finishing this collection of short stories, I found myself thinking about the characters and how they managed to survive and adapt to their new circumstances. The characters are well developed and often connected from story to story.
~Teri's pick



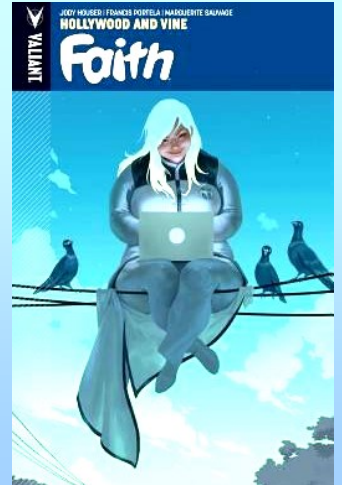
Adult Graphic Novels

[Faith 01: Hollywood and Vine](#)

Jody Houser

When she's not typing up listicles about cat videos, Faith makes a secret transformation to patrol the night as the City of Angels' own leading superhero — the sky-soaring Zephyr.

A superhero comic series for people who hate superhero comics, Faith is a body-positive series where size is never mentioned, but we can see our large heroine wear normal clothes and live a life free of fat-shaming. And she kicks-butt!
~Carol's pick

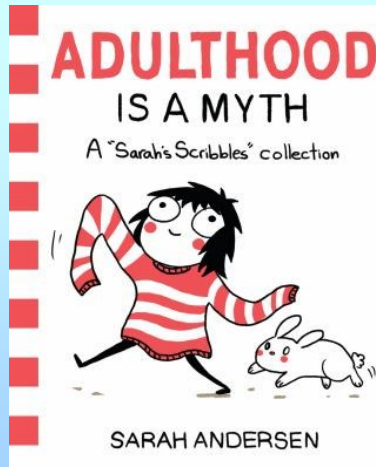


[Adulthood is a Myth: a "Sarah Scribbles" Collection](#)

Sarah Andersen

Confronts head-on the horrors, anxiety, and awkwardness of modern adult life.

I hadn't heard of Sarah Andersen until I cataloged this book. Now I can't stop reading everything she's ever written. Her comics are highly relatable to any millennial, woman, or person in the world. It's also a fast read.
~Carol's pick

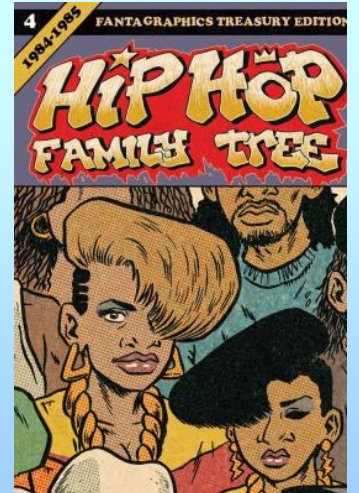


[Hip Hop Family Tree Volume 4](#)

Ed Piskor

Piskor continues his work telling the "origin stories" of hip hop's most important artists and of the genre itself. This book covers 1984-1985 and has a large focus on the Def Jam record label.

The large format, rough paper, and muted colors make reading about 80s hip hop feel closer than the 30 years that separate it from the present. Every book in this series is worth a read, yet each stands on its own equally well.
~Zac's pick

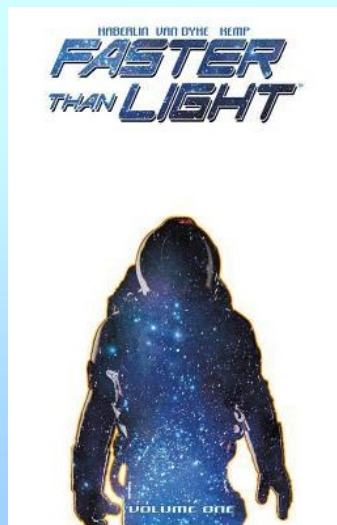


[Faster than Light](#)

Brian Haberlin

Human beings have finally discovered how to travel faster than the speed of light. This book, with the help of an iOS/Android companion app, tells the story of the first crew to venture deep into our universe.

Unlike what you might see on Star Trek, the technology in this sci-fi title feels a little clunky, which adds a layer of suspense to the storytelling.
~Zac's pick

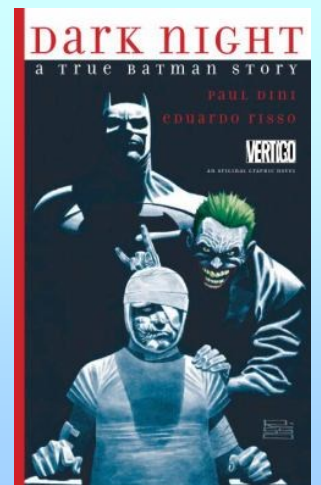


[Dark Night: a True Batman Story](#)

Paul Dini

Author Paul Dini tells his personal story of physical and psychological recovery after being seriously beaten while walking home.

I grew up watching the animated Batman cartoons that Dini created in the 90s. It's fascinating to see how those fictional characters became very real players in the author's personal struggles.
~Zac's pick



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Adult Graphic Novels

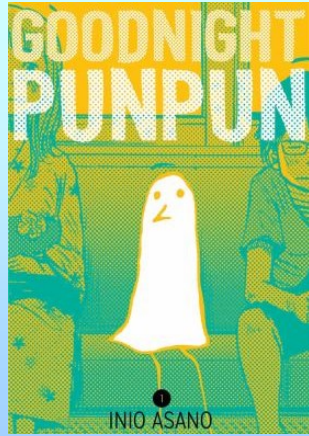
Goodnight Punpun

Inio Asano

This manga centers around Onodera Punpun (drawn as a mostly formless bird to project a neutral character) as he grows up in a very dysfunctional family.

There's much complexity in Punpun's family situation, and this manga does not hesitate to show the darker side of life and dabble in very serious topics. It is at once a heavy and delightful read.

~Zac's pick



We Stand on Guard

Brian K. Vaughan

In a dystopian future, Canada has been attacked by its aggressive neighbors to the south. One group of Canadian citizens dares to defy the American invaders.

The book's premise drew me in, and it works really well in this short, one-volume format. Overall, it was the gritty art style (a little reminiscent of Frank Miller's Robocop) that kept me fully engaged to the end.

~Zac's pick



Adult Nonfiction

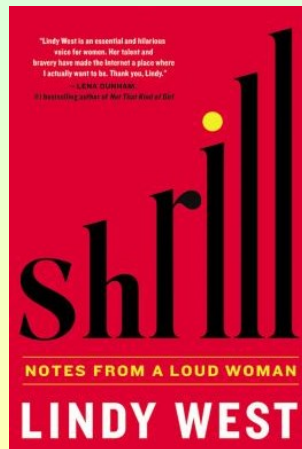
Shrill: Notes from a Loud Woman

Lindy West

Shrill is an uproarious memoir, a feminist rallying cry in a world that thinks gender politics are tedious and that women, especially feminists, can't be funny.

This book seriously changed my life. I gained confidence in my body, my voice, and my own thoughts and opinions. I can't really put into words what this book means to me; I just want you to read it now. Lindy is a Seattle writer and is pretty much the best.

~Carol's pick



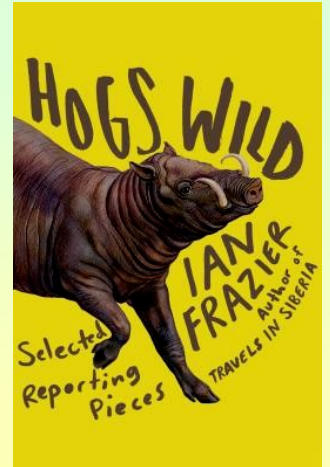
Hogs Wild

Ian Frazier

A decade's worth of Frazier's delightful essays in which he goes wherever his curiosity takes him. Whether the subject is wild hogs (they're gaining ground!), or making a Styrofoam substitute from fungus, he makes the reader his willing companion.

I enjoyed (or was terrified by — Asian carp — oh no) all of these essays, but I loved learning about Dutch artist Theo Jansen and his strandbeests.

