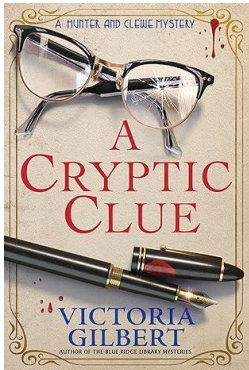


**READER'S ADVISORY STAFF PICKS - DECEMBER 2023/
JANUARY 2024**
CHRISTINA



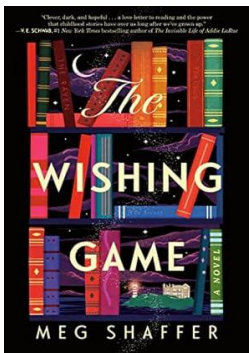
Title: *A Cryptic Clue*

Author: **Victoria Gilbert**

Mystery

Jane Hunter, a retired librarian with a talent for solving mysteries, finds a new job cataloging a large collection of books for young, wealthy businessman Cameron Clewe. During her first week of work, Jane discovers the body of a wealthy young woman known to be Cam's girlfriend. The local police involve Jane, and she and a coworker find themselves trying to clear Cam's name.

Jane discovers that the victim had enemies, all with solid motives to commit murder, and now Jane is being threatened. Incidentally, she finds that Cam has been harboring secrets, leading her to question whether proving his innocence is worth risking her safety, and whether he's actually innocent at all."



Title: *The Wishing Game*

Author: **Meg Shaffer**

Fiction

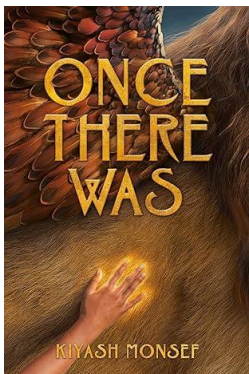
Lucy Hart - all too familiar with feeling unwanted with parents focused on her sick sister - often attempted to escape reality by reading Jack Masterson's books.

Now, Lucy is a twenty-something teacher's assistant when she meets Christopher, a child living with a neglectful foster family. Lucy adores Christopher and desperately wants to adopt him.

The catch? She doesn't have the resources until an invitation to participate in a contest arrives setting her off on an adventure full of twists and turns that could very well change the course of her life and Christopher's.

For people who prefer books that keep them guessing and feeling the whole spectrum of emotions, this is a fantastic read! Definitely a book that I could've never predicted the ending to with total accuracy. Enjoy

MARCIA



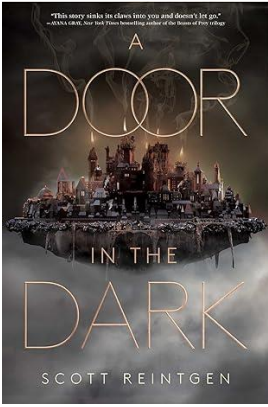
Title: *Once There Was*

Author: **Kiyashi Monsef**

YA Fantasy

Marjan's veterinarian dad was recently murdered and now she's been approached by a mysterious visitor asking for her help. This begins her journey into a dangerous underground business, where magnificent mythological creatures are captured, bought, and sold. The half-Iranian author uses the folklore he grew up with to introduce each creature featured, beginning chapters with the traditional "Once was, once wasn't."

The book explores grief in its many forms, ending with a hopeful acceptance...I especially loved how folktales were incorporated into this modern story.

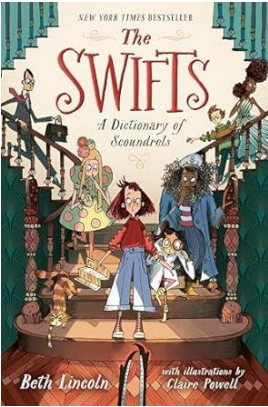


Title: *Door in the Dark* (Waxways series, book 1)

Author: Scott Reintgen

Young Adult

This title is a non-stop, action-filled, fantasy thriller. The story follows six teens, who are on their way home for semester break from a magic school. They all use a magic candle-wax portal, when a fight breaks out and the portal spell malfunctions. They are transported hundreds of miles away into uncharted and dangerous woods. One is dead upon arrival, and the remaining five try to make their way back. Secrets that all of them are keeping slowly unfold while something terrible is hunting them. Bonus is the totally surprising, twisty ending! Watch out for an exciting sequel.



