

## **A Million Ways Home**

Dianna Dorisi Winget

Scholastic Press, 2014

242 pages

### **Summary:**

Poppy Parker has lived her entire life with her grandmother. But when her grandmother suffers a stroke and Poppy has no other family to turn to, she's shipped off to a children's center wondering if her grandmother will ever be well enough to care for her again. Poppy's life is flipped upside down when she is a witness to a horrible crime and is forced to hide out at the detective's mother's house. Life will never be the same for Poppy in this wonderfully touching book about loss, friendship, and change.

### **If You Liked This Book, Try:**

*A Handful of Stars* by Cynthia Lord

*Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin

### **WEBSITES:**

<http://diannawinget.com/> : for information about the author, other books she has written, and how to contact her

### **BOOKTALK:**

Poppy Parker is an impulsive twelve year old girl who's life has spun out of control when her grandmother, and legal guardian, suffers a stroke and has to be hospitalized. With no other family around, Poppy is sent off to a children's center where the showers are cold, the food is gross, and the air is stale. As if things can't get any worse, while sneaking away from the center one day to visit her grandmother, she witnesses a horrible crime and becomes the only person who can identify the suspect. Since Poppy's life is in danger, she is now forced into a "witness protection program", which consists of living with the detective in charge's mother and a host of rescue animals. Will Poppy's grandmother ever be well enough to take care of her again? Will the police catch the criminal that has made her life miserable, and if they do, will she have to go back to the horrible children's center again? Pick up a copy of *A Million Ways Home* to find out the answers to these questions and so much more!

Prepared by:

Michelle Woodyard, Rosewood Elementary, mwoodyard@richlandone.org

**Always, Abigail**  
Nancy J. Cavanaugh  
Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2014  
320 pages

**SUMMARY:**

Abigail dreams of being a pom-pom girl, but when sixth grade doesn't turn out the way she planned, she finds herself having to choose between the little bit of popularity she has left or being a real friend.

**IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Kate the Great, Except When She's Not*, Suzy Becker

*This Journal Belongs to Ratchet*, Nancy Cavanaugh

*Rebel McKenzie*, Candice Ransom

*Genie Wishes*, Elisabeth Dahl

*Roller Girl*, Victoria Jamieson

**WEBSITES:**

Nancy Cavanaugh, <http://www.nancyjcavanaugh.com/> , This website gives personal information about author, Nancy Cavanaugh, book information, school visits, contact information and access to her blogs.

Nancy J. Cavanaugh Talks with Roger, <http://www.hbook.com/2014/09/talks-with-roger/nancy-j-cavanaugh-talks-roger/#> , Roger Sutton, editor in chief of The Horn Book, interviews Nancy J. Cavanaugh about her book *Always, Abigail*.

Teaching Books, <http://www.teachingbooks.net/> , Educators will find detailed information about books, authors, and activities with books. This is a paid subscription, but can sign-up for a 30 daily trial.

**BOOKTALK:**

When Abigail's dreams of becoming a pom-pom girl are dashed, she finds herself in the unlikely situation of having to choose between her two best friends and the school's biggest outcast. *Always, Abigail* begins with Abigail and her two best friends, Alli and Cami, (a.k.a. AlliCam) poised for a long life of pom-poms and popularity. But for Abigail, her own insecurities and lack of confidence—coupled with her bad luck of being assigned to a different homeroom than AlliCam—make for a rough start to sixth grade. Abigail uses her list writing to calm herself down and keep her anxiety at bay, which is why she tells her story through lists and letters. Being assigned to a different homeroom than AlliCam is only the beginning of her bad luck. What makes it worse is that Miss Hendrick, (a.k.a. Old Hawk) is her homeroom teacher. Old Hawk is the toughest, strictest teacher at Crestdale Heights. But even that's not the worst of it. Old Hawk is also Abigail's language arts teacher, and Old Hawk's friendly letter assignment is what almost pushes Abigail over the edge. Old Hawk assigns Abigail to be friendly letter partners with Gabby Marco—the biggest outcast at Crestdale Heights. Being partners with Gabby is something that could ruin a person's life. Abigail's misery continues to grow as she feels herself being left out with AlliCam because of their inside jokes that don't include her. Abigail's lack of confidence about being good enough for poms grows until she's unsure if she'll even make the squad. To her surprise and relief, Abigail does well at tryouts. She's thrilled to see

her name posted on the squad roster. She's even more thrilled when the other girls tell her the asterisk by her name probably means she'll be named squad captain. Abigail finds out later what the asterisks really means—she's an alternate, which means she's really not a pom-pom girl at all. Her dreams of pom-poms and popularity are crushed in an instant, and as a result, she loses touch with AlliCam as they begin spending their time practicing poms and hanging out with the other girls on the squad.