~Eileen's pick



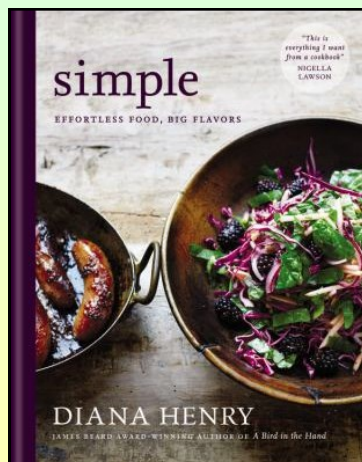
Simple: Effortless Food, Big Flavors

Diana Henry

Another wonderful cookbook by James Beard Award winning author Henry. You may need to go to the grocery store first, but these recipes are worth it. And yes, once you have what you need on hand, they are simple.

I love how Henry encourages home cooks to expand their flavor options. Her recipes are easy to follow, too.

~Eileen's pick



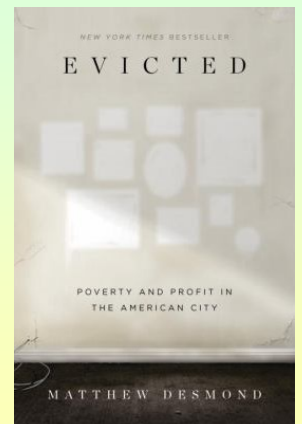
Evicted

Matthew Desmond

Desmond spent four months interviewing poor inner-city families of Milwaukee who were dealing with eviction from poorly maintained units owned by slumlords. Most were spending 70% or more of their income on rent, making their lives very difficult.

Evicted has three distinct sections. The majority tells the individual stories of these people. There is a section of national facts, figures, and many ideas for solutions. Wrapping up this excellent book is the author's own experiences with his research

~Elizabeth's pick



Adult Nonfiction

[Lust and Wonder](#)

Augusten Burroughs

In another chapter of Burroughs life, (what happened after *Dry*), he delves into his love-life. After he settles for years in a bland but stable relationship, the lies he's been telling himself surface, and he endeavors to see more clearly.

Each time I read a book by Burroughs I hesitate first, since it's not my usual fare, but then I remember why I love his books. He still has it: honesty, humor, depth, and he really knows how to tell his story!

~Elizabeth's pick



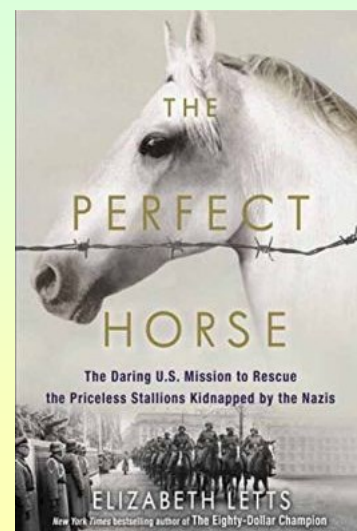
[The Perfect Horse: the Daring U.S. Mission to Rescue the Priceless Stallions Kidnapped by the Nazis](#)

Elizabeth Letts

This book traces the lesser-known efforts of Hitler to build a master race of the finest purebred horses, and the heroic achievements of American soldiers to rescue them.

I loved her other book entitled *The Eighty Dollar Champion*.

~Leslie's pick



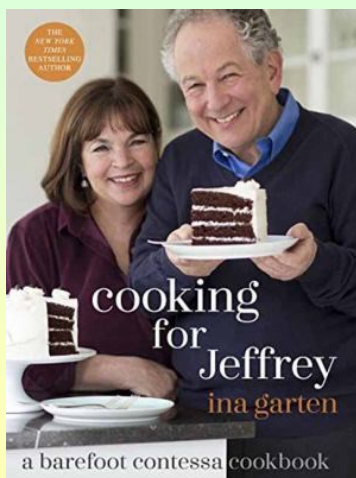
[Cooking For Jeffrey](#)

Ina Garten

Ina's most personal cookbook yet, *Cooking for Jeffrey* is filled with the recipes Jeffrey and their friends request most often, as well as charming stories from Ina and Jeffrey's many years together.

Ina always includes gorgeous photos and foolproof recipes. I have already tried a few and they are winners.

~Leslie's pick



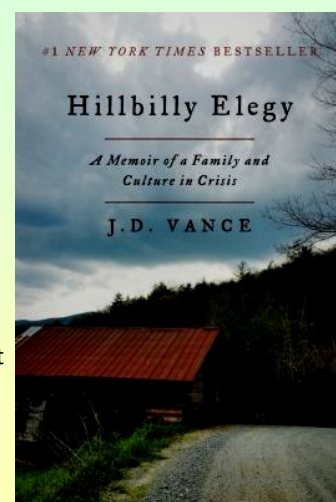
[Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis](#)

J.D. Vance

One young man's journey from a poverty-stricken area of Ohio to the elite halls of Yale Law School.

Far from being a feel-good story of 'bootstraps' upward mobility, most of the discussion revolves around why his case is so rare for individuals growing up in Rust Belt and Appalachian towns. It's a powerful look at the effects of generational poverty.

~Lisa's pick



[Simple Matters: Living With Less and Ending Up With More](#)

Erin Boyle

The author explains that living in small apartments all her life has forced her to pare down and keep only the items that she really loves.

Of all the books I've been reading on organization lately, this has been one of my favorites. The simple and beautiful design of the book is a good representation of the author's main message.

~Liz's pick



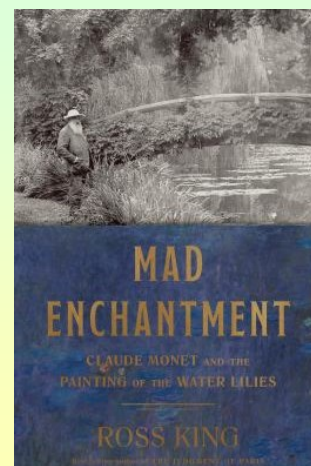
[Mad Enchantment: Claude Monet and the Painting of the Water Lilies](#)

Ross King

King masterfully chronicles the story of the creation of the Water Lilies, even as Monet was challenged with aging, failing eyesight, the loss of his wife, and the advancing horrors of World War I.

This is a mesmerizing story of an artist's creative vision and process as well as the challenges Monet overcame in his 30-year effort to paint his magnificent masterpiece at Giverny.

~Pat's pick



Adult Nonfiction

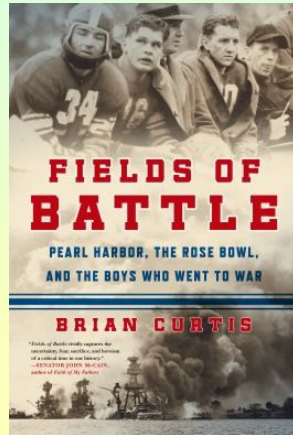
Fields of Battle: Pearl Harbor, the Rose Bowl, and the Boys Who Went to War

Brian Curtis

Curtis connects two seemingly unrelated events: the Pearl Harbor attack and, a few weeks later, the Rose Bowl — played in Durham, North Carolina, because more air strikes were feared on the West Coast.

This detailed intersection of sport and war in World War II is gripping, occasionally tragic, but always rewarding — filled with stories of real life champions in sport who soon became warriors in battle.

~Pat's pick



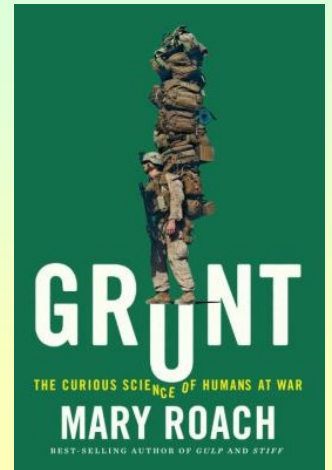
Grunt: The Curious Science of Humans at War

Mary Roach

Roach examines the odd intersection between science and the military with surreal and humorous results through interviews with the 'experts' in the field.

You have to admire the author's gung ho attitude and ability to keep a straight face when investigating things like caffeinated meat, army fashion and maggot therapy.

~Richard's pick



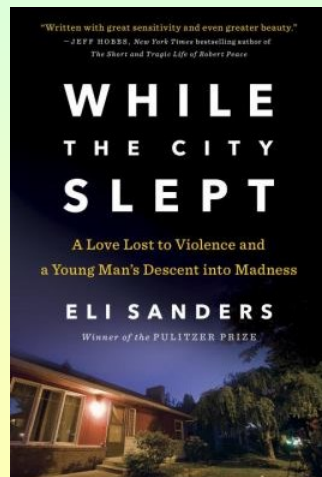
While the City Slept

Eli Sanders

In 2009, Isaiah Kalebu broke into a home in the South Park neighborhood of Seattle, and brutally raped and attempted to kill two women. Sanders tries to explain how Isaiah's untreated mental illness led him to Teresa and Jennifer's house.