Title: *The Swifts: A Dictionary of Scoundrels*

Author: Beth Lincoln

Illustrator: Claire Powell

Juvenile Mystery

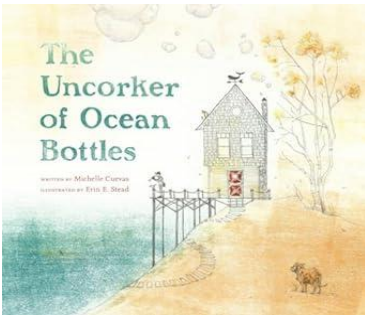
On the day they're born, every Swift child is named from a randomly chosen word picked by their mother from the sacred "Family Dictionary."

This story follows Shenanigan Swift, mischief maker, risk taker, and little sister. She is getting ready for the big family reunion and meeting dozens of her relatives. Part of the gathering involves searching for Grand Uncle Vile's lost treasure and Shenanigan has a plan.

But, someone else desperately wants that fortune and is willing to kill for it. Shenanigan is determined to follow the twisty clues and catch the murderer.

Lots of fun wordplay and suspense in addition to being a coming of age story for Shenanigan as she discovers that she is not defined by pre-conceptions and family expectations.

MEL



Title: *The Uncorker of Ocean Bottles*

Author: Michelle Cuevas

Illustrator: Erin E. Stead

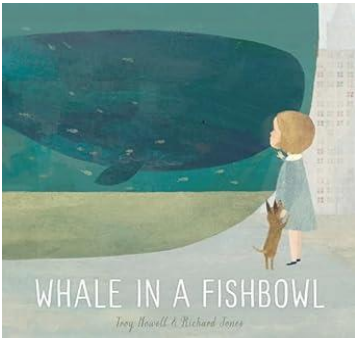
Picture Book

"The uncorker of ocean bottles lived alone on a high spot...watchful for a glint of glass. It was his task to open any bottles found at sea and make sure they were delivered."

Follow the uncorker as he travels near and far in an effort to deliver a "peculiar" invitation to a most unusual group of possible recipients and the lovely conclusion.

A story of dedication, loneliness, and the discovery of new friends this exquisitely written and drawn tale pulls the reader in with inviting, evocative language and the unexpected combination of mono-print coloration with sketched illustrations.

A tale for all ages to read time and again - destined to be a favorite on the bookshelf.



Title: *Whale in a Fishbowl*

Authors/Illustrators: Troy Howell & Richard Jones

Picture Book

Wednesday is a whale – she lives in the very center of the city in a HUGE fishbowl and spends her time watching the world go by around her and leaping mightily to see the distant blue of the sea, not knowing why the blue calls to her.

Piper is a little girl that meets Wednesday and worries that the whale isn't where she belongs...in the sea. As Wednesday struggles to understand why she longs for the "blue" the reader is led on a journey of self-discovery and finally what it means to belong.

A charmingly illustrated book with a seaside city which will be familiar to those close to the coast – it will appeal to both the environmentally minded and those that love the sea as much as the whales do!



Title: *Once Upon a Jungle*

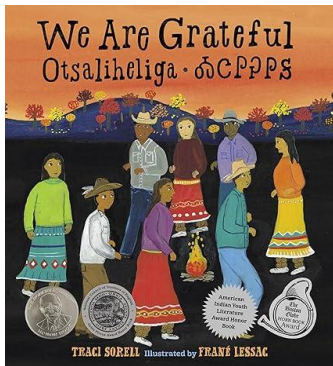
Author: Laura Knowles

Illustrator: James Boast

Picture Book

A vivid treat for the senses as the illustrations create seek-and-find opportunities for the reader as the story unfolds.

A very well-done life-cycle book for children showing how each creature in the jungle provides sustenance for the next one up the predatory pyramid until eventually all return to the soil to sustain the jungle. A bright, exotic portrayal that engages all ages in the story of the food chain and provides additional information about producers, consumers and decomposers at the end for those interested in learning more.



Title: *We are Grateful – Otsaliheliga - ᎠᏚᏰᎩᎠᏰᎩ*

Author: Traci Sorell

Illustrator: Frané Lessac

Picture Book

I LOVED this book – from the vibrantly painted illustrations to the simple, honest language rendering family/community celebrations in ways that invite the reader to learn about the true meaning of gratitude as practiced by the Cherokee people.

The book takes the reader through the four seasons as it depicts events - big and small – that engender the need to express thanks and appreciation even in the face of difficulty. From feast days to daily meals, celebrations of birth to the passing of cherished family members, planting to playing, this book does a beautiful job of relating the blessings to be found throughout the year.

A brightly captured modern tale of the Cherokee Nation's annual celebrations including examples of the rich language, pronunciation, definitions, and a wonderful syllabary created in the early 1800's and remains in use today.