Abigail finds herself with nothing to do and no one to do it with. So in an effort to earn some much-needed extra credit points from Old Hawk, she ends up helping her teacher clean out a cabinet in her classroom. Volunteering to help her teacher is bad enough, but what makes it worse is that Gabby Marco volunteers too. The two friendly letter partners, who aren't really friends at all, find themselves having to work very closely together. But to protect what little popularity she has left, Abigail keeps her distance from Gabby as best she can. Surprisingly though, the two girls find they have a common love of books, so they begin to connect as they sort through Old Hawk's pile of old picture books. Eventually Old Hawk has the two girls partnered up to do a storytelling for the kindergarten class down the hall. Abigail keeps her involvement with Gabby on the down low so that AlliCam and the other students don't realize the truth—that Abigail and Gabby are becoming more than just friendly letter partners. As Abigail and Gabby prepare for their first visit to the kindergarten class, they actually begin to enjoy spending time together. But just after their first storytelling session is a smash hit, Abigail's circumstances change drastically: one of the pom girls get injured and is out for the rest of the season. Abigail goes from being an alternate to being a real pom-pom girl—her dreams are finally coming true! (© 2014, Sourcebooks Jabberwocky [www.JabberwockyKids.com](http://www.JabberwockyKids.com))

Prepared by:

Donna Myles, Jackson School, [donna.myles@kcsdschools.net](mailto:donna.myles@kcsdschools.net)

## **Anybody Shining**

Frances O’Roark, Dowell

Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2014

228 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Arie Mae Sparks is a twelve year old girl that is growing up in a small mountain community in North Carolina in 1924. Although there are many other children living near her, she has not met anyone yet that she can relate to as a friend. She decides to write letters to her long lost cousin, Caroline, who she has never met, to find out if she is “the one.” Despite sending many letters, Caroline doesn’t write back. Arie Mae continues to write Caroline about her adventures with her school friends, her family, and the “songcatchers” that have started a new settlement school in their community. Will Caroline ever write her back and become the one true friend that she has been waiting for her whole life?

### **IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, TRY:**

*M.C. Higgins, The Great*, Virginia Hamilton

*Dovey Coe*, Frances Roark Dowell

*Shiloh*, Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

*Appalachia: The Voices of Sleeping Birds*, Cynthia Rylant

*When I Was Young in the Mountains*, Cynthia Rylant

*My Great Aunt Arizona*, Gloria Houston

### **WEBSITES:**

Frances O’Roark Dowell’s website: [www.francesdowell.com](http://www.francesdowell.com) This website has a nice biography section as well as information about her other novels and reviews of them.

National Barn Dance Radio: [www.radiolovers.com/pages/nationalbarndance.htm](http://www.radiolovers.com/pages/nationalbarndance.htm) This website will allow you to listen to the actual Tenth anniversary broadcast of National Barn Dance Radio, as featured in the book.

Youtube.com has many videos of folk artists explaining their crafts, examples of Appalachian music, and demonstrations of how to dance the Virginia Reel.

### **BOOKTALK:**

*Anybody Shining* is a story about the childhood adventures of Arie Mae Sparks, a spunky twelve-year-old girl growing up in a mountain community in North Carolina in 1924. She has many friends, but she longs to find her “one true friend.” So she decides to begin writing letters to her cousin, Caroline, whom she has never met, in hopes that she will become her best friend. The story is told mainly through Arie Mae’s letters to Caroline. Arie Mae tells her about her adventures and life in her small mountain community. The only problem with Arie’s plan is that Caroline is not writing back to her. Will she ever write her back and become her one true friend?

If you like historical fiction that is full of fun and adventure, as well as an occasional ghost story, then *Anybody Shining* is the book for you!

Prepared by:

Amy Blakely, E.B. Morse Elementary School, [ablakely@laurens55.org](mailto:ablakely@laurens55.org)

# **Eddie Red Undercover: Mystery on the Museum Mile**

Marcia Wells

HMH Books for Young Readers, 2015

256 pages

## **SUMMARY:**

Not many sixth-graders work undercover for the NYPD, but Edmund Xavier Lonnot, code name Eddie Red, is not just any sixth-grader. A “near-death ice cream experience” lands him as a material witness in the police station with his dad, where the NYPD first discovers Eddie's photographic memory and uncanny sketch-artist abilities. Things get dangerous when Eddie is recruited to help track down the infamous Picasso Gang that's casing NYC's famous Museum Mile.

## **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*The Girl From Felony Bay*, J.E. Thompson

*Masterminds*, Gordon Korman

*The Ghosts of Tupelo Landing*, Sheila Turnage

*Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer*, John Grisham

## **WEBSITES:**

Marcia Wells author website, <http://marciawellsauthor.com/> . This is the official author website for Marcia Wells which includes author biography, news, books, and ways to contact the author.

Marcos Calo illustrator website, <http://www.marcoscalo.com/> . This is the official illustrator website for Marcos Calo including examples of his illustrations and contact information.

## **BOOKTALK:**

Edward has a photographic memory! His special talent gets the attention of the NYPD, who need his help solving a series of art thefts. Using the codename “Eddie Red” he goes undercover with his best friend Jonah in order to help solve the crime! Will the case be too dangerous? Can a sixth-grade kid rely on his memory to catch the bad guys in time? Find out the answers to these questions as you read *Eddie Red Undercover: Mystery on the Museum Mile* by Marcia Wells.

Prepared by:

Michelle Weaver, Walker Gamble Elementary, [tmweaver0625@hotmail.com](mailto:tmweaver0625@hotmail.com)

## **EL DEAFO**

Cece Bell  
Amulet Books, 2014  
233 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Growing up isn't easy for anyone. It is even harder with you have a Phonic Ear hearing aid system strapped to your chest. After a case of meningitis at age 4, Cece lost her hearing. In this funny and poignant graphic novel, author Cece Bell, shares her struggles to adapt to her extremely powerful hearing aid and navigate through friendships and school. She never knows what she'll hear next.