This is a new classic in true crime, depicting the overpowering love between the two women and providing a rational voice for change.

~Sarah's pick



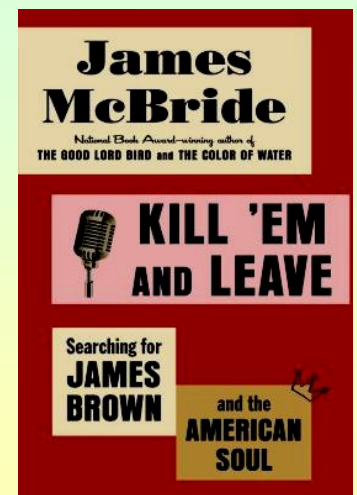
Kill 'Em and Leave

James McBride

James McBride sets off to explore the roots of the iconic soul legend, James Brown.

This is a lyrical account of the racial environments that produced a legend.

~Sarah's pick



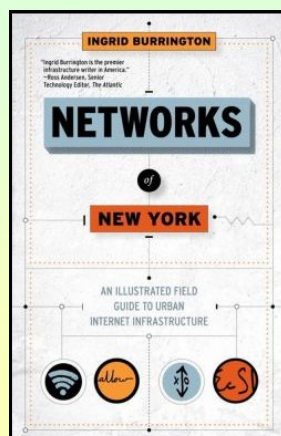
Networks of New York: an Illustrated Field Guide to Urban Internet Infrastructure

Ingrid Burrington

Behind our Internet connection on our phones, tablets, laptops, televisions, and refrigerators is a vast system of hardware, cabling, and radio waves that join forces to make the whole thing work.

Despite the New York City setting, this book deals with the same infrastructure used across the US. The author breaks dense technicalities into digestible chunks, so you'll never look at a radio tower or traffic camera the same way again.

~Zac's pick



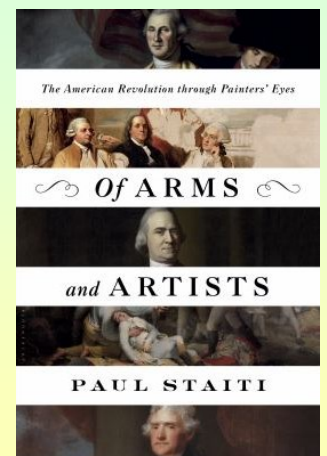
Of Arms and Artists: the American Revolution through Painters' Eyes

Paul Staiti

Chronicles the American Revolution through the stories of the five great artists whose paintings animated the new American Republic: Charles Willson Peale, John Singleton Copley, John Trumbull, Benjamin West, and Gilbert Stuart.

The stories of these five artists and their vision of America during the Revolution is a fascinating study of the effect of history on art, and art's ability to shape our view of history.

~Pat's pick



Young Adult Fiction

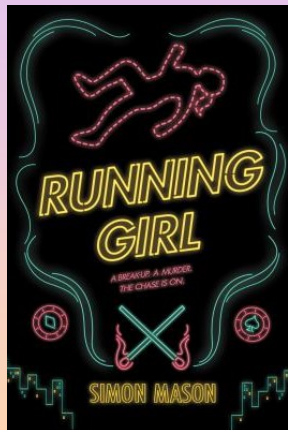
Running Girl

Simon Mason

Garvie Smith is 16 with a genius level IQ who cannot be bothered with school; he smokes and hangs out with the bad boys. But when 15 year-old Chloe Dow is murdered, Garvie comes up against the ambitious D.I. Singh — and both are determined to solve the murder.

I was so ready for a mystery I could devour, and was surprised to find myself flying through this page-turner. Garvie is an unlikeable main character, but that was actually part of his charm. If that doesn't make sense, you need to read this!

~Carol's pick



As Old as Time

Liz Braswell

What if Belle's mother cursed the Beast? That tagline was all I needed to know — I had to read this book, so that's all I'm giving you.

I read this fresh take on *Beauty and the Beast*, one of my favorite tales of all time, completely in one day (literally could not sleep until I'd read the last page)

~Carol's pick



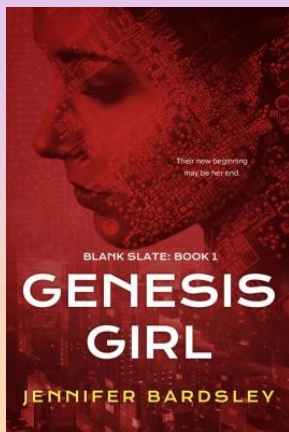
Genesis Girl

Jennifer Bardsley

Blanca has never been online and doesn't even know how to text. Her lack of a virtual footprint makes her extremely valuable, and upon graduation, Blanca and those like her are sold to the highest bidders.

A dystopian novel for those (like me) who dislike dystopian novels. I was so invested in Blanca's story that I didn't want it to end. The author will be here in 2017 as part of Everett Reads! So read this while you can!

~Carol's pick



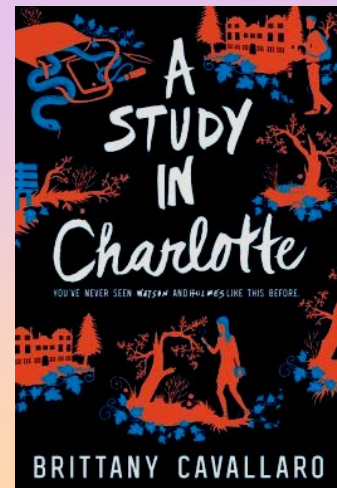
A Study in Charlotte: a Charlotte Holmes Novel

Brittany Cavallaro

Charlotte and Jamie, descendants of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson and students at a Connecticut boarding school, team up to solve a murder mystery.

Anything relating to Sherlock Holmes is always a sure bet with me. What made this book stand out was how real the characters felt and how the author handled addiction.

~Carol's pick



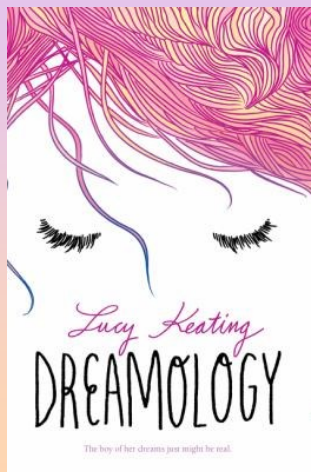
Dreamology

Lucy Keating

Experiencing dreams about her soul mate all of her life, Alice meets the real boy, Max, when she moves to a new school and finds that their real relationship is more complicated than their dream one.

I've always been obsessed with the fantasy that you could dream about real people without having ever met them, and maybe even communicate with them in the dream. This book explores that idea, with a twist you won't see coming.

~Carol's pick



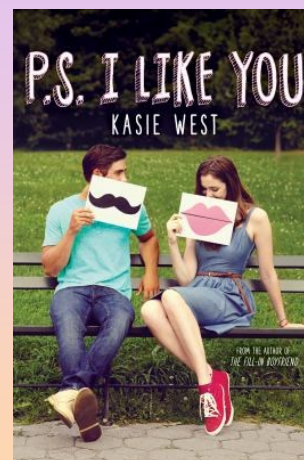
P.S. I Like You

Kasie West

Every day in chemistry class Lily Abbott is finding notes left to her by a mystery boy, love letters really, and she hopes they are from Lucas, her crush. So when she finds out who really wrote them, she's shocked and unsure about how to respond.

I used to pass notes when I was younger, and so I'm predisposed to enjoy stories like this. While high school tropes abound, I was surprised at the twist at the end and want a re-read. If you want to swoon, read this book!

~Carol's pick



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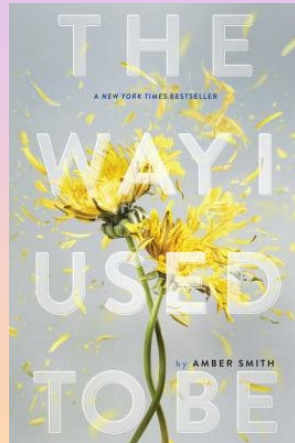
The Way I Used to Be

Amber Smith

Eden is a freshman in high school when her brother's best friend sneaks into her room at night and rapes her, turning her life upside down. She knows she should tell someone but the time is never right, so she attempts to deal with it on her own.

