

Adrift
Paul Griffin
Scholastic, 2015
240 pages

SUMMARY:

Five very different teens are lost at sea with no one to count on but each other. The newfound friends head out into the Atlantic after midnight in a stolen boat. “None of them come back whole, and not all of them come back.” The book interweaves the narrative scenes of the rescuers and those in the boat with the thoughts of the teens to create foreshadowing while revealing bits of the characters’ pasts, creating webs of questions, confusion, and abruptly apparent answers.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Code of Honor, Alan Gratz

Once, Morris Gleitzman

My Brother’s Secret, Dan Smith

Lost in the Pacific, 1942: Not a Drop to Drink (Lost #1), Tod Olson

Adrift: Seventy-six Days Lost at Sea, Steven Callahan

WEBSITES:

Adrift, <http://paulgriffinstories.com/adrift/>, Author’s website which contains information about the book and author.

Education World Survival Lesson Plan, http://www.educationworld.com/a_tsl/archives/02-1/lesson032.shtml, Complete lesson plan in which students interact with disaster survival skills in order to become the “instructor” for teaching others to survive their a variety of disaster situations.

CNN Boat Survival Article, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/11/sport/ultimate-survival-guide/>, This site provides an informational article on survival at sea, as well as linked topic articles.

BOOKTALK:

Matt and Mike are two working-class best friends trying to earn some money in Montauk for the summer. Things change for the two when they meet Driana, JoJo, and Stef, three friends who live a much different life of privilege. Little does the group know it, but their lives take a dangerous turn when one of the group steals a boat from her father’s dock. The group ventures out to sea aboard the small boat. As the waves rise and the fragile vessel weakens, things begin to go horribly wrong. The group is adrift at sea for days and is forced to confront the real possibility of death, coupled with the or even greater need to survive the potential treachery the group begins to display to one another. Each member of the group comes face to face with what exactly it takes to survive.

Prepared by:

Susan Grinsteinner, Dorchester District Two, sgrinsteinner@dorchester2.k12.sc.us

Beneath
Roland Smith
Scholastic, 2015
304 pages

SUMMARY:

Brothers Pat and Coop grew up in a dysfunctional family home in Washington, D.C. where Coop's eccentric behavior was tolerated until the day of the accident and Pat was hurt. Coop runs away to New York City and the only thing he sends Pat are audio recordings of his experiences in the city. Pat goes in search of his brother and is determined to bring him home.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Tunnels, Roderick Gordon
The Blackthorn Key, Kevin Sands
Code of Honor, Alan Gratz

WEBSITES:

Roland Smith, Author, <http://www.rolandsmith.com/>, Visit author Roland Smith's website to learn more about his books and writing.

An Interview with Bestselling Author Roland Smith, <http://oomscholasticblog.com/post/interview-bestselling-author-roland-smith-and-giveaway>, Read an interview with author Roland Smith where he shares what inspired the book *Beneath*.

New York's Secret Underground World, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhDNuPdyjSA>, Learn about underground New York City from History Channel's *Cities of the Underworld*.

New York Underground, <http://www.npr.org/2013/09/14/222525583/new-york-underground-exploring-city-caves-and-catacombs>, Listen to audio recordings about underground New York City on National Public Radio (NPR).

BOOKTALK:

If you have ever wondered what lies beneath NYC and government conspiracy theories are intriguing to you, then *Beneath* by Roland Smith may be the story for you. Coop is eccentric. He doesn't sleep much and all he wants to do is dig. His younger brother Pat looks up to Coop and accepts his odd behavior until one-day Coop's digging ends up almost killing Pat. Coop runs away to NYC and Pat is determined to find his brother and bring him back home. Will Pat be able to find Coop? Read *Beneath* to find out.

Prepared by:

Lorena Swetnam, Blythewood Middle School, lswetnam@richland2.org

Big Top Burning: The True Story of an Arsonist, a Missing Girl, and the Greatest Show on Earth

Laura A. Woollett

Chicago Review Press Incorporated, June 1, 2015

167 pages

SUMMARY:

It started and ended all on the same day, July 6, 1944. Thousands of people expecting a fun show and then to happily go home with their families got an unexpected surprise. These people were going to see the famous Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus Performance. Not long after the show began, a fire started and many people pushed and ran to escape, knocking people over and eventually killing many. Within 10 minutes, the whole big top had burned to the ground. There was chaos and panic everywhere, frightened family members, frantically searching for their children, siblings, and parents. 167 people never got to go home that day. Read the book *Big Top Burning* to follow along with the stories of many families and the tragedies of this event.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK:

Fatal Fever: Tracking Down Typhoid Mary, Gail Jarrow

Lincoln's Spymaster: Allan Pinkerton, America's First Private Eye, Samantha Seiple

Trapped! A Whales Rescue, Robert Burleigh

Stubby the War Dog: The True Story of World War I's Bravest Dog, Ann Bausum

Tricky Vic: The Impossibly True Story of the Man Who Sold the Eiffel Tower, Grey Pizzoli

WEBSITES:

Big Top Burning, <http://www.laurawoollett.com/big-top-burning.html>, Page on the author's website with information about the book.

