

Civil War Drummer Boy

By Verla Kay

This is a rhyming text with wonderful illustrations. This is the story of a young boy who signs up to drum for the Confederate Army, signaling movements and such during battles. It's good for elementary kids because while it gives them a glimpse of the war, it passes over the violence and blood. Kids will enjoy this version of history.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Skippyjon Jones Class Action

By Judy Schachner

This is a typical rhyming, Spanish infused story of a kitty who fancies himself a Chihuahua. This story tells about his musings about going to school with the "big dogs". As usual he has high adventures and returns to his mama and sisters ready to go at it again in the future. Kids will love this fun book...especially as a read aloud.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Inside Tree

By Linda Smith

This is a funny story of an overly compassionate man who lets his dog come in his house and then decides that his tree is lonely and it needs to come in too. As can be predicted, this leads to some interesting and up close nature experiences. In the end, he moves to the barn and starts over...only to see a cow that might need to come inside. The illustrations are fun and so is the predicting for this story. Recommended for early elementary aged kids and any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Ladybug

By Gail Gibbons

This is a very typical book by this author. It's well illustrated nonfiction book that's full of info just right for early elementary kids to read on their own. Kids will enjoy the info in the back as well as her extra sources listed there for more research.

Recommended for any library collection

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Betsy Ross

By Becky White

This is a rhyming book for K-2 about Betsy Ross making the first flag. For older children, the last pages tell more about the methods used in making the flag, and gives instructions on how to fold and cut a five point star. Good illustration throughout.

Joyce Sullivan

Double Dog Dare

By Lisa Graff

Kansas Bloom moves to a new elementary school and inadvertently becomes engaged in a Double Dare war to become the news anchor of the fourth-grade Media Club. Francine thought she had the news anchor position locked up

but those plans are now in limbo because of Kansas. Licking a lizard, dying hair green, wearing a tutu, running underwear up a flagpole are just a few of the dares. And although it starts out as just dares, they both find themselves in trouble at school as the dares become increasingly crazy. As each of them wants to dislike the other, they both find out their families have something in common that is changing both of their lives forever. This book is recommended for grades 3-5 and for any library collection. The dares the characters are challenged to do are quite attention-getting. Fourth graders will probably find this more interesting since the characters are a fourth grade class. Boys or girls should find it fun and I think it would be a good book for reluctant readers. Both Kansas and Francine are dealing with divorce in their families and kids should be able to commiserate with the characters and how divorce turns their worlds around.
Deb Daehnke

Remarkable

By Lizzie K. Foley

This is crazy mystery would be good for 4th through 7th graders. Characters include a pirate turned teacher, a sea monster, and a musician all living in a remarkable town that considers almost all of the residents to be remarkable. Jane Doe and her grandpa, John Doe, seem to be the only ordinary people, but they are the ones who solve the mysteries of the town named Remarkable.
Joyce Sullivan

Theodore Boone: The Accused

By John Grisham

This is a fast paced mystery and has 10 year-old Theo accused of robbing a computer store. His uncle Ike helps find the real culprit, but to do so Theo must steal a password from his lawyer-parents' office computer. Theo feels guilty about stealing the password, but does not tell his mom or dad. Sixth grade readers and up would enjoy this book.
Joyce Sullivan

The Unfortunate Son

By Constance Leeds

The baby of a Count in 16th century France is born with only one ear. This is unacceptable to nobility and he is raised by his wet nurse. He becomes a fisherman and then is taken by pirates and sold into slavery. He is unfortunate in many ways but learns easily, and eventually ends up back with the family he did not know he had. This adventure story is recommended for 5th grade and up and appropriate for any library.
Joyce Sullivan

Yours Truly Lucy B. Parker Girl vs. Superstar

By Robin Palmer

Lucy's life goes from bad to worse. Her best friends dump her, a bad haircut forces her to wear hats, she has yet to have her period, and her mother insists that it is time to wear a bra.