Eden's efforts to toughen herself and test her level of damage by experimenting with an older boy ring true and accurate. Told in four sections that represent her four years of high school, Eden's story, all too common, is so important to hear.

~Elizabeth's pick



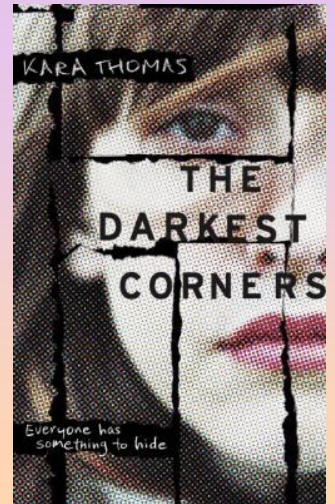
The Darkest Corners

Kara Thomas

Tessa travels back to her childhood hometown to visit her father who is very ill in prison, but instead gets entangled in a murder mystery in which she played a part 10 years before. Did she and ex-friend Callie help convict the wrong man?

In addition to plenty of suspense and mystery, I enjoyed Tessa's seemingly average character who, despite her challenging past, shows real determination to once and for all learn the true identity of the Ohio River Monster.

~Elizabeth's pick



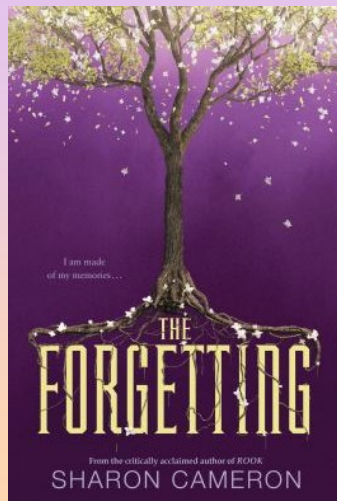
The Forgetting

Sharon Cameron

Every 12 years, the settlers of the colony of Canaan lose their memories. Otherwise, life on their beautiful planet would be almost perfect.

I'm always on the lookout for unique science fiction for teens. Something that varies from the current dystopian "formula."

~Emily's pick



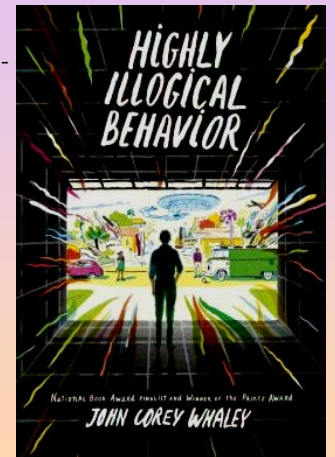
Highly Illogical Behavior

John Corey Whaley

Solomon, a teenager with severe anxiety and agoraphobia has figured out what he needs to do to survive — never leave the house. It's all going fine until Lisa bursts into his life, bent on helping Solomon, and winning a college scholarship in the process.

This novel manages to tell a very funny coming of age story about friendship, love, and all the awkwardness of being a teenager while also talking about mental illness in a respectful and enlightening manner.

~Jesse's pick



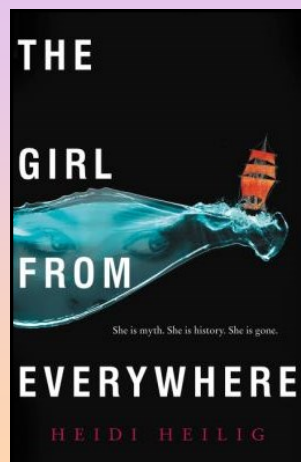
The Girl from Everywhere

Heidi Heilig

Nix has the power to sail anywhere: to the future, the past, and even into mythical worlds. Now she must decide whether to help her father sail back in time and save her mother's life, even if doing so might threaten Nix's very existence.

This book has such a fresh, creative premise. It is a joy to slowly unpeel the layers of Nix's past in this story that is one part swashbuckling adventure and one part historical mystery.

~Jesse's pick



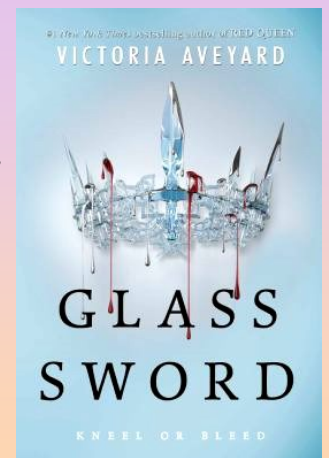
Glass Sword

Victoria Aveyard

A struggle between a tyrannical empire and a rebel army, who are separated by blood. The sequel to an equally compelling series beginner, Glass Sword showcases the best and worst of people in the tragedies of war, in ways both honest and heart-wrenching.

Amazing characters, engaging plot, and it takes place in a truly unique world. 10/10 would recommend.

~Sammy's pick



Young Adult Fiction: Graphic Novels

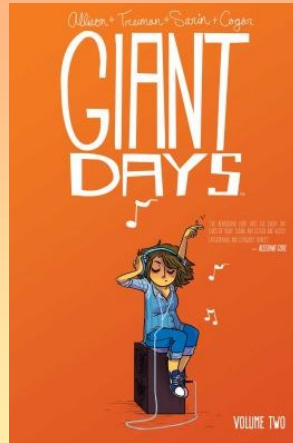
Giant Days

John Allison

Best friends Susan, Esther, and Daisy are rounding out their first semester at university where they find out college is more than academics. Add pub-hopping, hookups, breakups and political scandal — this might be the most eventful semester ever.

The ongoing saga of friendship and personal discovery with laugh-out-loud humor (or humour, since John Allison is English) never fail to impress me and capture my undivided attention. If you've never read a comic book, start at volume 1 and thank me later!

~Carol's pick



Goldie Vance

Hope Larson

Goldie wants to one day become the in-house detective at the resort where she lives with her dad, the manager. When the current detective encounters a case he can't crack, he agrees to mentor Goldie in exchange for her help solving the mystery.

Goldie is the girl I always wanted to be: she gets to work with her best friends, drive other people's cars (she's a valet), and solve mysteries on the side. Mix adventure, mystery, and a dash of 1960s Florida — Welcome to the Crossed Palms Resort!

~Carol's pick



Patsy Walker aka Hellcat Volume 1: Hooked on a Feline

Kate Leth

Patsy Walker returns to the spotlight in her first solo ongoing series since the 60s!

I know literally nothing about the old-school Patsy Walker. But I do know that our modern lady works as a PI for lawyer She-Hulk and fights crime as Hellcat. There are tons of fun and puns thanks to legend Kate Leth. Lighthearted and witty — pick this up today.

~Carol's pick



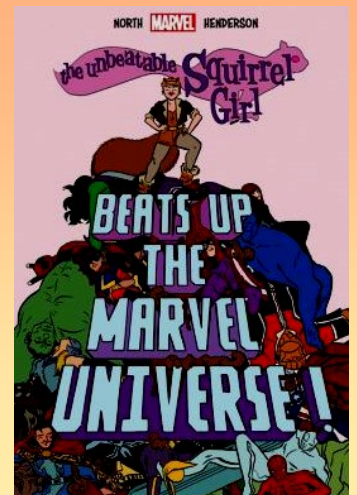
The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl Beats Up the Marvel Universe

Ryan North and Erica Henderson

In this standalone story, Squirrel Girl will encounter her most unbeatable, powerful, and dangerous enemy — herself!

If you haven't read *The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl*, this is your chance to try it out without having to know what's what. Funny and outrageous, Squirrel Girl will leave you in stitches.

~Carol's pick



One-Punch Man

ONE

An ordinary guy decides to be a hero and discovers that he can defeat anyone with just one punch. Unfortunately, no one takes him seriously or believes that he got his powers by sticking to a simple training routine.

The series uses a lot of deadpan humor and is very self-aware. Each volume is a very quick read (20-30 minutes maximum), which for me, is a definite plus.