Laura A Woollett, <http://www.laurawoollett.com/>, The author's website contains information about the author and her books.

BOOKTALK:

It started and ended all on the same day, July 6, 1944. Thousands of people expecting a fun show and then to happily go home with their families got an unexpected surprise. These people were going to see the famous Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus Performance. Not long after the show began, a fire started and many people pushed and ran to escape, knocking people over and eventually killing many. Within 10 minutes, the whole big top had burned to the ground. There was chaos and panic everywhere, frightened family members, frantically searching for their children, siblings, and parents. 167 people never got to go home that day. Read the book *Big Top Burning* to follow along with the stories of many families and the tragedies of this event.

Prepared by:

Natalie Davis, Powdersville Middle School, davanat27@gmail.com

Book Scavenger

Jennifer Chambliss Bertman

Henry Holt and Co., 2015

368 pages

SUMMARY:

When twelve-year-old Emily moved to San Francisco, she was actually excited to move, this time. Garrison Griswold lived in San Francisco. Griswold is the creator of her favorite online game, Book Scavenger. You have to solve different types of puzzles to find books all over the US. For Emily, who loves to read and has moved around a lot, it is the perfect game. Looking into the scene of the attack that put Griswold in the hospital, Emily discovers a book he was carrying contained a new game he had not released yet. As she works her way through the book, Emily finds that those responsible for the attack on Griswold are now after her and her friends. An entertaining mystery full of ciphers, secret codes, and hidden treasure.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Case of the Case of Mistaken Identity, Mac Barnett

Chasing Vermeer, Blue Balliett

Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library, Chris Grabenstein

The Unbreakable Code, Jennifer Chambliss Bertman

The Westing Game, Ellen Raskin

WEBSITES:

Book Scavenger, <http://bookscavenger.com>, Join the game! Find a book or hide a book and look at the interactive map to see who is playing and where.

Jennifer Chambliss Bertman, <http://jenniferchamblissbertman.com/>, Find out a little about the author, her books, what she is doing, and what schools and events she will be appearing.

BOOKTALK:

When twelve-year-old Emily gets to San Francisco she finds two things: first, a new friend and fellow scavenger, James and, second, her idol, Garrison Griswold, in a coma. Griswold is the creator of Book Scavenger. The game is so cool. Members earn points by finding hidden books or by hiding books for others to find, and the clues have to be in the form of a puzzle to be solved.

While visiting the scene where Griswold was attacked, Emily finds an odd book that contained an unreleased game developed by her idol, Griswold. It isn't long before those that put Griswold in the hospital are after Emily and her friends. With the aid of her older brother, one of her new teachers, and her new friend James, will Emily be able to solve this new puzzle or face the same fate as her idol?

Prepared by:

Michelle Martin, South Middle School, michelle.martin@lcsdmail.net

Chasing Secrets

Gennifer Choldenko

Random House Children's Books, 2015

261 pages

SUMMARY:

San Francisco, 1900. The Gilded Age. A fantastic time to be alive for lots of people . . . but not thirteen-year-old Lizzie Kennedy, stuck at Miss Barstow's snobby school for girls. Lizzie's secret passion is science, an unsuitable subject for finishing-school girls. Lizzie lives to go on house calls with her physician father. On those visits to his patients, she discovers a hidden dark side of the city—a side that's full of secrets, rats, and rumors of the plague.

The newspapers, her powerful uncle, and her beloved papa all deny that the plague has reached San Francisco. So why is the heart of the city under quarantine? Why are angry mobs trying to burn Chinatown to the ground? Why is Noah, the Chinese cook's son, suddenly making Lizzie question everything she has known to be true? Ignoring the rules of race and class, Lizzie and Noah must put the pieces together in a heart-stopping race to save the people they love.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate, Jacqueline Kelly

Moon Over Manifest, Clare Vanderpool

Night on Fire, Ronald Kidd

WEBSITES:

Chasing Secrets, <http://www.gennifercholdenko.com/books/chasingsecrets/synopsis.html>,
This site contains a synopsis of the book, resources, and reviews.

Gennifer Choldenko, <http://www.gennifercholdenko.com/>, Author's website contains information about the author and her books.

Gennifer Choldenko: 2015 National Book Festival Webcast, https://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=6978, Gennifer Choldenko discusses "Chasing Secrets" at the 2015 Library of Congress National Book Festival in Washington, D.C.

