

Jeremy Bender vs. the Cupcake Cadets

By Eric Luper

Jeremy and his friend are constantly bullied by Paul Vogler. When they accidentally ruin the motor on Jeremy's dad's boat they don dresses and join the Cupcake Cadets to try and win some easy prize money. The Cupcake Cadets group turns out to be harder than they thought, and they do not win prize money. But they make friends with a girl that can help them repair the boat motor, and they do manage to get treated better by Paul. This fiction book has an outrageous plot, but it is funny. This book is recommended for grades 4th through 6th and appropriate for any library.

Joyce Sullivan, Elgin, NE

Emma

By Jane Austen

This classic is a hard book to read. The story is good, but the language is hard to understand as is the society and rules of the 1800s. Emma is unsuccessful as a matchmaker, but all comes out good in the end. Very few teenage girls would enjoy this book. Those who love English literature might enjoy it. I would recommend it for the higher grades of high school, and this book is appropriate for any library.

Joyce Sullivan, Elgin, NE

The Helpful Puppy

By Kim Zarins

A little puppy tries to find his place on a very busy farm. He explores each animal's job, and tries to help all the animals. The puppy finally finds his job and that is to give love to his owner. This is a very heartwarming story that every child will enjoy. This book is recommended for grades Preschool through 2nd and appropriate for any library.

Lara Morrow, O'Neill, NE

This School Year Will Be the Best!

By Kay Winters

A student tries to foresee what the new school year will hold. Every child gets excited for a fresh new start each year. This one is the child's vision. This would be a great book to read to a class on the 1st day of school. Recommended for grades Kindergarten through 2nd and appropriate for any library.

Lara Morrow, O'Neill, NE

Cindy Moo

By Lori Mortensen

This is the funny story that is a take-off of the Hey, Diddle Diddle Rhyme. When Cindy Moo finds out cows can jump over the moon, she's determined to try. And believe it or not, after a lot of funny trial and error, she's comes up with a solution. It's a cute story with its rhymes and cartoonish illustrations that preschoolers and kindergarteners would love as they learn their nursery rhymes. They can learn to jump over the moon too. This book is recommended for anyone who loves silliness.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Hansel and Gretel

Retold by Amy Ehrlich

This is an adaptation from the retold version of Amy Ehrlich and originally by the Brothers Grimm. As all of us know a lot of the Brothers Grimm work are rather gruesome and dark, and this story, even though lightened with colorful pictures, is dark as well. Two children, unloved by a step-mother, are led through the forest to be eaten by wolves by their father.

Wisely, they drop breadcrumbs, which are then eaten by the birds. Their luck gets even worse when they run into an old woman who happens to be a witch. The children have many harrowing experiences before they are reunited with their father. This book is recommended for grades Preschool through 2nd and appropriate for any library.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School

Finding Family

By Tonya Bolden

Delana was unable to get her Grandpa and Aunt Tilly to tell her much about her younger years. They raised her and were pretty closed mouthed about her parents and the circumstances that lead to Delana's life with them in Charleston, WV. However, Aunt Tilly had a favorite pastime that she shared with Delana. She called it "Time to Visit Kinfolk." They would peruse family photos and Aunt Tilly would sometimes share small bits of information and her opinions about the people in the photos. These morsels only served to whet Delana's appetite for information about her parents. When Aunt Tilly died, Grandpa had to decide who would continue to help raise Delana. She had her own thoughts on the matter and began to put pieces of information together about the relatives in the family photos. She pushed Grandpa for more information than he had previously been willing to share and Delana's future became bright and more in focus than she had ever hoped would be the case.

There are antique black and white photos in this book, and also a family tree to add context to the novel. The Author's Note provides insight into the inspiration to the story. This book should appeal to those who like mild mysteries and those interested in Southern history. Recommended for grades 6 and up and appropriate for any library.

MeMe Smith, Schuyler Public Library

Start Saving, Henry

By Nancy Carlson

Henry the mouse receives a very generous allowance each week for making his bed and a few other chores around the house. Like many other youngsters, he can't wait to spend his earnings each week. His spending habits change when his Mom tells him that she will not buy "Super Robot Dude" for him and that he needs to save his own money. That was hard for Henry, and he had a few setbacks. Then Grandma came to visit and brought Henry his own "Super Robot Dude." Henry celebrated by treating everyone to ice cream before beginning to save again for another toy. This book contains bright illustrations that take up most of the space on each page. The actual writing consists of only one or two lines per page. This book is similar to other books in attempting to teach youngsters how to deal with the challenges of life. However, by presenting Grandma's gift to Henry before he saves enough allowance to make his own purchase, this tale is only partially successful at showing youngsters the significance of saving their funds for something important. Although this is a very short book, story time can be extended by spending time discussing the tale and the pros and cons of saving an allowance. Recommended for preschool through lower elementary grades and appropriate for any library.
MeMe Smith, Schuyler Public Library