~Zac's pick



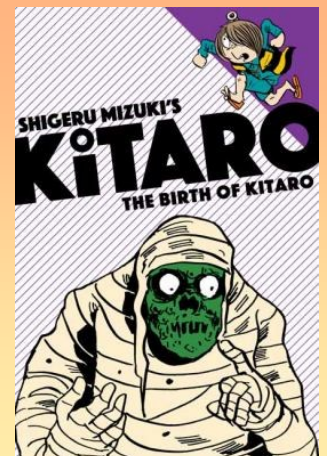
Birth of Kitaro

Shigeru Mizuki (translated by Zack Davisson)

This volume introduces Kitaro and includes a few additional stories in a very accessible format. Kitaro, created in the late 1960s and a mainstay in Japanese culture, exists in a world of Japanese folklore.

The detail and explanation of yokai and Japanese folklore is both entertaining and highly informative. Mizuki's storytelling is a treat for readers of all ages.

~Zac's pick



Children's Fiction

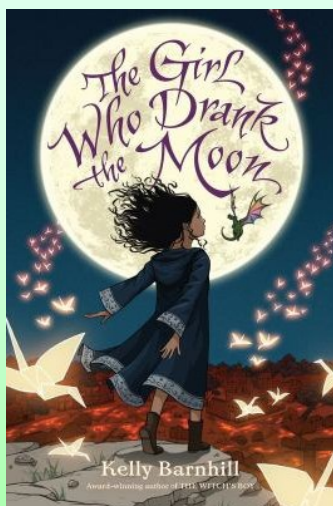
[The Girl Who Drank the Moon](#)

Kelly Regan Barnhill

An epic fantasy about a young girl raised by a witch, a swamp monster, and a Perfectly Tiny Dragon, who must unlock the powerful magic buried deep inside her.

I made myself slow down while reading this book. It wasn't just about finishing the story; it was a world with rich characters and imagery. I enjoyed how critical thinking, empathy, and legend were interwoven in this magical fantasy.

~Andrea's pick



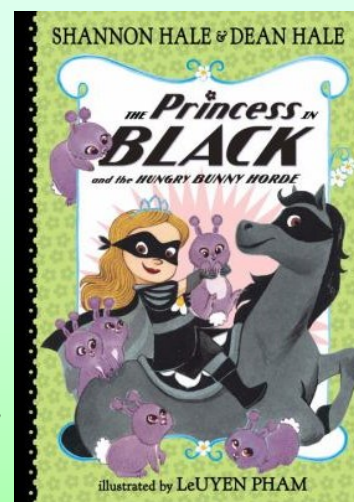
[The Princess in Black and the Hungry Bunny Horde](#)

Shannon Hale & Dean Hale

It's a case of monstrous cuteness as the Princess in Black encounters her biggest challenge yet: a field overrun by adorable bunnies.

The Princess in Black series just right for children almost ready for chapter books. With bright and colorful illustrations, short chapters, and an appealing plot, the books will entertain readers and make them want more.

~Andrea's pick



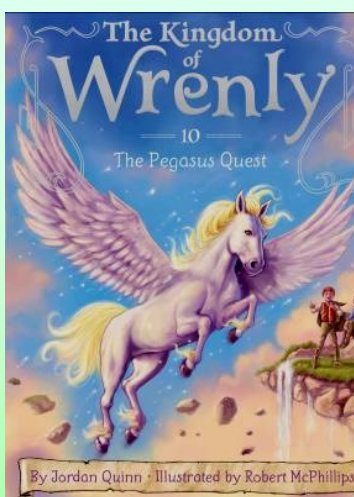
[Kingdom of Wrenly: Pegasus Quest](#)

Jordan Quinn

As Lucas and Clara set out to investigate some mysterious happenings in Wrenly, they discover a horse with wings that is lost and in danger.

This is an adventurous beginning chapter book series, with the right balance of illustrations and excitement to keep a new reader going.

~Andrea's pick



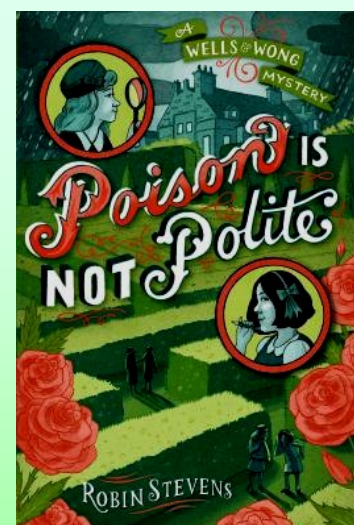
[Poison is Not Polite: a Wells & Wong Mystery](#)

Robin Stevens

A tea party takes a poisonous turn, leaving Daisy and Hazel with a new mystery to solve in the second novel of the Wells & Wong Mystery series.

Book 2 in a series I'm obsessed with takes us back to 1930s England with boarding school besties Daisy Wells and Hazel Wong. Sort of a Sherlock Holmes for middle grade readers, it'll capture your interest and heart.

~Carol's pick



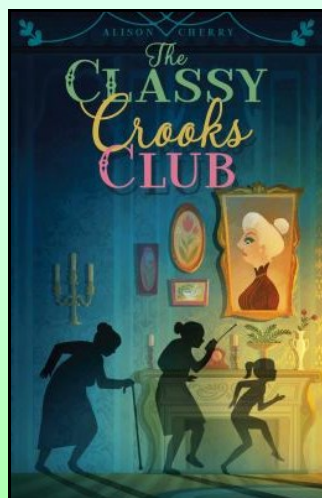
[The Classy Crooks Club](#)

Alison Cherry

Twelve-year-old AJ is dreading spending the summer with her uber-strict grandmother — that is, until she's recruited to join Grandma Jo's madcap band of thieves.

Entrapment meets The Golden Girls! What more do you need?

~Carol's pick



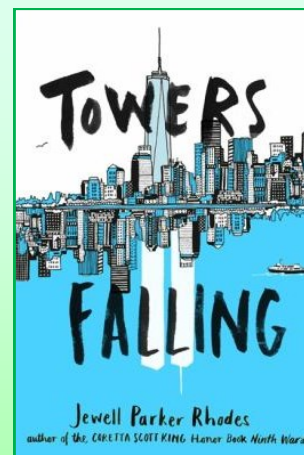
[Towers Falling](#)

Jewell Parker Rhodes

Fifth grader Deja is in a new school, and it's a good one for the first time. That's the only thing going right in her life: she lives in a shelter; her dad is sick, and her mom, stressed. It's 15 years after 9/11, and she is just learning about the tragedy.

I listened to the audiobook version which is read by the author. While the narration is a little shrill at times, I appreciated the intensity of feeling the author put into Deja's voice. It is a believable tone for someone who has had a tough life.

~Elizabeth's pick



Children's Fiction

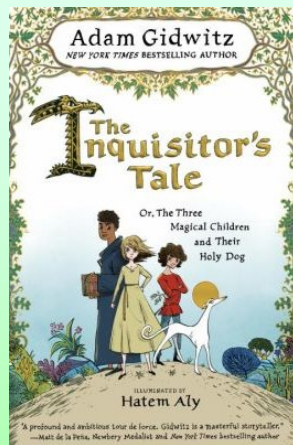
The Inquisitor's Tale or, the Three Magical Children and Their Holy Dog

Written by Adam Gidwitz, Illustrated by Hatem Aly

In the year 1242, a peasant girl and her recently resurrected dog become unlikely friends with a suddenly orphaned Jewish boy and a giant of a boy who is studying to be a monk, and just happens to be black.

We don't always see a lot of racial and cultural diversity in children's historical fiction, and there are reasons for that. Historically, not all countries were as diverse as they are today.

~Emily's pick

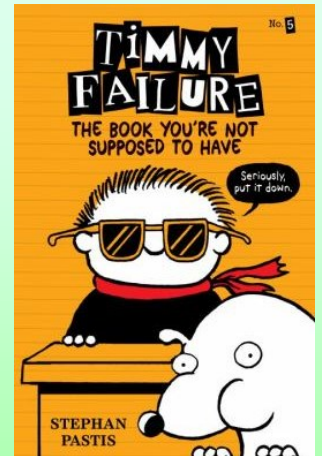


The Book You're Not Supposed to Have (Timmy Failure Series, #5) Stephan Pastis

Timmy and his imaginary(?) polar bear friend, Total, are amateur detectives with good intentions but not much common sense. So, Timmy's mother insists he close down his detective agency, Total Failure.

This author also writes and illustrates the comic strip *Pearls Before Swine*. The humor in this book is dry, wry, and full of sly cultural satire.