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Smile* by Raina Telgemeier

*Sisters* by Raina Telgemeier

### **WEBSITES:**

Abrams Books [www.abramsbooks.com/pdfs/academic/El\\_Deafos\\_TeachingGuide.pdf](http://www.abramsbooks.com/pdfs/academic/El_Deafos_TeachingGuide.pdf) Teaching Resource Guide

Cece Bell <https://cecebell.wordpress.com/> Author's website.

### **BOOKTALK:**

Cece was just a regular kid until she contracted meningitis at 4 and lost her hearing, but she wasn't about to let that stop her from having fun and being fashionable. That was, until she had to wear a big bulky hearing aid strapped to her chest to school. Talk about embarrassing. Yeah, her Phonic Ear was supersonic, which was cool since Cece could hear all kinds of juicy stuff she shouldn't, but sometimes she would hear the kids say mean things as well. Cece just wants a true friend. Will Cece find a friend? Will she ever get the hang of wearing the Phonic Ear? Read the graphic novel, *El Deafos*, by Cece Bell to read about the author's real life adventures.

Prepared by:

Shannon Ryan, Lake Carolina Elementary Upper Campus, [sryan@richland2.org](mailto:sryan@richland2.org)

## **Eliza Bing Is (Not) a Big, Fat Quitter**

Carmella Van Vleet  
Holiday House, 2014  
165 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

After learning that she cannot take a cake decorating class with her best friend, partly because her parents consider her a quitter, eleven-year-old Eliza tries to prove herself by sticking with a taekwondo class all summer.

### **IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Tales from a not-so-dorky drama queen* by Rachel Renee Russell

*Pay it forward* by Catherine Ryan Hyde

*Wonder* by R. J. Palacio

### **WEBSITES:**

Located on Carmella Van Vleet's webpage, <http://www.carmellavanvleet.com/mgs.html> you will find two helpful links. One link is to a detailed Educator's Guide for *Eliza Bing Is (Not) A Big, Fat Quitter*. The second link is entitled Free Stuff which contains additional activities and information related to Carmella Van Vleet's books.

Taekwon-Do Kids, <http://www.tkd-kids.org/ext/tkd-kids/site/en/#!/splash> is an interactive website that teaches basic Taekwon-Do Skills and Coordination Skills as well as Life Skills, Danger Awareness and Character Education

### **BOOKTALK:**

I'm dying to take the Cakes with Caroline class this summer, but can't because Mom and Dad are having money troubles and they think I'll quit this time too, on account of my ADHD. What they don't understand is that I really want to learn how to create scrumptious cakes from scratch and decorate it too especially from Sweet Caroline, the nicest person on TV! My brother, Sam gets to take a taekwondo class and then quits! In the history of all unfair things in the world, this has to be in the top ten! But I've got a plan; I'm going to strike a deal with Mom and Dad to prove that I am not a big fat quitter. I am going to take Sam's place in the taekwondo class and if I don't quit they will let me take the Sweet Carolina cake decorating class this fall. The only problem is I have no interest in martial arts. Oh, by the way did I forget to mention, I have trouble focusing and remembering all the new rules and positions. How will I ever pass the test? Yea, there's a test! Read *Eliza Bing Is (Not) A Big Fat Quitter* by Carmella Van Vleet to find out if Eliza will discover her inner ninja in time to pass her summer taekwondo class and earn her spot in the fall Cakes with Caroline decorating class.

Prepared by

Stephanie Morin, North Augusta Elementary, [smorin@acpsd.net](mailto:smorin@acpsd.net)



## **Gabriel Finley and the Raven's Riddle**

George Hagan

Schwartz & Wade, 2014

384 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Gabriel Finley's father disappeared three years ago and now, on his twelfth birthday, he was given his father's journal where he discovers that his world is not what he thought. He is an amicus, as was his father. He can merge with a raven and fly through the sky. He also discovered that it is up to him to save the world from the evil Corax. Can he do it? He won't be alone. With the help of a young raven named Paladin, and Septimus, a friend of his father's, as well as 3 school friends, Gabriel sets out on a quest which will lead him to an underground city and his destiny.

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY:**

*The Luck Uglies*, Paul Durham

*The Boundless*, Kenneth Oppel

*The Iron Trial*, Holly Black

*The Witch's Boy*, Kelly Barnhill

### **WEBSITES:**

Birdinginformation.com at <http://www.birdinginformation.com/birds/ravens-crows-magpies-jays/common-raven/> This website has images and information about ravens. You will want to know more about these amazing birds while reading this book.

Buzzle at <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/hard-riddles-for-kids.html> This site has riddles and puzzles for kids to solve that are like the ones that Gabriel solved.

National Geographic/New York Underground at <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/97/nyunderground/> Gabriel Finley found the city of Aviopolis under New York City. Could that happen? What is really under the Big Apple?

### **BOOKTALK:**

Twelve-year-old Gabriel Finley must accomplish a monstrous task. To do so, he will have to overcome daunting obstacles, including: a tangle of ingenious riddles, a spiteful necklace called a torc, and flocks of evil valravens. Young Finley is not completely unprepared for his quest. His father, Adam Finley, prepared Gabriel by telling him a riddle every day until the day he vanished three years ago. Nor will he face these obstacles alone. He rescues an orphaned young raven named Paladin, and discovers that he has the power (as did his father) of bonding with him. This bond allows them to share thoughts, speak aloud to one another, and even merge with the raven to fly. Paladin, an adventurer named Septimus and three heroic friends accompany

Gabriel on his quest to find the torc and bring his father home. The intrepid band's journey will take them from the heights of New York City to the depths of Aviopolis. This book is a fantasy adventure filled with unforgettable characters, challenging riddles, and magic around every corner.