Now, to top it all off, her mom is dating the father of TV-music-movie star, Laurel Moses. Laurel is just a year older than Lucy, but where Lucy's life is a mess, she sees Laurel as perfect. How can she compete with that? The idea behind the book, dealing with a possible stepfamily, is good. The problem is the amount of rambling that persists. It feels like the issues of her impending period and wearing a bra are just fill-in and really have nothing to do with the book. Young girls do like to talk about themselves but most do not want to listen to their friends doing the same and Lucy pretty much goes on about nothing for the first half of the book. There truly has to be something better out there for young readers. This book is recommended for grades 4th through 6th and for any library.
Diane Limoges

Slide

By Jill Hathaway

Everyone believes that Vee is narcoleptic. The real truth is that when she falls asleep, Vee slides into the body of someone else. When she touches something that someone has imprinted themselves on, she slips into their mind and sees things from their perspective. Rather than take the prescription the doctors have given her to make her sleep, Vee takes a caffeine pill to help her stay awake. When she finds a note pasted to the door she slips into the body of someone who has killed her sister's friend. Everyone thinks that Sophie committed suicide but Vee knows better. Now she is going to have to find out what really happened and the only way seems to be to slide into different people and see what she can learn. Though the sliding seems a little far-fetched, it works. Readers will think they have solved the mystery of who-done-it several times before the real murderer is revealed. This will make an excellent addition to your young adult collection. Recommended for grades 9th and up, and any library collection.

Diane Limoges

Madhattan Mystery

By John J. Bonk

Lexi and Kevin are stuck with their aunt in NYC while their dad honeymoon with their new step mom. They get caught up in a mystery the moment they arrive in NYC when they hear about the jewels stolen from a museum. After getting into many dangerous situations, they solve the mystery and Lexi sees that her deceased mother has been helping her and wants her to accept their new step mom. Recommended for grades 5th to 9th and appropriate for any library.

Joyce Sullivan

Icefall

By Matthew J. Kirby

Solveig, along with her older sister, Asa, and younger brother, the crowned Prince Harald, are sent to a hidden fortress to protect them from the war their country is involved in. The winter is long and they can't wait for spring so they can return home. Solveig has strange and terrible dreams of death and

fire. When her dreams start to come true, everyone sent to protect them becomes a suspect of the evil doings. Who can they trust? Will they ever see their father again? Here is a fantasy and mystery story that will attract readers of all ages. Reading this tale will have young readers wanting to learn to read. The adult reading the tale will be as enthralled by the tale as their young listener. This is a great selection for all ages to enjoy and another hit for this author. Recommended for grades 6th and up. Also, for any library.

Diane Limoges

Girl's Best Friend

By Leslie Margolis

This story reveals what it is like to be a young girl growing up, but with a little mystery thrown in. Maggie, secret dog-walker turned detective, stumbles across her part-time job when just trying to help out a friend. Not wanting to upset her parents, who might think she can't handle school and a job, she keeps her financial endeavor under-wraps. Maggie is dealing with a friendship gone bad, a boy who maybe she would like to get to know better, but maybe not, and, oh yes, all those dogs who have been disappearing in her neighborhood. Maggie loves dogs; in fact, lately she loves them more than most people. They are always happy to see you, they don't dump you for no reason or talk bad about you to their doggy friends. She would love to have one, but her twin brother, Finn, is allergic to them. She is thrown into mysterious dog disappearances when she catches her ex-best friends stealing her dog walking money, and the adventure takes off from there. This book is part of the *Maggie Brooklyn Mystery* series. With the content focusing around friendship issues with boys and girls, I feel *Girl's Best Friend* would be best suited for middle school readers. It would be a good mystery series for either a school or public library.

Jane Dodson

The Price of Loyalty

By Mike Castan

Manny is a 7th grade Hispanic boy who, without meaning to, becomes part of a new gang, the Conquistadors. He finds out that getting out of a gang is much harder than getting into one. He is a go between getting marijuana for his gang from an old friend. He finally gets the courage to rat on his so-called friends to the police after two of his classmates are seriously beaten up by members of his gang. Recommended for 6th grade and up and appropriate for any library.

Joyce Sullivan

Stomp, Dinosaur, Stomp!