BOOKTALK:

If you're thirteen, your mother has died, and you live in San Francisco at the turn of the 20th century, you want excitement in your life. Lizzie, who is a smart and curious girl, doesn't want to grow up to be just a wife and mother in society. She actually likes science, holding frogs, setting broken arms, and discovering secrets and their sources. There is a big mystery about the plague, rats, and the Chinatown section of San Francisco. Lizzie wants to be in the center of it all! Fans of historical fiction will enjoy *Chasing Secrets*. Choldenko captures the atmosphere of San Francisco at the turn of the last century with strong, well developed characters and an exciting mystery.

Prepared by:

Alissa Davis, Parent Member, adavis1997@gmail.com

The Chosen Prince

By Diane Stanley

HarperCollins, 2015

368 pages

SUMMARY:

Alexos of Arctos, the champion of the goddess Athene, was marked at birth to be the prophesied hero who would save his people from a long-standing punishment from Zeus, leaving his people without adequate food, clean water, and protection from an aggressive neighboring kingdom. But being chosen turns out to be a difficult job, one that puts Alexos at odds with his father's high, perhaps too high, expectations and separates him from the other boys his age. 12-year-old Alexos finds joy only in his love of running and spending time with his younger brother, Teo. At the precipice of his rise to glory, he suffers a mysterious and paralyzing illness that renders him initially all-but useless to his father and the kingdom. He then receives another paralyzing blow with the loss of his beloved younger brother. Alexos struggles to regain his strength and an understanding of his purpose as Athene's chosen champion, as well as his growing responsibilities as Prince of Arctos. With the help of his friends and the wisdom of his trusted doctor, Alexos must heal his country and himself.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Loki's Wolves (The Blackwell Pages #1) by K. L. Armstrong & M. A. Marr

The Sea of Trolls by Nancy Farmer

The Crocodile Tomb by Michelle Paver

The Heroes of Olympus Series & the *Percy Jackson Series* by Rick Riordan

WEBSITES:

Diane Stanley, <http://dianestanley.com/project/the-chosen-prince/>, You can find info about the author and her books at this website.

Greek Gods, <http://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/greek-mythology/videos/greek-gods>, A brief summary of Greek Gods and Goddesses.

BOOKTALK:

Alexos is Athene's champion. He is a prince and a skilled runner. He is destined to conquer his enemies and restore his kingdom to greatness. He should be happy, but Alexos struggles to win his father's affection and wonders if his friends like him for who he really is, or for being a Goddess-chosen prince. He hopes that perhaps by winning his country's highest honor for running he will gain his father's respect and his friends' support. But the gods have a different challenge in mind for Alexos. Struck down by a terrible disease, paralyzed from the waist down, and mourning the loss of his younger brother Teo, Alexos must find a way to regain his strength and save his kingdom. Is Alexos able to lead his people? Will his friends rally around him? How will Alexos recover from the loss of his brother? How could Athene let such terrible things happen to her chosen champion?

Prepared by:

Kinsi Near, Cyril B. Busbee Creative Arts Academy, knear@lex2.org

Code of Honor

Alan Gratz
Scholastic Press, 2015
278 pages

SUMMARY:

Kamran Smith is loving life, his girlfriend is the most popular girl in school, he is a superstar running back for the football team, and everything looks good for him to be accepted into West Point just like his big brother Darius. Of course, just when you think things are perfect something usually goes wrong and it does just that for Kamran. Darius is deployed in Afghanistan, a fact that scares his family; however, they are proud of his service to his country. But when a terrorist video shows up on the evening news showcasing Darius as a terrorist, his family is in shock. Kamran and his family are of Iranian descent, which has never been a problem before, but now that the video shows Darius as a terrorist, their lives are falling apart. News cameras show up on the lawn, people are vandalizing their house, and one night they are kidnapped right out of their own homes by the US Government. Kamran refuses to believe his brother is a traitor and sets out to prove him innocent. But can he escape from the government and find a way to prove his brother's innocence in time? And will his life ever be the same again?

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

I am the Mission, Allen Zadoff
Every Second Counts, Sophie McKenzie
Those Who Wish Me Dead, Michael Koryta
The Long Game, Jennifer Barnes

WEBSITES:

Alan Gratz, <http://www.alangratz.com/>, You can find info about the author, and his books at this website.

BOOKTALK:

Have you ever been judged solely by the color of your skin? Kamran Smith and his family experience just that in this action packed thriller. Although Kamran is American, his family is of Iranian descent, and in the post 9/11 world they are often looked upon as potential terrorists. However, at school his senior year is going great. He is the star running back for the football team, has a great girlfriend, and all the friends he could ever want. Unfortunately, his world come crashing down when his older brother, a West Point Grad and Army Ranger, shows up on video in a terrorist attack. Now all of Kamran's friends are turning against him, news crews are showing up on his lawn, and someone has painted "Terrorists" on his house. What's worse is that more videos of his brother keep coming out and each more awful than the last. Just when Kamran thinks things can't get any worse, he and his parents are kidnapped from their home and held prisoner by the US Government. Kamran wants to believe that his brother is innocent and that the tapes aren't real, but he has his doubts. He vows to get to the bottom of it and prove his brother is not a terrorist. Find out what happens by reading this exciting adventure story.