Prepared by:

Leslie Cooper, Stiles Point Elementary, [leslie\\_cooper@charleston.k12.sc.us](mailto:leslie_cooper@charleston.k12.sc.us)

**Masterminds**  
Gordan Korman  
Harper Collins, 2015  
336 pages

**SUMMARY:**

Serenity, New Mexico is a wonderful place to live. Everyone in town lives in perfect peace and prosperity. Eli and his friends have never lived anywhere else. Everyone in town is honest, content and peaceable. That is just the way life is. One day Eli and a couple of kids notice something odd. They cannot leave town or they get very sick. Suspicious, they dig deeper to find the truth about their lives and find out there is more lying in Serenity than anyone could possibly imagine. Can they ever find out the entire truth?

**IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*The 39 Clues Series*

*Ungifted*, by Gordon Korman

*The search for WondLa*, by Tony DiTerlizzi

*Space Dogs*, Justin Ball & Evan Croker

**WEBSITES:**

Gordon Korman, <http://gordonkorman.com/> All about Gordon Korman and his wide array of books, blogs, videos and more.

Scholastic's Biography, <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/contributor/gordon-korman> Who is Gordon Korman, an interview and author visit kit.

**BOOKTALK:**

Do you like adventure? If you do, then you wouldn't think that Serenity, New Mexico would be the place for you. However, as Eli Frieden discovers, things are not always as they seem. In fact all of the great homes, swimming pools and peace and plenty are a cover for something dark and sinister. Eli isn't quite the honest, upright citizen that Serenity values. He longs for a little adventure. One day, he bikes to the edge of the city limits and something so crazy and unexpected happens that it changes everything. Eli convinces his friends to help him investigate further, and it soon becomes clear that nothing is as it seems in Serenity. Get to know Eli and find out what lies below the perfect face of the town called Serenity.

Prepared by:

Beth Kelly, Chapin Elementary School, mekelly@lexrich5.org

# **NEIGHBORHOOD SHARKS**

## **Hunting with the Great Whites of California's Farallon Islands**

Katherine Roy

David Macaulay Studio, Roaring Brook Press, 2014

48 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Neighborhood Sharks is an intimate portrait of the life cycle, biology, and habitat of the great white shark. This book is based on the latest research and an up-close visit with these amazing animals during their annual visit to their hunting grounds in the Farallon Islands, just 30 miles from the Golden Gate Bridge.

### **IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Surprising Sharks* by Nicola Davies

*Tooth and Claw: The Wild World of Big Predators* by Jin Arnosky

*Tough, Toothy Baby Sharks* by Sandra Markle

*Megatooth* by Patrick O'Brien

### **WEBSITES:**

Katherine Roy Website, <http://katherineroy.com/sharks/> Learn about the author and illustrator.

TTPM Book Review Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8s0a2p76bZg>

MarineBio. Great White Sharks, *Carcharodon carcharias* webpage, <http://marinebio.org/species.asp?id=38> contains three videos and informational text about great white sharks. Please preview all videos before showing to students to ensure that the videos are age appropriate.

### **BOOKTALK:**

"They cut through the water in total silence ... until, all at once, they strike."

A few miles from San Francisco lives a population of the ocean's largest and most famous predators. Each fall, while the city's inhabitants dine on steaks, salads, and sandwiches, the great white sharks return to California's Farallon Islands to dine on their favorite meal: the seals that live on the island's rocky coasts. Massive, fast and perfectly adapted to hunting after 11 million years of evolution, the Great Whites are among the planet's most fearsome, fascinating, and least understood animals. Read *Neighborhood Sharks: Hunting with the Great Whites of California's Farallon Islands* by Katherine Roy to learn more about how these fascinating predators maintain their place at the top of the Pacific ocean's food chain.

Prepared by

Stephanie Morin, North Augusta Elementary, [smorin@acpsd.net](mailto:smorin@acpsd.net)

## **Pack of Dorks**

Beth Vrael

Sky Pony Press, 2014

240 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Lucy is one of the most popular girls in fourth grade, until her BFF Becky convinces her to kiss her boyfriend at recess. Lucy doesn't really want to do it, but she had no way of knowing that that one botched kiss would turn her world upside-down! Suddenly, none of the popular kids will talk to her, even Becky, and her family doesn't have time to deal with her problems, as they adjust to the arrival of her baby sister, who was born with unexpected special needs. Lucy partners with one of the unpopular kids for a project on wolves and as she learns about how wolf packs are formed, starts to see parallels in the cliques in her school, and has to decide what kind of wolf she wants to be.

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOKS, TRY...**

*Absolutely Truly*, Heather Vogel Frederick

*Dash*, Kirby Larson

*El Deafo*, CeCe Bell

*Rain Reign*, Anna M. Martin

### **WEBSITES:**

Beth Vrael, <http://www.bethvrael.com/pack-of-dorks/> Read more about the author and her other books, including the sequel to *Pack of Dorks*.

Huffington Post, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mary-pauline-lowry/qa-with-beth-vrael-about\\_b\\_5943072.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mary-pauline-lowry/qa-with-beth-vrael-about_b_5943072.html) Check out this interview with Beth Vrael to learn about her childhood obsession with wolves and her inspiration for writing!

National Geographic, <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/gray-wolf/#gray-wolf-closeup.jpg> Learn more about wolves with this kid friendly National Geographic article.