By Margaret Mayo

Stomp, stomp, stomping through this book is so much fun! Dinosaurs are a huge lure to young readers. This story would definitely fill a hunger that kids have to learn about them. The pictures are bright, colorful, and so appealing. The word choice and the font style will grab children's attention. It would definitely be a lap reading book because a lot of the

words would be hard for young readers to decode. Each page brings a new dinosaur with the pronunciation of each name. I feel that Kindergarten through 2nd grade level readers will really enjoy this picture book. It would be a great addition to any kind of library.

Jane Dodson

A Pirate's Guide to First Grade

By James Preller

Full of pirate jargon, this imaginative story of the first day of school will appeal to 4-8 year-olds. At the back of the book, all of the pirate vocabulary is defined (helpful to teachers, parents, and children). The treasure, found at the end of the first day of school, is books! Recommended for any library.

Joyce Sullivan

The Fantastic Secret of Owen Jester

By Barbara O'Conner

Owen and his friends find a two person submarine when it falls off a train. They figure out a way to get it to the pond and how to operate it before they are discovered. Then they are grounded until a newspaper reporter interviews them and writes the headline CHILDREN TOUR LOCAL POND IN SUBMARINE. This adventure story would be good for 4th-6th graders. Recommended for any library.

Joyce Sullivan

Death Cloud

By Andrew Lane

Sherlock Holmes is a 14 year-old boy in 1868 England. He is sent to live with an aunt and uncle during a break from boarding school. He and his tutor find a dead body and a friend he meets also sees a dead body, both bodies covered with boils and a mysterious cloud leaving. Sherlock and his friends get in many dangerous predicaments while solving the mystery of the murders caused by African bees. High school readers and adults would enjoy this book. Recommended for any library.

Joyce Sullivan

Farm Friends

By Wendell Minor

This is a rhyming book about various farm animals and is very charming and colorful. The bright colors catch the reader's eye and this would be a great choice for any library or children's collection! Recommended for ages toddler to mid-elementary.

Sharon Kinnan

Eddie Gets Ready for School

By David Milgrim

This story is written as a checklist for getting ready for school. Eddie throws in some humorous items on his list. This book has a unique story format and has limited reading. This would be a good choice for a young children's collection and

is recommended for younger school-aged children. Good for any library.

Sharon Kinnan

As Simple as It Seems

By Sarah Weeks

Verbena, an 11 year-old girl, finds out she was adopted at a time in her life when she is changing. She loses her best friend, fights with her parents, and pretends to be a ghost. This story is very easy to read and would make a good addition to a young teen collection. Recommended for mid-elementary to Jr. High school students and great for any library.

Sharon Kinnan

Nightshade City

By Hilary Wagner

The Nightshade rats develop a new home for the rats from the catacombs who had become prisoners of Killdeer and Billycan. Through much planning the Nightshade rats easily free the rats and conquer the others – all except Billycan who escapes. This story is magical with a make believe world of rats and makes for a very interesting plot! This would be a great purchase for those pre-teens and teens who like magical stories. Recommended for upper elementary to High School grades, and appropriate for any library.

Sharon Kinnan

The Frenzy

By Francesca Lia Block

Liv has a secret that no one can know. Something happened to Liv on her 13th birthday and everything starts changing. Will Liv discover who or what she is? This is similar to Maggie Stiefvater's Linger series – where teenagers change into werewolves. Another exciting story for the girls interested in the “werewolves” plots. It's the typical mixture of love, lust, and strange that so many teens are into these days. This book is recommended for 7th grade on up and appropriate for any library.

Kristy Wittler

Calamity Jack

By Shannon Hale

This is a graphic novel fairy tale version of a criminal mastermind – but he's not a “jack of all trades” he is more of a jerk with lots of bad luck! I thought it to be satirical and didn't like it much. I would only have one or two students who I know would enjoy this book. Recommended for middle school and up, and appropriate for any library.

Kristy Wittler

Scratch-Scratch a Perfect Match

By Kimberly Marcus

This is a picture book that tells the story in rhyme about a flea that causes lots of trouble and lots of itching. The illustrations are done beautifully and bold-face words are great for

emphasis with all the “sound-effects” of the crazy words! I’m just “itching” to read this story to the lower grades and we can all “itch” as the flea “itches” his way through the whole town. Recommended for pre-Kindergarten through 2nd grade and appropriate for any library.

