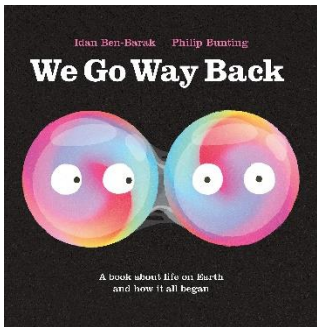


BRI

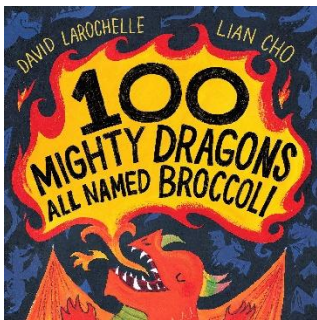


Title: *We Go Way Back*

Author: Idan Ben-Barak & Philip Bunting

Picture Book

Such a fun, “science-y” book about life on Earth and how it all began. For all the little scientists with questions about life, this book explores past hypotheses on what life is: magic, energy, a kind of behavior, a mechanism? What is known about where life started (we don’t know exactly where or exactly how), is that elements joined together to form molecules. Those molecules formed small bubbles of molecules, and then one day there was a very special bubble that is considered the first living thing. We know life gets passed down: you have it, you got it from your parents, who got it from their parents... we all did, and we go way back. But what, really, is life? The short answer is that "Life is... um.. Life is the way that some things make more things that are a lot like themselves, but sometimes a little bit different. Sort of." Given the nature of evolutionary biology, this is a pretty solid description for life on Earth!



Title: **100 Mighty Dragons All Named Broccoli**

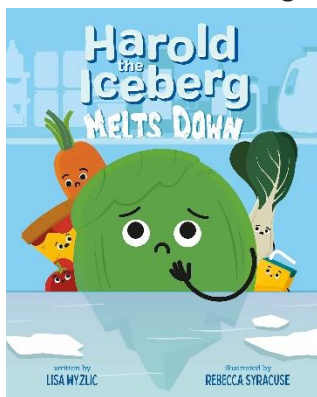
Author: David Larochelle

Illustrator: Lian Cho

Picture Book

The most fun take on a counting book I've seen in a while. High on a mountain near a deep, dark cave lived 100 mighty dragons. They were all named Broccoli. However, the number of Broccoli dragons quickly dwindles after a series of wacky events. Ten of them leave to become professional surfers in Hawaii. The oldest and youngest dragons take a train to NYC to start a heavy metal band. One becomes a unicorn. One becomes a werewolf. Half get blown away. Two move to West Virginia, but then move back. For any young ones practicing their addition and subtraction, dragons named Broccoli are a great tool for counting! By the end of the story we are left with one lonely dragon named Broccoli alone in her cave.... but when spring comes you'll never guess what she names her 100 baby dragons. (hint: They aren't Broccoli!)

Title: **Harold the Iceberg Melts Down**



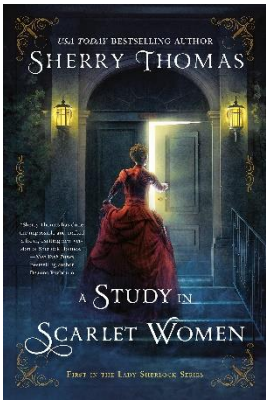
Author: Lisa Wyzlic

Illustrator: Rebecca Syracuse

Picture Book

So much fun about a mistaken identity. Harold is an iceberg. An iceberg lettuce, to be exact. He lives in the fridge with all of his other food friends. Harold spends most of his days worried - about big things, about small things, about everything. To combat his worries, he likes to watch documentaries. He feels better if he learns and understands things, so he doesn't need to worry about them. Until one day he watches a documentary about the icebergs melting at an alarming rate. Now Harold is very, VERY worried! He is so small, much smaller than the icebergs in the documentary - he must have already been melting! Luckily, Harold has good friends by his side, who are able to ease his worries about melting away. But what can they do about the real icebergs melting? It's a big problem, and they are so little. Together, they learn that even they can take little steps to combat climate change and help Harold's "cousins," the icebergs.

CHRISTINA



Title: *A Study in Scarlet Women* (The Lady Sherlock Series - Book 1)

Author: Sherry Thomas

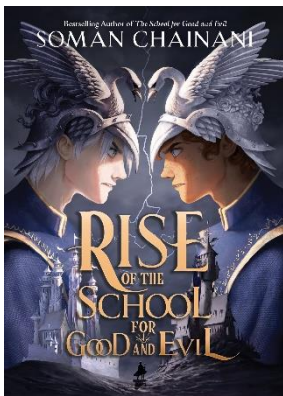
Mystery

Charlotte Holmes is anything but an ordinary woman of her time. She notices far more than the average person and loathes the idea of depending on someone else to provide for her for the rest of her life. In hopes that her father will finance her education, Charlotte tells him that she wishes to eventually become headmistress of a school one day, but he ignores her request.