### **BOOKTALK:**

What would you do to be popular? Kiss a boy? Make fun of other kids in your class? Make sure that you act and dress and talk exactly like the Queen Bee? Well, that's what Lucy has to decide in *Pack of Dorks*. One bad decision costs her everything, or does it? After she plummets from the top of the fourth grade social ladder, Lucy has to figure out where she fits in at school, where no one is talking to her, and at home, where her family is absorbed with her new baby sister, and what kind of person she wants to be. Lucy applies what she learns from her school project on wolf packs to her life, and learns to make choices for herself in a pack of her own.

Prepared by:

Charlotte Evans, Ebenezer Avenue Elementary School, [cevans@rhmail.org](mailto:cevans@rhmail.org)

## RAIN REIGN

Ann M. Martin

Schwartz & Wade, 2014

384 pages

### SUMMARY:

Fifth grade can be difficult for any girl. But a girl with high-functioning autism, a mother who ran away from their family, and an unhappy father, life is particularly challenging. Rose Howard might not have everything a girl wants but her name is a homophone (Rose loves homophones) and she has a great dog and an uncle who is there for her. When a hurricane hits her rural town Rose's life turns upside down.

### IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY:

*Out of My Mind*, Sharon Draper

*Brown Girl Dreaming*, Jacqueline Woodson

*Mockingbird*, Katherine Erskine

*One for the Murphys*, Linda Mullay Hunt

### WEBSITES:

Rescue Me at <http://animal.rescueme.org/SouthCarolina> This website has information about animals in South Carolina that need to be adopted.

Autism Speaks at <https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/100-day-kit/ten-things-every-child-autism-wishes-you-knew> Learn more about kids with autism on this site.

### BOOKTALK:

People mistakenly call homophones homonyms. That bothers Rose Howard. She is a girl who loves homophones. She also loves rules and numbers. Some people think she is obsessed with homophones, and rules, and numbers. She's thrilled that her own name is a homonym. Not very many people understand Rose and her rules. She is different and sometimes that means alone.

A hurricane hits their rural town causing rivers to overflow. Rose's father let Rain out during the storm and now he is missing. Rose must find her dog, no matter what it takes. But, will finding her dog make everything better? There are new things for Rose to learn and those lessons come at a price. Rose finds out that she is more resilient than anyone realizes. Read *Rain Reign* to find out how a lonely, isolated girl courageously makes decisions that could break her heart but show her who she really is after all.

Prepared By:

Leslie Cooper, Stiles Point Elementary, [leslie\\_cooper@charleston.k12.sc.us](mailto:leslie_cooper@charleston.k12.sc.us)

# **RANGER IN TIME: RESCUE ON THE OREGON TRAIL**

Kate Messner  
Scholastic Press, 2015  
144 pages

## **SUMMARY:**

Ranger is a Golden Retriever with a good life. He has Luke, his owner, and dreams of making it big as a search and rescue dog. If only he could break his habit of chasing squirrels! Ranger is destined for greater things. A mysterious object sends him back in time to the year 1850 and the Abbot family who will need the help of a dog who is good in a crisis. This is the first book in the new Ranger In Time series.

## **IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK TRY:**

*Ranger in Time: Danger in Ancient Rome* by Kate Messner

*Ranger in Time: Long Road to Freedom* by Kate Messner

*The Adventures of a South Pole Pig: A Novel of Snow and Courage* by Chris Kurtz

*Hooper Finds a Family: A Hurricane Katrina Dog's Survival Tale* by Jane Palay

## **WEBSITES:**

Kids on the Oregon Trail, <http://www.blm.gov/or/oregontrail/education-kids-trail.php> Read all about kids who traveled on the Oregon Trail including some excerpts from actual diaries.

Scholastic Oregon Trail Webquest <http://teacher.scholastic.com/webquest/ushist/oregon.htm>  
Learn all about life on the Oregon Trail through this webquest.

Time Travel Kids <http://timetravellerkids.co.uk/> Ranger is not just going on the Oregon Trail. Where would you go if you could time travel? Check out this site to find some cool historical destinations.

Science Kids: Is Time Travel Possible?

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/videos/physics/timetravel.html> Check out these videos that explore one of the questions that humans most want to know.

## **BOOKTALK:**

Have you ever wanted to do something but you just can't quite seem to do it? Then you know what Ranger, Luke's golden retriever, feels like. He wants to pass the exam to become a search and rescue dog but chasing those darn squirrels is just too tempting. One day, however, he finds something that changes him into an entirely different rescue dog. While sniffing his wondrous find, he is suddenly transported back in time to the year 1850 and immediately finds a family

who needs him. When he rescues the Abbot family's wayward toddler he quickly becomes an important family member. He further helps the family by warning them of dangers along the trail. History buffs will find great historical details, full-page illustrations, and lots of action. At the end there are quotes from authentic journals and information on search-and-rescue dogs. You are going to love Ranger!

Prepared By:

Leslie Cooper, Stiles Point Elementary, [leslie\\_cooper@charleston.k12.sc.us](mailto:leslie_cooper@charleston.k12.sc.us)



## THE ROOKIE BOOKIE

L. Jon Wertheim & Tobias Jacob Moskowitz  
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2014  
268 pages

### SUMMARY:

New kid Mitch Sloan wants to fit in, but his nerdy love of statistics and making money isn't winning him any friends in his sports-loving town--until he finds the perfect way to attain instant popularity. But running a football betting ring at school eventually turns sour, and Mitch loses the only real friend he's made. He'll have to win her back by using his brainpower for good and helping the school football team achieve victory--*if* they'll listen to the advice of a former bookie!

### IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

*Football Hero*, Tim Green  
*Fantasy League*, Mike Lupica  
*Double Reverse*, Fred Bowen

### WEBSITES:

Hachettebookgroup.com, look for Reading Group Guide on left hand side.

<http://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/l-jon-wertheim/the-rookie-bookie/9780316249812/>

This is the link for the guide:

[http://media.hdp.hbgusa.com/titles/assets/reading\\_group\\_guide/9780316249812/CCG\\_9780316249812.pdf](http://media.hdp.hbgusa.com/titles/assets/reading_group_guide/9780316249812/CCG_9780316249812.pdf)

Onlyagame, <http://onlyagame.wbur.org/2014/11/01/jon-wertheim-the-rookie-bookie-book>,

A short audio interview with author Jon Wertheim.

Timeforkids.com, <http://www.timeforkids.com/news/winning-novel/181886>, Author interview titled "A winning Novel" in the entertainment section.

### BOOKTALK:

Mitch Sloan, a seventh-grader, has just moved to Indiana. Mitch loves sports but he's not athletic like his brother who plays on the high school football team. He meets Jamie, a girl who enjoys sports as much as he does. Mitch convinces Jamie to help him run a football betting ring at school. They get caught and are suspended. Mitch loses his only friend. As part of his punishment, he has to help the janitor clean the locker room where he meets the coach who is in jeopardy of losing his job unless the team wins the last game. Can Mitch help the team win?

Prepared by:

Tambra Pingle, Bridge Creek Elementary School, [tpingle@richland2.org](mailto:tpingle@richland2.org)

## **Saving Kabul Corner**

N.H. Senzai

Simon & Schuster, 2014

288 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

From Afghanistan to America, family matters most in this multicultural suburban mystery. When a rival Afghan grocery store opens near Ariana's family store, a decades old family feud is reignited. When both stores are vandalized, Ariana and friends unite, work hard to unravel the mystery of the guilty party, and put the feud to rest.

### **IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Kids of Kabul: Living Bravely Through a Never-Ending War* by Deborah Ellis

*Shooting Kabul* by N.H. Senzai

*Ticket to India* by N.H. Senzai

*Home of the Brave* by Katherine Applegate

*The Red Pencil* by Andrea Davis Pinkney

### **WEBSITES:**

Blog with author N.H. Senzai, read interviews, and obtain a curriculum guide in PDF format from Simon & Schuster at [www.teachingbooks.net](http://www.teachingbooks.net)

Learn about author N.H. Senzai at the author's website [www.NHSenzai.com](http://www.NHSenzai.com)

<http://www.sozointernational.org/afghanistan.html> provides a glimpse into life in Kabul in video format.

### **BOOKTALK:**

Saving Kabul Corner is a book about family, friendship, and saving things you love. Twelve-year old-Ariana Shinwari, a true tomboy, can't wait to have her own room in the new house that her parents have just put a deposit on. But for now, she must share her small bedroom with her grandmother Hava Bibi and her perfect, ladylike cousin Laila, who has just recently arrived from Afghanistan with her mother. A jealous Ariana soon discovers that she just can't stand her cousin. To make matters worse, a decades old family feud is reignited when a rival Afghan grocery store opens up across the street from their family store. When both grocery stores are vandalized, the families blame each other. Laila and Ariana are convinced that something fishy is going on. Will Ariana and Laila be able to overcome their differences, solve the mystery, find the guilty parties, and save the family stores? Read Kabul Corner by N.H. Senzai and find out!

Prepared by: Cheryl Curtis, Chukker Creek Elementary, [ccurtis@acpsd.net](mailto:ccurtis@acpsd.net)

**Ship of Dolls**  
Shirley Parenteau  
Candlewick Press, 2014  
258 pages

**SUMMARY:**

The one thing eleven-year-old Lexie Lewis wants more than anything is to leave Portland, Oregon, where she has been staying with her strict grandparents, and rejoin her mother, a carefree singer in San Francisco. But Mama's new husband doesn't think a little girl should live with parents who work all night and sleep all day. Lexie's class has been raising money to send a doll to the children of Japan in a friendship exchange, and when Lexie learns that the girl who writes the best letter to accompany the doll will be sent to the farewell ceremony in San Francisco, she knows she just has to be the winner.

**IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Dolls of Hope*, Shirley Parenteau

*The Friendship Doll*, Kirby Larson

*Finding the Friendship Dolls: A True Story How Children Can Help Create World Peace Through Toys*, Charlotte Pack

**WEBSITES:**

Friendship Dolls, <http://www.bill-gordon.net/dolls/>. This website gives detailed information about the 1927 Friendship Doll exchange project between Japan and the United States school children. The website also contains individual photos of the American and Japanese dolls/

Alan Scott Pate's Antique Japanese Dolls,

[http://www.antiquejapanesedolls.com/pub\\_artinfofocus/miss\\_fukushima/friendshipdolls.html](http://www.antiquejapanesedolls.com/pub_artinfofocus/miss_fukushima/friendshipdolls.html).

This link provides history behind the original 1927 Friendship Doll exchange as well as the struggle after the war to locate all of the original dolls. This article also discusses the antique dealers struggle to locate and authenticate the Miss Fukushima doll currently in their possession.