~Emily's pick



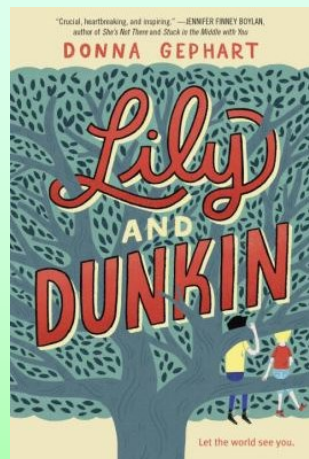
Lily and Dunkin

Donna Gephart

Lily is a transgender girl whose differences make her a target. Dunkin is desperate to fit in and hide his bi-polar disorder. After meeting one summer, they must figure out if their friendship can survive the cruel realities that surround them.

This is a beautiful, heartfelt and narratively compelling story. But it is also a marvelously empathetic work that does an incredible job placing the reader in the shoes of these two unique, resilient characters.

~Jesse's pick



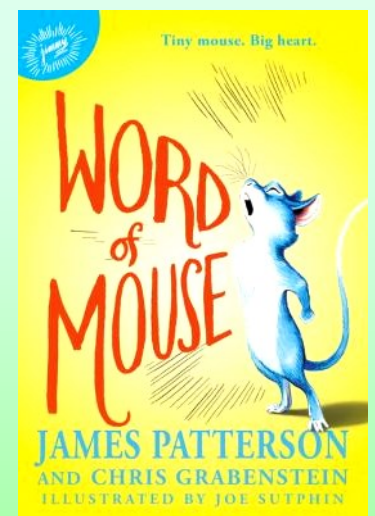
Word of Mouse

James Patterson and Chris Grabenstein

Isaiah is a very smart mouse that gets separated from his family while escaping the "horrible place." He joins another mischief of mice that help him in a grand adventure to rescue his family.

It was a really fun book, and has a happy ending (of course!) Kids will enjoy Isaiah's "can do" attitude, and his optimism and words of wisdom are inspiring.

~Linda's pick



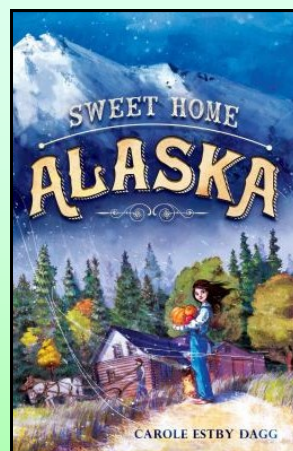
Sweet Home Alaska

Carole Estby Dagg

It's 1934 and times are tough, but opportunity and adventure wait when young Terpsichore and her family move to Palmer, Alaska. Terpsichore meets adversity with determination, gaining community support and new friendships along the way.

A delightful and witty story interjected with historical facts. Terpsichore's youthful spirit is refreshing. She brings life and enthusiasm to her new surroundings.

~Margo's pick



Ghosts

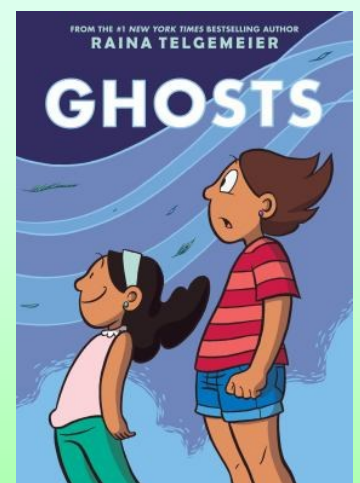
Raina Telgemeier

Another hit about family life, this time about cystic fibrosis and moving to a new town.

Raina Telgemeier tells and draws such great stories about growing up around the same time I was growing up, in the 80s and 90s.

It is heartwarming, fun, endlessly optimistic — I bought my own copy so I can re-read it whenever I miss my family.

~Julie's and Carol's pick



Children's Fiction: Picture Books

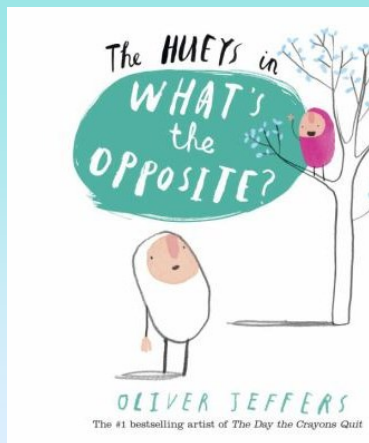
The Hueys in What's the Opposite?

Oliver Jeffers

Quirky egg-shaped creatures known as the Hueys explore the concept of opposites.

It's hard to make a concept book interesting, but Oliver Jeffers is clearly up for the challenge. His adorable art and elliptical story arc add tremendously to the book's teaching value.

~Alan's pick



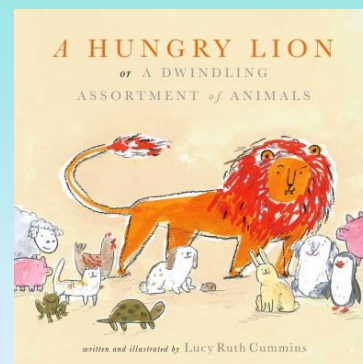
A Hungry Lion, or, a Dwindling Assortment of Animals

Lucy Ruth Cummins

Members of a large group of animals, including a penguin, two rabbits, and a koala, disappear at an alarming rate but the hungry lion remains.

Takes the "once upon a time" story structure and twists it until the narrator becomes part of the story, and the lion. Really, almost too clever, but lots of fun for older toddlers and preschoolers as they "get" what's going on.

~Alan's pick



When Spring Comes

Kevin Henkes & Laura Dronzek

Animals and children watch as the world transforms from the dark and dead of winter to a full and blooming spring.

Henkes and Dronzek previously collaborated on *Birds*, a lovely paean to nature delivered in a style both exacting and emotionally satisfying. Henkes delivers a poignant message for older toddlers and preschoolers.

~Alan's pick



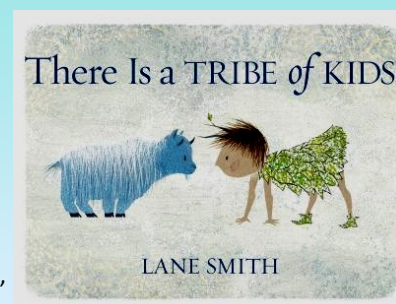
There is a Tribe of Kids

Lane Smith

Simple text follows a young boy and the many animals he meets on his adventure through the jungle.

Connecting kids with nature is critical for their spirit as well as education. This perfect little book runs somewhere between an adventure and an education, with expressive images of the boy meshing with different creatures until a satisfying end.

~Alan's pick



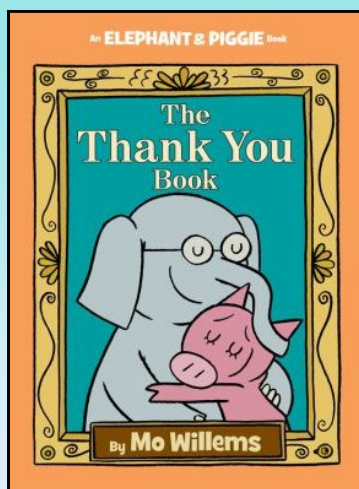
The Thank You Book

Mo Willems

This is the very last *Elephant and Piggie* book to ever be written, and it is a wonderful one.

I used it at all of the elementary schools I visited to talk about summer reading. Thank YOU for being a reader!

~Leslie's pick



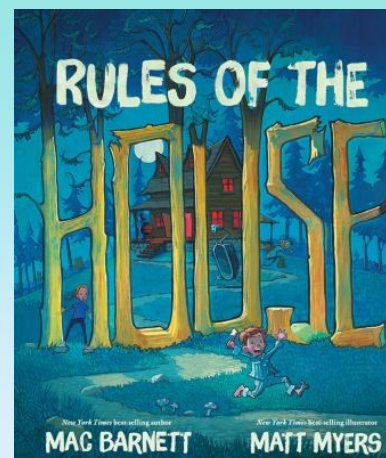
Rules of the House

Mac Barnett

Ian always follows the rules and his sister, Jenny, never does. But when Jenny angers some monsters while breaking all the rules of their vacation house in the woods, Ian first runs away, then realizes there should be a rule about protecting your sister.

There's a rule against pinching! It's a tad bit scary but that's okay.