Realizing that she must take matters into her own hands, Charlotte engages in an action that causes her to become an outcast. She then leaves home and heads for London, only to discover that three murders have been committed in the area, with her father and older sister as suspects. Using her unique talent for discernment, and with the help of an old friend and some new acquaintances, Charlotte ("Sherlock") Holmes sets out to prove her family members' innocence.

This is a fantastic read for anyone who loves strong female characters and enjoys the challenge of solving a crime!

MEL



Title: *Rise of the School for Good and Evil* (The School for Good and Evil – Book 0)

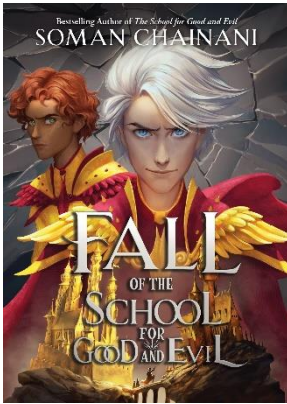
Author: Soman Chainani

Juvenile Fiction

Want a twist on the fairy tale and the battle between good and evil? An entertaining and wonderfully direct (and sometimes silly) tale about making choice and how those choices define not only ourselves, but our relationships, and the strange and unexpected places to which we find ourselves led as a result. The book does an excellent job of questioning the nature of both good and evil, the balance between the two, and whether the heroes and villains live up to their reputations.

Although some of the characterizations may seem stereotypical, you will be pleasantly surprised to see the depths the author chooses to invest in his people, each one of the cast having a moment (or more) in the spotlight at just the right time, acting just like a “real” person might. Angst, sulking, tantrums, boorishness, courage and more are shown in equal measure with insecurity, flattery, popularity, reticence, kindness, and plain ridiculousness. It’s a dressed up and dramatized version of high school in the endless woods.

Follow the teachers, students, and founders of the school as magical surprises and daring tests of loyalty challenge each of them to find their own true selves – good, evil, or a bit of both. NOT a Harry Potter “wannabe,” this book has a very different style and incredibly diverse cast of characters. Read at the risk of laughing (Snorting? Giggling? Snickering?) and recognizing yourself (or others) in the pages. Have fun!



Title: *Fall of the School for Good and Evil* (The School for Good and Evil – Book .5)

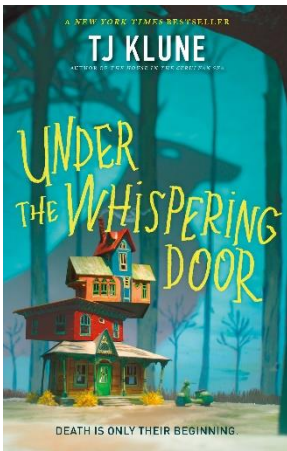
Author: Soman Chainani

Juvenile Fiction

The conclusion to the duology (and precursor to *The School for Good and Evil* series), see what unfolds in the battle between the twin *IMMORTAL* School Masters for control of the school. Will the school survive? What about the students? What will become of the Endless Woods?

I became invested in this series when looking for Juvenile/YA reads that provided excellent escapism, but didn't stint on realistic human behaviors and issues. Exploring diversity, biases, concepts of good/evil, loyalty, and friendship never grow old and this author does a really good job of making his characters flawed in all the right ways. No matter how hard we may strive to be good (or bad for that matter), it all comes down to perspective and a realization that it's the effort that really defines us. By writing ALL of his characters with evolving personalities, needs, and desires, Chainani ensures that they are relatable and representative of more than one viewpoint.

BTW, this series is equally enjoyable as a book or an audiobook. I did prefer it as an audio book, but I do so love to be "read" to, and good narrators can truly bring characters and worlds to life with a flourish.



Title: *Under the Whispering Door*

Author: T.J. Klune

Narrator: Kirt Groves

Fiction

Welcome to Charon's Crossing, an unusual tea shop in which the recently deceased may find themselves visiting in preparation to "crossing over."

Wallace, our main character, finds himself collected from his own funeral by a newly trained "reaper," but isn't quite sure that he's REALLY dead. Hugo, tea grower/server/collector extraordinaire and owner of The Crossing, is quietly determined to help Wallace find his peace. Over the course of the 7 days that Wallace is allotted to come to terms with his death, he learns that life is more than the office, and it's in this afterlife that he finds the meaning of home.

Full of familial love, friendship, romantic love, and the losses that we bear with the death of our 'loves' – human or otherwise – this is a wonderfully quirky and uplifting book. Full of warmth, wit, and humor, the author exposes our soft human underbellies with simple and engaging language, while offering a unique, wry, and loving take on death (and what comes after).