Prepared by:

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Fast Break
Mike Lupica
Puffin Books, 2015
262 pages

SUMMARY:

Forced to live on his own after his mom dies and her boyfriend abandons him, 12-year-old Jayson does whatever it takes to get by. He will do anything to avoid the foster care system. He manages to get away with his deception until the day he gets caught stealing a new pair of basketball sneakers. Game over. Within a day, a social worker places him with a family from the other side of town, the Lawtons. New home, new school, new teammates.

Jayson, at first, is combative, testing the Lawtons' patience at every turn. He wants out, yet the Lawtons refuse to take the bait. But not everyone in Jayson's new life is so ready to trust him. It's on Jayson to believe that he deserves a better life than the one he once had. The ultimate prize if he can? A trip to play in the state finals at Cameron Indoor Stadium – home to the Duke Blue Devils and launching pad to his dream of playing big time college ball. Getting there will be a journey that reaches far beyond the basketball court.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

True Legend, Mike Lupica

Last Man Out, Mike Lupica

Maximum Ride, James Patterson

WEBSITES:

Mike Lupica, <http://www.mikelupicabooks.com/>, The author's site contains information about the author and his books.

Fast Break Book Trailer, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sfna8ANAXy8>, This site shows a YouTube book trailer for *Fast Break*.

FAST BREAK by Mike Lupica, <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/mike-lupica/fast-break/>, This page has a book review for Lupica's book, *Fast Break*.

BOOKTALK:

In a 12-year-old world, when you're all alone, you try to make it and fake it, stealing food, taking risks, acting like all is right in the world. One day, you take one risk too many. After Jayson Barnes steals a pair of tennis shoes, gets caught, and goes to a foster home, his world is upside down. But this slam-dunk story gives hope to the star basketball player and his new life might be the best thing that's ever happened to him...if he can just take it, one play at a time.

Prepared by:

Clara Eads, Teacher, Liberty Middle School, claraeads@pickens.k12.sc.us

Fort

Cynthia C. DeFelice

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015

208 pages

SUMMARY:

Eleven-year-old Wyatt is staying with his father during summer vacation. His friend Augie and him decide to build a fort in the woods so they can hangout. Camping fishing, hunting, they are having a great time until the two town bullies decide to start messing with their fort. When they find out that they are also messing with Gerard, a kid who can't take up for himself, they decide they have had enough. It's time to take matters into their own hands and stop their bullying for good.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Middle School: How I Survived Bullies, Broccoli, and Snake Hill (Middle School series Book 4), James Patterson

Bully on the Bus, Kathryn Apel

Poison Ivy, Amy Goldman Koss

Bystander, James Preller

WEBSITES:

Cynthia DeFelice - Fort, <http://cynthiadefelice.com/novels/fort>, Information about the author and *Fort* with synopsis and reviews.

Dealing with Middle School Bullying, <http://7mindsets.com/dealing-with-middle-school-bullying/>, Gives 4 ways, we as, educators, can help stop bullying.

Pacer National Bullying Prevention Center, <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/video/>, Collection of videos on how to prevent and handle bullying.

How to Build and Outdoor Fort, <http://www.wikihow.com/Build-an-Outdoor-Fort>, ideas on how a student can build a fort in 12 steps.

BOOKTALK:

It's summer and Augie and I have long, sunny days ahead of us to do whatever we want. When we decide to build a fort in the woods, it opens up all kinds of adventures for us. All is going great until the town bullies find our fort and start messing with it. We didn't know what to do until Gerard came into the picture. He may be a little slow, but he can't help that. We find out that J.R. and Morrie have been bullying him. Can you believe that? Gerard can't take up for himself like we can, but we have a plan to stop the bullying once and for all. If you think *Home Alone* was funny, you'll love to see what we have in store for J.R. and Morris.

Prepared by:

Michele Bates, Northside Middle School, batesm@gwd50.org

Ghostlight
Gensler, Sonia
Alfred A. Knopf, 2015
249 pages

SUMMARY:

Avery May Hillard and her older brother, Blake, spend their summers visiting their Grandmother's farm in Tennessee. They spend their days playing a game of telling stories and make-believe. This summer Blake decides he is too old for "Kingdom". Avery is prepared for the worst summer yet, but then she meets Julian who plans to film a ghost story while visiting the area with his dad. Avery decides to help Julian. She soon finds out that Julian plans to film at Hillary House, a spooky old mansion Avery is forbidden to enter. She begins to research the history of the house, and decides to go against Grandma's wishes and film with Julian in the house. The story they plan to tell takes a back seat to the real happenings inside the house once they enter.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK TRY...