~Leslie's pick



Children's Fiction: Picture Books

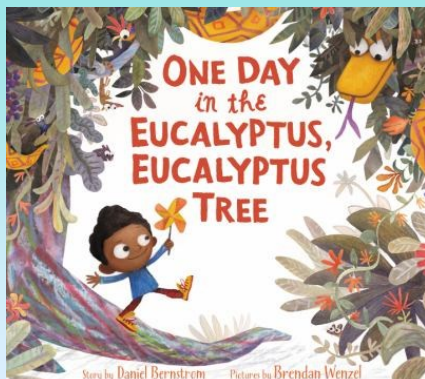
One Day in the Eucalyptus, Eucalyptus Tree

Daniel Bernstrom

Gobbled by a snake, a crafty boy finds a way out of his predicament by encouraging the snake to eat an increasing number of animals.

This is another slightly scary book, and it's well written.

~Leslie's pick



Extremely Cute Animals Operating Heavy Machinery

David Gordon

Cute animals are bullied by other animals and then solve the problem in an extremely unique and surprising way.

The title grabbed me, the story was creative and unexpected, and you learn the use of the word extremely, if you didn't already know it.

~Margaret's pick



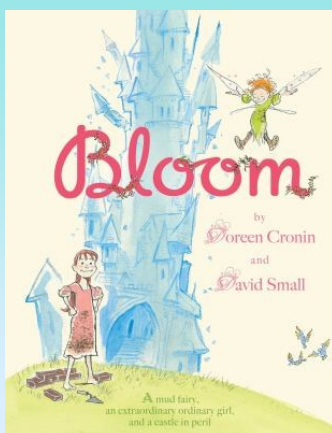
Bloom

Doreen Cronin and David Small

This is an encouraging fairytale about an unusual fairy, a crumbling castle, and who can finally rebuild the castle before it's too late!

I've always loved fairytales, and it's been a long time since I've read a new and very different one like this story. Very creative and appealing; encourages confidence in one's abilities as well. Fun illustrations besides!

~Margaret's pick



Gingerbread Christmas

Jan Brett

It is the well-known story about the gingerbread man but done with Brett's own creative and unexpected twist to the story, with a little search thrown in for extra fun.

Jan Brett's books are all very special, with their amazingly detailed and colorful illustrations, as well as engaging stories. I'm very happy to see a new addition to her wonderful collection for children to love.

~Margaret's pick



Children's & YA Nonfiction

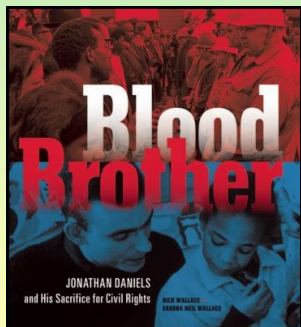
Blood Brother: Jonathan Daniels and His Sacrifice for Civil Rights

Rich Wallace and Sandra Neil Wallace

The story of Jonathan Daniels, who travelled from New Hampshire to Alabama in 1965 to stand up against oppression, register black voters, and march with other heroes of the Civil Rights movement.

This is a taut, thrilling and terrifying account of Daniels experiences in the Deep South. This biography does an excellent job of depicting the courage of Daniels and his comrades and the horrible abuse that they fought against.

~Jesse's pick



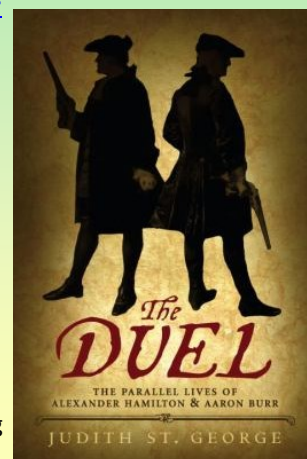
The Duel: The Parallel Lives of Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr

Judith St. George

Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr were two men who seemed drawn to each other, as if by gravity. This book explores their lives, from their early days fighting the British, to their infamous final meeting on the shores of the Hudson River.

It's the year of Hamilton! St. George does an incredible job detailing the lives of these notorious frenemies, separating myth from truth, and showing the mirrored nature of their lives.

~Jesse's pick



Children's & YA Nonfiction

National Geographic Kids

Awesome 8

National Geographic Kids

Introduces the top eight examples of specific subjects, from wicked water slides and perilous predators to remarkable ruins and weirdest wonders.

This book is perfect for a curious mind with a short attention span. Each two-page spread is a list with eight awesome things in each category. There are 50 picture-packed lists that will capture the attention and interest of children and adults alike.

~Andrea's pick



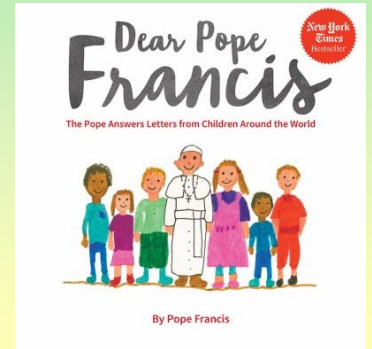
Dear Pope Francis

Pope Francis

Questions written by children from across the world are presented to Pope Francis — and the Pope himself answers each letter.

This is a beautiful book that is not just for children or Catholics. In very simple words Pope Francis answers some very difficult questions. Wonderful!

~Leslie's pick



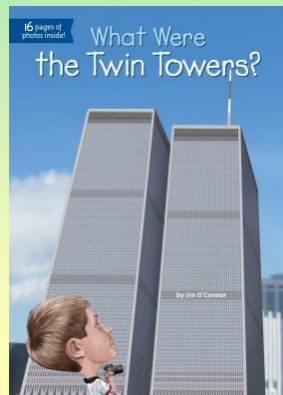
The "What Was" Series

Various Authors

The "Who Was" biography series was so successful that now there's an historical series of books about the San Francisco Earthquake and other events.

I like this series because kids love them! They're interesting reads and good for AR points.

~Leslie's pick



Music

Adore Life

Savages

Adore Life is a solid rock album that brings to mind the likes of Joan Jett, The Pixies, and Fugazi.

I really appreciated the progression of the album; it has the ability to rip things apart and then slow everything down with a lyrical and melodious groove.

~Lisa's pick



Tower Music

Joseph Bertolozzi

A hard album to define! This album was made by using the Eiffel Tower as a percussion instrument.

The music is somehow lively and minimal at the same time. It really is impressive how intricate each track is, and the range of sounds the artist was able to create using the iconic landmark.

~Lisa's pick



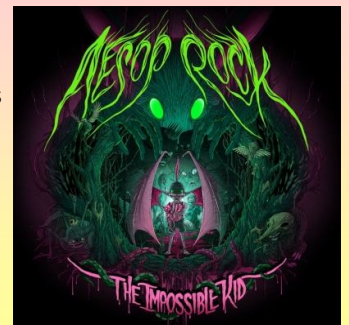
The Impossible Kid

Aesop Rock

This is the kind of hip-hop album that you'll listen to a hundred times and probably notice something different each time.

Intricate, powerful rhymes do acrobatics with the English language, making the listener sit up and take notice.

~Lisa's pick



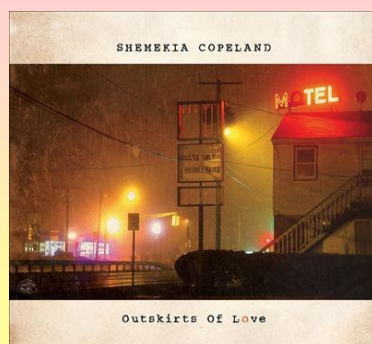
Outskirts of Love

Shemekia Copeland

A fiery, driving mix of blues, rock, and soul.

It's the type of album you want to listen to on repeat.

~Lisa's pick



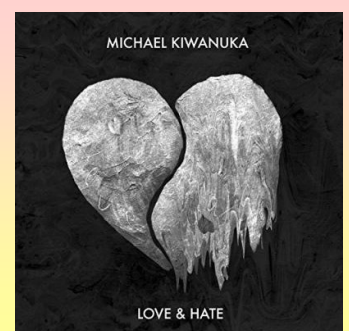
Love & Hate

Michael Kiwanuka

First and foremost a soul album, but with hints of rock, blues, gospel, and even a kind of classic rock feel at times.

It's very beautiful, grand, and political.

~Lisa's pick



Music

Everybody Wants

The Struts

Rock music with toe-tapping melodies, clever lyrics, and attitude.

ROCK IS NOT DEAD. Anyone who has told you that needs this CD. Lead singer Luke Spiller has an amazing vocal range, guitarist Adam Slack has some hot licks, and the whole band is covered in glitter and yelling at me — and I love it.