Mukogawa Fort Worth Institute, <http://www.mfwi.edu/JCC/DollPage.htm>. This section of the Mukogawa Fort Worth Institute's website explains the history of the Friendship Dolls and their relevance to their institute. The information details how Sidney L. Gulick came up with the idea for the Friendship Dolls exchange with Japan and also how that gift was reciprocated by Japan. These gifts did seem to develop a sisterhood between Oregon and Japan resulting years later in the Mukogawa Institute.

**BOOKTALK:**

Lexie misses her mom more than anything! Her mom has left her and moved away to exciting San Francisco with her new husband while Lexie is stuck living with her strict grandparents. When she hears about a writing contest that could possibly get her to San Francisco she knows that she has to win! Only one problem...there is another classmate who is just as determined to win at ANY cost! The writing contest centers on a real-life historical event involving a doll

exchange between American and Japan school children pre-World War I. Read along as a little doll teaches Lexie more about herself than she ever expected.

Prepared by:

Michelle Weaver, Walker Gamble Elementary, [tmweaver0625@hotmail.com](mailto:tmweaver0625@hotmail.com)

# SHOOTING AT THE STARS

John Hendrix

Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2014

39 pages

## SUMMARY:

Shooting at the Stars begins as Charlie writes a letter to his mother describing the harsh conditions in the trenches on the battlefield during World War I. His letter continues sharing vivid details of the amazing and miraculous Christmas Eve Truce of 1914 between the German and British soldiers where they sang and exchanged souvenirs. This fictionalized account of a factual event is beautifully illustrated and told using hand-lettered text.

## IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

*Marvelous Cornelius : Hurricane Katrina and the Spirit of New Orleans* by Phil Bildner

*The Drummer Boy : Marching to the Civil War* by Ann Warren Turner

*Knit Your Bit : a World War I Story* by Deborah Hopkinson

*Sarah Emma Edmonds was a Great Pretender : the True Story of a Civil War Spy* by Carrie Jones

## WEBSITES:

Abrams Books, [http://www.abramsbooks.com/product/shooting-at-the-stars\\_9781419711756/](http://www.abramsbooks.com/product/shooting-at-the-stars_9781419711756/) , Provides a summary of the book and reviews.

John Hendrix <http://johnhendrix.com/portfolio/books/Truce/> Author's website.

## BOOKTALK:

Soaking wet and deep in mud, Charlie, a British soldier, writes letters to his mother during the first World War. Even though he is cold and miserable, Charlie begins to tell the story of a miraculous event that began by the German soldiers on December 24, 1914 when they put up Christmas trees, yes, Christmas trees. Other amazing things happened during the Christmas Truce of 1914. Read *Shooting at the Stars* by John Hendrix to find out what happens in this fictionalized account of a true event in history.

## ACTIVITY:

Compare and contrast the story format, pictures, and details with the similar text, *Christmas in the Trenches* by John McCutcheon. Possible discussions. These two books are told from different perspectives of time. One story is a shared memory from long ago and the other a real time recollection. How does the perspective change your understanding of the story? Provide evidence of details in the story. One story has more or different details of the event than the other. Do those differences add to the story or are they unimportant? Provide evidence and explain your reasoning. Do the illustrations in each book enhance or distract from the story? Provide evidence of pages and explanations of your selection.

Prepared by:

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

# STELLA BY STARLIGHT

Sharon M. Draper

Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2015

320p.

## SUMMARY:

Stella lives in the segregated South—in Bumblebee, North Carolina, to be exact about it. Some stores she can go into. Some stores she can't. Some folks are right pleasant. Others are a lot less so. To Stella, it sort of evens out, and heck, the Klan hasn't bothered them for years. But one late night, later than she should ever be up, much less wandering around outside, Stella and her little brother see something they're never supposed to see, something that is the first flicker of change to come, unwelcome change by any stretch of the imagination. As Stella's community—her world—is upended, she decides to fight fire with fire. And she learns that ashes don't necessarily signify an end.

## IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

*The War that saved my life*, Kimberly Brubaker

*School of Charm*, Lisa Ann Scott

*Listen Slowly*, Thanhha Lai

*Runaway Twin*, Peg Kehret

*Gone Crazy in Alabama (Gaither Sisters #3)*, Rita Williams Garcia

*The Madman of Piney Woods*, Christopher Paul Curtis

## WEBSITES:

Simon & Shuster, <http://books.simonandschuster.com/Stella-by-Starlight/Sharon-M-Draper/9781442494978>

Publisher's website containing book trailer video, praise reviews, read an excerpt, and hear an excerpt.

Sharon Draper.com <http://sharondraper.com/bookdetail.asp?id=74>

Author's website containing book trailer video, summary, general questions, and study guide.

## BOOKTALK:

Eleven year-old Stella practices her school writing assignments late at night outside under the stars. One night Stella and her brother witness the Ku Klux Klan burning a cross near their house. It's 1932 and their father has decided to register to vote. But first he has to pass a literacy test. Rules are different for the white folk. They don't have to pass a test or pay a fee to vote. They are also free to shop at any store and borrow books from the library, but not Stella, her family, or any other Negro living in Bumblebee, NC.

Prepared by: Tambra Pingle, Bridge Creek Elementary School, [tpingle@richland2.org](mailto:tpingle@richland2.org)

## **The Iron Trial**

Holly Black and Cassandra Clare

Scholastic Press, 2015

304 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Set in the modern day United States, twelve-year-old Callum Hunt has been raised to distrust magic. Mages killed his mother, and his father has warned him that the Magisterium, a school where young mages are trained, is a deathtrap. Callum's attempts to fail the entrance exam go awry, and he is chosen to apprentice under Master Rufus, along with fellow students Aaron and Tamara. As Callum, Tamara, Aaron, and their classmates embark on their first of five years of schooling, Callum realizes how little he knows of his own heritage. In this first of five books, Callum learns about true friendship, loyalty and trust.