Kristy Wittler

One Too Many

By Gianna Marino

This counting book is quite a challenge, which will keep it fun and fresh for repeated readings. Children can follow the hopping flea on each page as it leaps from one barnyard creature to the next, always increasing by one more on each page. There is the option to count how many of each type of animal is in the book. Additionally, there are some seek and find challenges that will have young ones pouring over the pages. The wordless format provides the opportunity for discussion with children or it can be the perfect selection for “quiet time” settings. This book is recommended for Pre-K through 1st grade and appropriate for any library.

Latricia Olson

Will Princess Isabel Ever Say Please?

By Steve Metzger

In this fractured fairy tale, Princess Isabel, because of her rudeness, is not able to marry the handsome prince. Each prince rejects Isabel because she refuses to say please. The princes go on to marry Cinderella and Snow White, but Isabel remains prince-less until she finally wins her prince’s heart by adding please to her request. This book charmingly teaches good manners without being preachy or heavy handed. Youngsters will delight in the connections to traditional fairy tales. This book is recommended for pre-Kindergarten through 2nd grade and appropriate for any library.

Latricia Olson

Detective Little Boy Blue

By Steve Metzger

Miss Muffet is missing and Detective Blue, AKA Little Boy Blue, searches everywhere for her. Fortunately, he is able to locate her with the help of many nursery rhyme characters. The graphic novel style of illustrating works well with the storyline. Although children may enjoy this book as a stand-alone book, they will enjoy it much more if they are familiar with traditional nursery rhymes. Unfortunately, many children today do not have the background to fully appreciate all of the references. This book is recommended for pre-Kindergarten through 2nd grade and appropriate for any library.

Latricia Olson

Too Many Dinosaurs

By Mercer Mayer

A little boy asks his mother for a puppy, but his request is refused. Luckily, he was able to purchase a dinosaur egg for \$1 at a yard sale. Surprisingly, the egg hatches and the baby triceratops is able escape. Unsuccessful at capturing the

dinosaur, the boy is able to borrow a dinosaur horn to call him back. The horn works all too well, and huge dinosaurs are everywhere. Fortunately, he is able to chase away the dinosaurs with his magnificent horn, and is rewarded with a puppy. This book is perfect for young listeners/readers who are often quite enamored with dinosaurs. This book is recommended for Pre-K through 2nd grade and appropriate for any library.

Latricia Olson

Stolen Away

By Alyxandra Harvey

Main character, Eloise, is abducted by Fue King and her best friend Jo attempts to rescue her and is abducted as well.

“Fairy” books are quite popular right now. This one seems pretty much on par with the others. I thought the story moved pretty fast, but left lots of holes in the story. Characters were pretty one-dimensional, but tweens probably won’t mind.

Recommended for the middle school grades and appropriate for any library.

Jennie Schneider

Bliss

By Kathryn Littlewood

Rose’s family runs a “magical” bakery. She and her siblings decide to “try out” some of the recipes in the Bliss Cookery Books (the magical cookbook) and problems arise. I enjoyed this story. Although it was pretty predictable, I felt the story had a unique premise. Recommended for middle school grades and appropriate for any library.

Jennie Schneider

Forest Born - The Books of Bayern

By Shannon Hale

Rin is a forest born girl itching to leave the forest and figure out who she is and what she wants to do, especially after her brother Razo leaves home. She struggles with her sense of the trees and what they are telling her. She returns to the palace with Razo where he has been working and becomes a woman in waiting for Queen Isi. Eventually she goes on a journey to save the kingdom with the Fire Sisters, as she calls them, Isi, Enna, and Dasha. Although Rin thinks she will have little to offer to their extraordinary powers, her latent powers of talking with the trees and communicating will influence their journey. This book is recommended for Upper Middle School readers and any library collection. This is the fourth tale in the Books of Bayern. I have not read the first three books but his one has a little bit of magic, lots of adventure, and strong female characters. I enjoyed this book very much and it was easy to follow even without having read the first three books. And it did make me want to read the other books. Girls might find this a little more interesting than boys but there was plenty of adventure for boys as well.

Several times the book did seem to drag just a little bit it didn’t last long and the action made up for it.

Deb Daehnke