Hot Diggity Dog: The History of the Hot Dog

By Adrienne Sylver

Hot dogs seem to be a staple in American diets, but readers will learn that there is more than American history behind the favorite ball park treat. Beginning with the reference to sausage in the "Odyssey" and continuing to modern day franks, hotdogs have been made from a variety of recipes and have been known by numerous names. They have been served for an assortment of events and have been the center of eating contests. This book contains recipes, a short list of interesting websites, suggestions for other books to read, and a bibliography. This is a fun and acceptable book for early research. There are cartoon drawings that contribute to the appeal of this engrossing book. Older readers this book might also enjoy "The World in Your Lunch Box: The Wacky History and Weird Science of Everyday Foods." I would recommend this for youth or anyone who enjoys non-fiction, especially that with trivia added to the more significant details. I would suggest this for upper elementary and older readers and this would be appropriate for any library.
MeMe Smith, Schuyler Public Library

Body Actions

By Shelley Rotner and David A. White

This is a fabulous basic anatomy book. Early elementary students will enjoy the unique perspective of body illustrations that are superimposed over photos of real kids. This gives kids a good perspective. The text is full of basic, but interesting information. This will be a book kids will pick up again and again and would be a wonderful part of any collection—public or private.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

In the Land of Milk and Honey

By Joyce Carol Thomas

This is the true story of the author's trip to live in California as a little girl. It's full of unique and beautifully worded descriptions that make a reader feel as if he is on the train alongside. The illustrations are lovely too and add to the story. This book is recommended for early elementary students and any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Find a Cow NOW!

By Janet Stevens

This is the story of a cattle dog who is an urban dweller. When he's sent on a quest to find a cow, he encounters many interesting and loud animals before finally stumbling upon his cow. But the adventure is a tiring one that lands him back where he started. The animal characters drawn in a lifelike way will make this book a favorite for any elementary aged animal lovers. This could be a part of any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Seed by Seed

By Esme Raji Codell

This is the story of Johnny Appleseed for kids that highlights Johnny's selfless philosophies and draws the reader into the story. The illustrations are perfect for adding to this effect. This book is recommended for biography readers of all ages and any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Homer

By Elisha Cooper

This is a fun story with very little text, making this a favorite of younger readers. Homer is an old and tired dog who sits quietly on his porch by the beach watching his family romp and plays and go about their day. But still he is loved and at home. Animal lovers will read this book and wish they were at the beach with their pet watching the fun. The illustrations are simple but really make the story. This book is recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Bailey at the Museum

By Harry Bliss

This is a fun story about a dog who acts human and follows his class to a dinosaur museum where he has a little trouble, makes friends with the security guard and has an fun adventure. Early elementary students will love this book and probably wonder if they can climb the dinosaur bones too.

Recommended for any collection

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Too Tall Houses

By Gianna Marino

This is a fun book of an owl and rabbit who build their houses so close together that they have to keep building up to stay ahead of the other. In the end, things come crashing down...literally, and Owl and Rabbit come up with a better solution than selfishness. It's a good story, with a good lesson and nice illustrations to make things extra funny. This book is recommended for anyone in need of a reminder to be part of the solution rather than the problem and consider others.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

It's Duffy Time!

By Audrey and Don Wood

This is a very cute story of a little pug's very nap-filled day. It's probably a pretty accurate book that will give kids insight into what the day looks like to a dog. Dog lovers everywhere will love this book, its lifelike illustrations and shenanigans.

Recommended for any audience and collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Charlie and the Christmas Kitty

By Ree Drummond

This is another in the Charlie series of a hound dog's life on a ranch. This one, as the title reflects, involves an interesting Christmas gift who kind of has to grow on Charlie. Kids will adore this cute book and story which will probably prompt requests for pets for their pets. Recommended for any collection and readers old and young who are Charlie fans.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

Big Turtle

By David McLimans

A Native American version of Creation. Done with Native American drawings it tells the story of Sky Girl who laid down to rest and fell through the sky to the other world, the world of water. Two swans catch her and take her to Big Turtle who tells the animals they must dive to the bottom of the water and bring back soil, so that he can create a place for Sky Girl to live. Otter and Muskrat try and fail, but toad succeeds in bringing back the dirt, dying in the process. The other animals spread it around on the turtles back creating a world that will sustain human life. Recommended for grades Kindergarten through 5th and appropriate for any library.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School

Dear Blue Sky

By Mary Sullivan

Cassie and her family must say good-bye to brother Sef as he goes off to serve in the war in Iraq. The author goes into each character behavior and thought to show the effect of Sef's departure. This book is filled with many complex problems in life from a younger brother who has Downs syndrome, a flirt mother who turns to alcohol, a father who is trying to hold it all together, and other sister who makes some bad relationship decisions, along with Cassie's loneliness and worry for her brother. When a school assignment involves Cassie in a blog with a girl in Iraq the reader soon sees that there are always two views of any event including the Iraq War. As Blue Sky describes details of bombings, people killed, lack of electricity and water, one soon realizes that we here in America are very blessed. This book was a very good read, but I wonder if the recommended 10 years and up is a bit too young to deal with some of the events that are going on including attempted suicide and the boy girl interest. I would put this at 7th grade and up. I would definitely recommend this volume for all public and school juvenile libraries.