The House on Stone Throw's Island, Dan Poblocki

The Murk, Robert Lettrick

The Graveyard Book, Neil Gaiman

Took: A Ghost Story, Mary Downing Hahn

WEBSITES:

Ghostlight, <http://www.soniagensler.com/ghostlight.php>, The book page on the author's website contains a book summary, discussions guide, and book trailer.

Ghostlight Trailer, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfVe3jER9qU>, Book trailer on YouTube.

BOOK TALK:

Imagine a summer spent with your older brother telling stories and playing games on your grandmother's rustic old farm. That is just what Avery and Blake do every summer. However, this summer Blake announces he is too old for make-believe. As Avery goes off to pout, she meets Julian. He's visiting the area with his father. He is planning to film a ghost story and recruits Avery to help. When Avery finds out the setting of the film is the old, abandoned mansion on their property, Hillard House she almost backs out. Her grandmother has warned her to stay out of the house. The fear of a boring summer causes Avery to go into the house with Julian to film. What they find isn't imaginary at all. Will Avery and Julian finish their ghost story movie or will the ghost of Hillary House create a new ghost story?

Prepared by:

Wendi Michael, Gold Hill Middle School, michaelw@fortmillschools.org

House Arrest

K.A. Holt

Chronicle Books LLC, 2015

296 Pages

SUMMARY:

Timothy, a young boy, is sentenced to house arrest after he steals a wallet in the hopes of saving his brother from a complicated home situation. He is given a chance at redemption if he can only keep a journal. Written in poetry, Timothy believes that the journal is ridiculous and pointless, but he comes to realize truths that many people still search for today. This book explores the right and wrong that the world sees in extreme circumstances as well as how far a person would go to save his family. The reader can see the passion behind the words written, and the voice of this book is outstanding. Although little Timothy is young, he makes a difference in his world for the better.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Ruby on the Outside, Nora Raleigh Baskin

Full Cicada Moon, Marilyn Hilton

Paper Things, Jennifer Richard Jacobson

Eleanor and Park, Rainbow Rowell

Up from the Sea, Alexa Lowitz

WEBSITES:

K.A. Holt, <http://kaholt.com/books/house-arrest/>, This website is the official website of K.A. Holt's books.

BOOKTALK:

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Prepared by:

Taylor Davis, Powdersville High School, taylordavis010202@gmail.com

I Am Princess X

Cherie Priest

Arthur A. Levine Books, 2015

229 pages

SUMMARY:

Childhood best friends May and Libby worked together to create a comic called “Princess X.” But when Libby died in a car accident, Princess X died with her. Three years later, a Princess X sticker in a vacant business window launches May into an investigation to discover who is behind the new Princess X and truth about what really happened to Libby.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Confessions of a Murder Suspect, James Patterson and Maxine Paetro

We Were Liars, E. Lockhart

The Plain Janes, Cecil Castellucci and Jim Rugg

Rat Life, Tedd Arnold

Scarlett Undercover, Jennifer Latham

Fallout, Gwenda Bond

WEBSITES:

The Haunt: The Official Blog and Home Page of Cherie Priest, <http://www.cheriepriest.com/>, Author’s website with information about her books and life, as well as a blog by Priest.

“I Am Princess X” Book Trailer, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KURIWKH4og>, Unofficial book trailer created by the National Cathedral School Library.

13 Great Webcomics for Kids and Teens, <http://www.slj.com/2016/04/technology/13-great-webcomics-for-kids-and-teens/>, A list of real webcomics with summaries and age recommendations.

BOOKTALK:

Once upon a time, there were two best friends named Libby and May. Libby was a gifted artist and May had a talent for thinking up stories, so the two of them collaborated to create a comic called “Princess X.” But Princess X met a tragic end when Libby and her mother were in a fatal car crash. When Libby died, Princess X died with her...At least, that’s what May thought until three years later when she noticed a familiar character on a sticker in an abandoned business window. From that moment on, May sees the princess everywhere. Her curiosity leads her to a webcomic that seems eerily similar to Libby’s short life and demise. With the help of Trick, the geeky computer nerd who lives in the apartment upstairs, May sets off on a dangerous quest to figure out who is behind the new Princess X and what really happened to Libby. Can May figure out the truth in time? This fast-paced mystery will keep you guessing till the very end.

Prepared by:

Kirsten Barber

I will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives

Alifirenka, Caitlin & Martin Ganda with Liz Welch

Little, Brown and Company, 2016

402 pages

SUMMARY:

Caitlin, an American girl becomes pen pals with Martin, a young man from Zimbabwe through a school project. Little do they know this letter writing experience will last a lifetime. Told through alternating viewpoints, this memoir explains how Caitlin and Martin become lifelong friends and changes their lives for the better.

IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK TRY...

A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story, Linda Sue Park

Brown Girl Dreaming, Jacqueline Woodson

Outcasts United: The Story of a Refugee Soccer Team that Changed a Town, Warren St. John

Bomb: The Race to Build--and Steal--the World's Most Dangerous Weapon, Steve Sheinkin

WEBSITES:

'I Will Always Write Back' – New York Times,

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/10/books/review/i-will-always-write-back-how-one-letter-changed-two-lives.html?_r=0, New York Times Book Review.

Martin Ganda, <http://martinganda.blogspot.com/p/about.html>, Martin's website with information about his life and non-profit organization.

Seeds of Africa Foundation, <http://seedsof africa.com/>, Martin's Non-profit Seeds of Change that helps children in Africa.

BOOK TALK:

This is the true story of how a school assignment changed two lives. Told in alternating voices, Caitlin, a typical American seventh grader, chooses Martin as her pen pal from Zimbabwe. Initially assuming he is from a rich family and going to private school, she soon realizes what life is really like for Martin. Life is a struggle just to have food to eat each day. Because of their friendship, Caitlin expands her world view and compassion for others. Eventually Caitlin's family sponsors Martin to help with his education.

Prepared by:

Wendi Michael, Gold Hill Middle School, michaelw@fortmillschools.org

Mark of the Thief

Jennifer A. Nielsen

Scholastic, 2015

339 pages

SUMMARY:

When Nic, a slave in the mines outside of Rome, is forced to enter a sealed cavern containing the lost treasures of Julius Caesar, he finds much more than gold and gemstones: He discovers an ancient bulla, an amulet that belonged to the great Caesar and is filled with a magic once reserved for the gods -- magic some Romans would kill for. Now, with the deadly power of the bulla pulsing through his veins, Nic is determined to become free. But instead, he finds himself at the center of a ruthless conspiracy to overthrow the emperor and spark the Praetor War, a battle to destroy Rome from within. Traitors and spies lurk at every turn, each more desperate than the next to use Nic's newfound powers for their own dark purposes. In a quest to stop the rebellion, save Rome, and secure his own freedom, Nic must harness the magic within himself and defeat the empire's most powerful and savage leaders.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Rise of the Wolf (Mark of the Thief, Book #2), Jennifer A. Nielsen

Wrath of the Storm (Mark of the Thief #3), Jennifer A. Nielsen

Dragonwatch: A Fablehaven Adventure, Brandon Mull

WEBSITES:

Mark of the Thief Book Trailer, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Kg44SmgWSs>, This is a YouTube book trailer for *Mark of the Thief*.

Jennifer A. Nielsen, <http://www.jennielsen.com>, The author's website has information about the author and her works.

BOOKTALK:

When Nic, a slave in the mines outside of Rome, is forced to enter a sealed cavern containing the lost treasures of Julius Caesar, he finds much more than gold and gemstones: He discovers an ancient bulla, an amulet that belonged to the great Caesar and is filled with a magic once reserved for the gods -- magic some Romans would kill for. In a quest to stop the rebellion, save Rome, and secure his own freedom, Nic must harness the magic within himself and defeat the empire's most powerful and savage leaders. Readers will enjoy an electrifying tale of greed and power, magic and destiny, and one boy's remarkable courage at the heart of it all.

Prepared by:

Clara Eads, Teacher, Liberty Middle School, claraeads@pickens.k12.sc.us

Roller Girl
Victoria Jamieson
Dial Books for Young Readers, 2015
240 pages

SUMMARY:

Astrid and Nicole are best friends and do everything together – that is, until the summer before sixth grade when Nicole heads off to ballet camp with a new friend while Astrid takes up roller derby. Not only does Astrid need a lot of practice to succeed at roller derby, but she also has a lot to learn about herself and being a good friend.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Smile, Raina Telgemeier

El Deafo, Cece Bell

The Lumberjanes, Noelle Stevenson

Chiggers, Hope Larson

Paige by Page, Laura Lee Gulledge

WEBSITES:

Victoria Jamieson, <http://www.victoriajamieson.com/>, Author's website with more information about the book and author, web comics, and a free ebook.

Roller Girl by Victoria Jamieson, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnQSfub4_k0, Book trailer and author interview.

WFTA, <https://wftda.com/>, Official Women's Flat Track Derby Association website with information about the sport, a database of member leagues, and a schedule of tournaments.

Men's Roller Derby Association, <https://mrda.org/>, Official Men's Roller Derby Association website with information about the sport, a database of member leagues, and a schedule of tournaments.