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...**

*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling

*Keeper of the Lost Cities* by Shannon Messenger

*The Lightning Thief (Percy Jackson and the Olympians)* by Rick Riordan

*Artemis Fowl series*, by Eoin Colfer

### **WEBSITES:**

Magisterium, <http://irontrial.scholastic.com/> Read about the authors, books, play games, chat on a forum, sign up for a newsletter.

Cassandra Clare, <http://www.cassandraclare.com/books/the-iron-trial/> Learn more about Cassandra Clare and her other books.

Magisterium (Random House), <http://randomhousechildrens.co.uk/magisterium/> Play games, go through the Trial, see other publications of the books.

### **BOOKTALK:**

Most kids would do anything to pass the Iron Trial. Not Callum Hunt. He wants to fail. All his life, Call has been warned by his father to stay away from magic. If he succeeds at the Iron Trial and is admitted into the Magisterium, he is sure it can only mean bad things for him. So he tries his best to do his worst – and fails at failing. Now the Magisterium awaits him — a place that's both sensational and sinister, with dark ties to his past and a twisty path to his future. The Iron Trial is just the beginning, for the biggest test is still to come...

(Booktalk from CassandraClare.com)

Prepared by: Beth Kelly, Chapin Elementary School, [mekelly@lexrich5.org](mailto:mekelly@lexrich5.org)

# THE GHOSTS OF TUPELO LANDING

Sheila Turnage

Penguin Random House Company, 2014

352 pages

## SUMMARY:

Best friends, Mo LoBeau and Dale Earnhardt Johnson III are back in a second book solving mysteries! Set in a small North Carolina town, where Mo washed up as a baby, this duo teams up again as the Desperado Detective Agency.

Mo's adopted mother, Miss Lana, buys an old abandoned inn. What they didn't know was the inn wasn't completely abandoned - it had a ghost living in it. Mo and Dale make it their mission to get an interview with the ghost for their history report, and along the way meet new people and discover secrets about others in their town. And of course the duo get themselves in sticky situations and solve mysteries along the way!

## IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

*Three Times Lucky*, Sheila Turnage

*The Odds of Getting Even*, Sheila Turnage

*The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp*, Kathi Appelt

*Under the Egg*, Laura Marx Fitzgerald

## WEBSITES:

Welcome to Tupelo Landing,

<http://www.penguin.com/static/packages/us/yreaders/tupelolanding/>

This website provides a summary of the author's books, detective training manual, downloadable map of the book's town, reviews, advice from the book and a trailer for the above book.

The Ghosts of Tupelo Landing - Sheila Turnage

<http://www.sheilaturnage.com/mo-and-dale-mysteries/the-ghosts-of-tupelo-landing.html>

The author's web page for this book and her others. Includes a summary of the book, Q&A with the author, author bio and contact information.

## BOOKTALK:

From ghosts to a mysterious new kid, this book has it all! When Miss Lana bids on and buys an abandoned and haunted inn, Mo LoBeau, and her best friend Dale, have questions about the inn and it's supposed ghost. The Desperado Detectives make it their mission to get an interview with the ghost. Along the way they make a new friend, come face-to-face with a real ghost and stumble upon a crime!

Mo LoBeau is outspoken and honest - her words and actions reflect what others may be thinking, but are too shy to voice, and she never backs down from a challenge.

There is never a dull moment in the book and you can't wait to read the next page to see what else Mo will get herself and Dale into!

Prepared by:

Susan DuBose, Lexington Elementary, sdubose@lexington1.net



## **The Fourteenth Goldfish**

Jennifer L. Holm  
Random House, 2014  
208 pages

### **SUMMARY:**

Ellie Cruz is a perfectly normal eleven year old girl but her world is about to get turned upside down when Melvin comes to town. Melvin is a normal thirteen year old, except for the fact that he is actually Ellie's grandfather! Melvin, a scientist, has discovered a way to turn himself into a kid again. Can Ellie and Melvin work together? Will Ellie's grandfather remain thirteen? Find out in *The Fourteenth Goldfish*!

### **IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY:**

*El Deafo*, Cece Bell  
*Fortunately, the Milk*, Neil Gaiman  
*Pie*, Sarah Weeks  
*Absolutely Almost*, Lisa Graff  
*Because of Mr. Terupt*, Rob Buyea

### **WEBSITES:**

Jennifer L. Holm, Author, <http://www.jenniferholm.com/> ,Author's Website  
Mrs. Diaz's Teaching Resources,  
<https://sites.google.com/site/mrsdiazsteachingresources/the-fourteenth-goldfish> , Blog Posts,  
Interviews, and Official Trailer  
Global Read Aloud, <http://globalreadaloud.wikispaces.com/Fourteenth+Goldfish+Page> ,  
Educator's Guide and Blog Resources

### **BOOKTALK:**

This book is excellent because it blends science fiction with elements of realistic fiction. Ellie is a likeable character and readers will love the relationship that develops between her and her now-young grandfather, Melvin! This book is witty and amusing and makes science fiction accessible to both girls and boys.

Prepared by:

Brittany Shay, Davis Early Childhood Center for Technology, Lexington 2 Schools,  
bshay@lex2.org