Pat Thompson, WSC

Beauty and the Beast

By Jan Brett

This is Brett's version of the original story by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, published in 1910. As usual, Brett's art work lends so much to this beloved fairy tale. How the father feels, the fear, the love, all of it are played out in the pages of the book. Nice book. Recommended for grades Preschool through 3rd and appropriate for any library.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School

The Summer My Life Began

By Shannon Greenland

Elizabeth Margaret, Em to her sister, has her whole life planned for her. She will attend law school and then practice in her father's law office. When a letter arrives from her Aunt Tilly, offering her a chance to spend the summer at her aunt's B&B, Pepper House, Em finds her whole life is changing. At Pepper House, her aunt encourages her to use her love of cooking to help out in the kitchen. Back home, Em's mom would not even allow her in the kitchen. She has never had a boyfriend, and now she finds herself attracted to Cade, the young man who helps out around the Pepper House. Here is a light, fun read about a young girl learning about herself as well as learning how to make her own decisions. This book is recommended for grades 7th and up and appropriate for any library.

Diane Limoges

The Fault in Our Stars

By John Green

Sixteen year old Hazel Grace Lancaster has stage IV cancer. She has beaten the odds and is a three year survivor. She knows it's not IF she will die from the cancer, but WHEN. The questions of how long she can fight the disease and how her parents will handle the loss of their only child weigh heavily on Hazel's shoulders. Her parents force her to go to all the support groups that she finds almost as depressing as the cancer itself. Then she meets Augustus (Gus) Waters, another cancer survivor, and her world is turned upside down. She fights the attraction because she does not want Gus to have to deal with losing someone and she knows it is only a matter of time before she does die. Soon she finds herself in love with Gus and her whole world is turned around in a way she never imagined. Here is a funny yet sad story not so much about dying as it is about living, loving, and getting the most out of life no matter how long or short. This is definitely a great read. Recommended for grades 9th and up and appropriate for any library.

Diane Limoges

The Flying Canoe: A Christmas Story

By Eric A. Kimmel

The Flying Canoe is an adaptation of a French-Canadian folktale that is a spin-off of a Norse mythology. A group of fur traders are gathered in the wilderness, where it is very remote and primitive. A stranger approaches them and offers to send them home that evening if they will not speak. Agreeing among themselves that they could use Indian sign language to communicate if necessary, they start their journey. If they fail they will be right back in the wilderness where they started. To start the journey, they must carry their canoe and eventually will climb in and be carried off. The trip moves smoothly until they get to Montreal and old Armand sees his daughter walking off with an officer he had told her not to date. Yelling, he almost gets them sent back when the stranger appears in the boat. Armand takes an oar, struck a spire on a church causing the canoe to shift and the furs and traders to slide out of the boat and into a snowdrift. The stranger disappears and miracles do happen on Christmas Eve. This book is recommended for grades 2nd through 5th and appropriate for any library.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School

The Red Hen

By Rebecca and Ed Emberley

This is a spin-off on The Little Red Hen folktale. This father-daughter duo likes to do spin-offs of common stories that all of us grew up with. The pages are colorful and the story moves quickly. Little tykes would enjoy this! This book is recommended for grades Preschool through 2nd and appropriate for any library.

Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School

Titanic, Voices from the Disaster

By Deborah Hopkinson

Using letters from several of the survivors of the Titanic, Deborah Hopkinson weaves together an account of what happened with the maiden voyage of the fated ship. Included are pictures of the Titanic to give readers a real feel for just how plush and upper class it really was. The story is woven in such a way to give young readers a real feel for what it was like to have been a part of the voyage, crash, and struggle that took place so many years ago. Here is a true account of the Titanic written for elementary age students that will give them a true grasp of the happenings leading up to and including the crash and rescue that took place. This book is recommended for grades 4th through 6th and appropriate for any library.

Diane Limoges

Thumbelina

By Sylvia Long

This is a version of the Hans Christian Anderson fairy tale about a girl no larger than a thumb. The pictures are beautiful and add much to the story. A woman had given up hope of having a child when she met a fairy. The fairy gave her a barley seed and told her to plant it in a container. The woman planted the seed in a small pot and one day a beautiful tulip bloomed. When the woman went to sniff the flower, a small girl appeared in the center. The woman called her Thumbelina. She was so small that she slept in a walnut shell. One night a large toad hopped in the window onto the table. She stole Thumbelina and hopped back out the window. The toads placed Thumbelina on a lily pad in a stream where she could not escape. Some fish and birds felt sorry for her and cut her lily pad loose, unfortunately the beetles she met were not so kind. Autumn came and she wandered in the cold, no warm clothes, no food, very sad. Thumbelina was taken in by a mouse and spent the winter with her and her friend the mole. The mouse became angry and said she would attack her if she didn't marry him. As fall drew near the bird returned and rescued her from the dark underground she would be forced to live in. They flew to another land where it was always warm. The bird helped her find a home where she met a fairy prince and they married and lived happily ever after. This book is recommended for grades Preschool through 3rd and appropriate for any library.
Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School