BOOKTALK:

Astrid and Nicole go everywhere and do everything together. So naturally when Astrid signs up for roller derby camp, she assumes that Nicole will join her. Instead, Nicole heads off to dance camp with a new friend. Roller derby is a lot harder than Astrid expected it to be, and things are even harder without her best friend there with her. Astrid struggles to stay on her feet, much less score any points. Life outside the rink is just as difficult. For the first time ever, she feels like an outsider who doesn't fit in. Can Astrid master her new sport without any broken bones or injuries to her pride? Will she and Nicole find their way back to each other or are they doomed to grow apart? Read *Roller Girl* and find out if Astrid can get back up when the other blockers and life knock her down.

Prepared by:
Kirsten Barber

The Seventh Most Important Thing

Shelley Pearsall

Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2015

288 pages

SUMMARY:

Ever since his father died, Arthur Owens is angry. When he sees a neighborhood trash picker wearing his father's old cap, it is too much. In a rage of grief, 13-year-old Arthur throws a brick at James Hampton, the neighborhood "Junk Man," and injures him. After three weeks in juvenile detention, Mr. Hampton comes up with an alternative punishment. Arthur is sentenced to become a "junk man" himself, collecting seven indispensable items from local trash bins for a project Mr. Hampton has in mind. Arthur's work for Mr. Hampton, along with the friendships he forms along the way, help heal Arthur's pain and give him a new sense of purpose and hope.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Lost in the Sun, Lisa Graff

Paperboy, Vince Vawter

Cornelia and the Audacious Escapades of the Somerset Sisters, Lesley M. M. Blume

Penny from Heaven, Jennifer Holm

WEBSITES:

FaveCrafts, <http://www.favecrafts.com/Earth-Day-Crafts/16-Recycle-Crafts-for-Kids>, links for 50+ arts and crafts ideas using recycled materials.

Smithsonian American Art Museum – Renwick Gallery, <http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=9897>, images and a brief description of The Throne of the Third Heaven of the Nations' Millennium General Assembly and artist James Hampton.

Colonial Williamsburg, <http://www.history.org/Foundation/journal/Spring04/throne.cfm>, brief bio of artist James Hampton. Briefly, touches on Hampton's not yet deciphered code worked into his piece The Throne of the Third Heaven of the Nations' Millennium General Assembly.

BOOKTALK:

We all get angry, and we all do some things when we are angry that we regret. For 13-year-old Arthur Owens, that moment comes when he sees the local "Junk Man" wearing his recently deceased father's hat. He throws a brick at the older man and severely injures him.

Arthur is prepared to spend a long time in juvenile detention when the judge instead tells him he will be spending his Saturdays helping James Hampton, a.k.a. the Junk Man instead of "juvie" time.

As the two spend time together, Arthur's view of others changes as does his view of what is trash and what is treasure.

Prepared by:

Michelle Martin, South Middle School, michelle.martin@lcsdmail.net

Terror at Bottle Creek

Watt Key

Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR) 2016

224 pages

SUMMARY:

Thirteen year-old Cort is accustomed to the outdoors. His father, an expert on hunting, swamp lore, and all things outdoors, has taught him well, but Cort's knowledge is put to the test when he and two neighbors must face a deadly Category 3 storm. In this realistic and action packed adventure, Cort must face the battle of his life so that he and his neighbors will live through the storm.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK TRY:

Adrift, Paul Griffin

The Edge, Roland Smith

Jungle of Bones, Ben Mikaelson

Never Say Die, Will Hobbs

Peak, Roland Smith

WEBSITES:

National Hurricane Center, <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutsshws.php>, This site contains information about the hurricane wind scale.

Terror at Bottle Creek, <http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/books/book-trailers/terror-at-bottle-creek>, This is a link to a book trailer for the novel.

Watt Key, Delta Storyteller, <http://wattkey.com/>, This is the author's website.

BOOKTALK:

Cort lives on a houseboat with his dad, a river guide, and is no stranger to the great outdoors. His preoccupied dad has often left him to flounder alone, but when a category three storm hits Cort's Alabama town his worst fears come alive. His father is nowhere to be found when this powerful storm hits. A series of terrible events leads Cort and his two neighbors stranded. Will they survive the *Terror at Bottle Creek*?

Prepared by:

Christy Brown, Blythewood Middle School, cbrown@richland2.org

Walk on Earth a Stranger

Rae Carson

Greenwillow Books, 2015

436 pages

SUMMARY:

Lee Westfall has a secret. She can sense the presence of gold in the world around her. Veins deep beneath the earth, pebbles in the river, nuggets dug up from the forest floor. The buzz of gold means warmth and life and home—until everything is ripped away by a man who wants to control her. Left with nothing, Lee disguises herself as a boy and takes to the trail across the country. Gold was discovered in California, and where else could such a magical girl find herself, find safety?