~Carol's pick



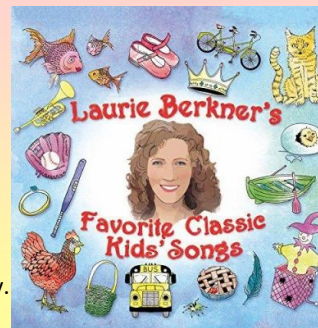
Laurie Berkner's Favorite Classic Kids' Songs

Laurie Berkner Band

Laurie Berkner presents a treasure trove of well-loved traditional children's songs plus six of her most popular originals.

This is classic kid's music at its best! From *Alouette* to *Zodiac*, these songs have great arrangements and delivery. Not just kiddie music, you'll love it too. Fantastic!

~Leslie's pick



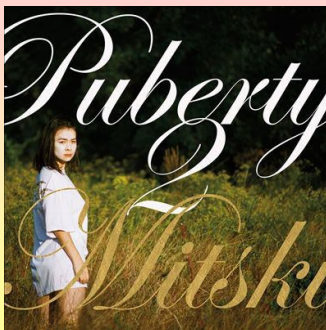
Puberty 2

Mitski

Gritty but lovely indie rock.

Mitski Miyawaki explores love, loss, anxiety, and depression in this emotionally-raw album.

~Lisa's pick



Habib Galbi

A-Wa

Three sisters with a love for electronic music, reggae, and Yemenite women's chants.

It's a really fun, upbeat, dancy album.

~Lisa's pick



No Manchester

Mexrrissey

A bit mariachi, a little bit rock and roll — all Morrissey.

I love the variety of artists and styles used to cover some very well-known Morrissey hits. Dedicated fans and those only slightly familiar with his work will find something to enjoy.

~Lisa's pick



Buenaventura

La Santa Cecilia

A fusion of Latin jazz, rock, Mexican folk music, rockabilly, and more.

Toe-tapping tracks are full of guitars, horns, accordion, and gutsy bluesy vocals in Spanish and English.

~Lisa's pick



Awo

uKanDanz

This group considers their style "Ethiopian Crunch Music," which is a wonderful combination of world music styles.

It's a thoroughly-satisfying mashup of metal and hard rock guitar riffs and power chords; a blues and jazz horn section; and amazing vocals that expressively wail, croon, and keen.

~Lisa's pick



LateNightTales

Ólafur Arnalds

Down-tempo dreamscapes with some trip-hop beats interspersed.

Fans of Bjork, Prefuse 73, and Sigur Rós would probably be into it. 'Icelandic' would be the best adjective to describe this album.

~Lisa's pick



Music

Blackstar

David Bowie

David Bowie's heavy, difficult, yet meditative industrial art-rock masterpiece recorded as he was dying from liver cancer.

Bowie recorded *Blackstar* to say goodbye. No one, including the musicians, knew this. They may have been distracted by this inspired genius incorporating hip-hop, jazz, folk, etc., into a stunning, sad, and beautifully dark album. Best of the year.

~Alan's pick



Good Times!

The Monkees

The Monkees reunite to create an album that sounds like the best of their 1960's output due mainly to excellent guest songwriters from Ben Gibbard to Andy Partridge.

Tuneful, hook-laden, and loaded with perfect pop songs, what's not to like? Plus, you get to hear the voices of the dearly departed Harry Nilsson and Davy Jones on 13 new songs. Much better than their last, dreadful 80's reunion.

~Alan's pick



DVDs

Everybody Wants Some!!

Directed by Richard Linklater

Richard Linklater (*Dazed and Confused* and *Boyhood*) hits it out of the park with this story of a freshman's move from constant adult supervision to a new exciting life with his skirt-chasing, rabbleroxing college baseball teammates in 1980s Texas.

The title (and movie poster) seemingly indicate dumbed-down, predictable shenanigans, but as author and director, Linklater has a bewitching touch which makes this comedy worth watching.

~Joyce's pick



Dark Matter: Season 1

Funimation Productions

Awoken from stasis with their memories erased, the crew of the spaceship Raza has to find out who they are and why everyone hates them so much as they rampage through the galaxy.

This TV series is classic over the top Sci Fi complete with a universe ruled by evil corporations, a sentient AI, self-repairing nanotechnology and, of course, space zombies (kind of).

~Richard's pick



The Fits

Directed by Anna Rose Holmer

Director Anna Rose Holmer's gripping feature debut is a psychological portrait of 11-year-old Toni (Royalty Hightower), a tomboy assimilating to a tight-knit dance team in Cincinnati.

The dreamy, beautifully syncopated movie — a coming-of-age tale — is extraordinarily watchable, made more so thanks to the thrillingly kinetic, fierce dancing.

~Joyce's pick



The Nice Guys

Directed by Shane Black

In 1970s Los Angeles, a mismatched pair of private eyes investigate a missing girl and the mysterious death of a porn star.

Director Shane "Lethal Weapon" Black uses action genre as background for brutally funny and incredibly twisting and twisted story performed with brio by Crowe as the brutal private eye and Gosling as his incompetent sidekick. Pure fun.

~Alan's pick



DVDs

Zootopia

Directed by Richard Moore

Zootopia city is a melting pot where animals from every environment live together. But when optimistic Officer Judy Hopps arrives, she discovers some are turning vicious.

A terrific film for old and young alike, *Zootopia* says as much about racism and bigotry as it does in believing in yourself. And it's masterfully done. And funny. Good for 8+
~Alan's pick

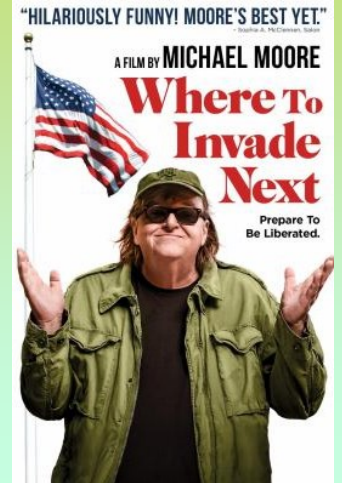


Where to Invade Next

Directed by Michael Moore

Presents the theory that the American dream, all but abandoned in the United States, has been adopted successfully in other countries, including Italy, France, Finland, Slovenia, Germany, Portugal, Norway, Tunisia, and Iceland.

Love him or hate him, agree with him or not, Moore is a brave filmmaker who knows how to craft a compelling film filled with evidence and lots of style and humor.
~Alan's pick



Legend

Directed by Brian Helgeland

The true story of the rise and fall of London's most notorious gangsters, Reggie and Ron Kray, both portrayed by Tom Hardy. This crime thriller takes viewers into the secret history of the 60s and the events that secured the infamy of the Kray twins.

Tom Hardy continues to be the best actor of his generation and he has so much to work with here: one brother is conflicted, complex, genteel, the other savage. Beyond this acting showcase, this is the best gangster film since *Goodfellas*. See it.
~Alan's pick



Deadpool

Directed by Tim Miller

The origin story of former Special Forces operative turned mercenary Wade Wilson, who after being subjected to a rogue experiment that leaves him with accelerated healing powers, adopts the alter ego Deadpool.

As a longtime fan of snark and a new fan of comic books, I was excited to see this on Valentine's Day with my husband. (My idea — it's totally a love story!) I loved every second; it has the best opening credits sequence EVER!
~Carol's pick



Crazy Ex-Girlfriend Season 1

Created by Rachel Bloom

A successful, driven and possibly crazy young woman impulsively gives up her partnership at a prestigious law firm and her upscale apartment in Manhattan in a desperate attempt to find love and happiness in suburban West Covina, California.

Hilarious, heartwarming, and utterly frustrating at times (Rebecca Bunch, what are you thinking?) this musical comedy is unlike any TV show I've ever seen. Season 2 just started, so now's the time to catch up with this award-winning show!
~Carol's pick



Hunt for the Wilderpeople

Directed by Taika Waititi

A defiant and troubled orphan finds himself on the run with his grizzled and very reluctant foster father in the wild New Zealand bush. With the two at the center of a national manhunt, they are forced to work together to survive.

This mismatched-buddy pursuit movie was directed by Taika Waititi, who directed/wrote/starred in one of my fave films from 2014, *What We Do in the Shadows*. It's an emotional story that has everything — drama, action and comedy!
~Joyce's and Leslie's pick