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK TRY...

Reawakened, Colleen Houck

The White Rose, Amy Ewing

Scent of Magic, Maria V. Snyder

Just One Day, Gayle Forman

A Million Suns, Beth Revis

WEBSITES:

Rae Carson, <http://www.raecarson.com/>, find info about the author and her books.

BOOKTALK:

Being a girl in 1848 is obviously not going to be easy. Now being a girl with gold sensing powers in 1848 during the California Gold Rush, well that's even worse. Lee Westfall lived her day to day life harboring this secret from all but a select few. She was doing her best to be able to provide for her family without drawing attention. However, when a family of humble country folk somehow manage to always have just enough money it's sure to raise suspicion. When that suspicion turned to accusations, to the death of near everyone she loved, and finally to her being made to live with her cruel Uncle, the distraught girl took off West. To the new land that held gold and her best friend Jefferson who had left in hope of striking rich just a while before. Though as she ran she had her gluttonous uncle that had taken claim to her parents' lands on her heels. He wanted to keep her, to use her magic for his own ill reasons. So disguised as a boy, she jumps from one mode of transportation to the next until she can find a steady wagon train to sign on with and meet up with Jefferson. If she ever makes it to Jefferson, where will she go from there? Can Lee make it to California without getting caught? Will she be able to hide her true gender and her powers from those she befriends along the way? Found out the answers by reading this enticing adventure story.

Prepared by:

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The War That Saved My Life

Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

Dial Books for Young Readers, Penguin Group, 2015

316 pages

SUMMARY:

Ten-year-old Ada has never left her one-room apartment. Her mother is too humiliated by Ada's twisted foot to let her outside. So when her little brother Jamie is shipped out of London to escape the war, Ada doesn't waste a minute—she sneaks out to join him. This is a tale of adventure, daring, cruelty, and love set during one of the worst times in world history – World War II.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Secret Keepers, Trenton Lee Stewart

Echo, Pam Munoz Ryan

Brown Girl Dreaming, Jacqueline Woodson

Good Night, Mr. Tom, Michelle Magorian

The Children of the King, Sonya Hartnett

WEBSITES:

Kimberly Brubaker Bradley, <http://www.kimberlybrubakerbradley.com/index.htm>, The author's website contains information about the author and her works.

The War That Saved My Life, <https://prezi.com/zwxmolfh2qgd/the-war-that-saved-my-life/>, This is a lovely presentation with pictures and text, summarizing the story.

The War That Saved My Life, <http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/20912424-the-war-that-saved-my-life>, This Goodreads page lists several reviews of this book.

BOOKTALK:

Ten-year-old Ada has never left her one-room apartment. Her mother is too humiliated by Ada's twisted foot to let her outside. So when her little brother Jamie is shipped out of London to escape the war, Ada doesn't waste a minute—she sneaks out to join him.

So begins a new adventure of Ada, and for Susan Smith, the woman who is forced to take the two kids in. As Ada teaches herself to ride a pony, learns to read, and watches for German spies, she begins to trust Susan—and Susan begins to love Ada and Jamie. But in the end, will their bond be enough to hold them together through wartime? Or will Ada and her brother fall back into the cruel hands of their mother?

Prepared by:

Alissa Davis, Parent Member, adavis1997@gmail.com

The Worst Class Trip Ever

Dave Barry

Disney-Hyperion, 2015

224 pages

SUMMARY:

8th grader Wyatt Palmer takes a class trip to Washington, D.C. Wyatt think this will be an ordinary trip and plans to focus on getting the attention of Suzana, the girl of his dreams. His focus quickly changes when he and his friends notice two mysterious men on their flight. The men are acting suspiciously and carrying a strange bag. The pace picks up and things go from bad to worse when Wyatt and his friends risk getting in trouble to stop the men who they believe have come to kill the president of the United States. Are these men really trying to kill the president? Will Wyatt and his friends find out or be sent back home by the school chaperones?

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Skink No Surrender, Carl Hiaasen

Crush, Gary Paulsen

Ungifted, Gordon Korman

Still a Work in Progress, Jo Knowles

WEBSITES:

Washington, D.C Fun Facts for Kids, <https://washington.org/DC-information/washington-dc-quick-facts-kids>, Find out fun facts about Washington DC and plan a trip there.

Official Tourism Site of Washington, D.C., <https://washington.org/>, Washington, D.C.'s official travel website.

Dave Barry, <http://www.davebarry.com/>, The author's website contains information about the author and his works.

BOOKTALK:

If you like a book that has mystery and humor, then this is the book for you. Dave Barry takes his readers on an out of the ordinary class trip seen through the eyes of the main character with a taste of danger and intrigue. The humor comes in when Wyatt and his friends try to prevent a crime and distract their chaperones all at the same time.

Prepared by:

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