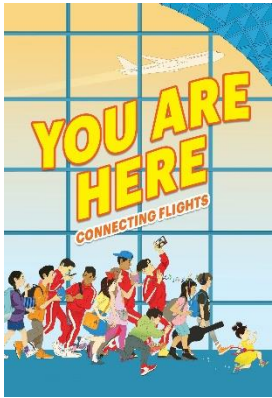


STAFF PICKS

Week of 5/1-5/6/2023



Bri

Title: *You Are Here: Connecting Flights*

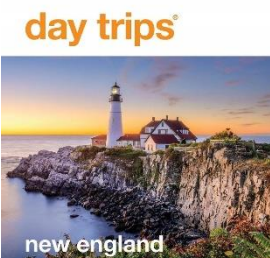
Editor: Ellen Oh

Juvenile Fiction

Happy start of AAPI month! Woohoo! This book was so, so special. The basic story follows the interactions of twelve different Asian-American kids as they travel through the Chicago airport. It's because each of the twelve chapters focuses on a different character and is written by a different Asian-American author. I was incredibly excited to read this book - I laughed a little, I cried a little, and I saw a little bit of myself in each story. Getting to see yourself in a story may be unremarkable to some, but it still feels magical to me each time it happens.

As a children's book that focuses on diversity and adversity, it did not pull any punches. Throughout the intertwining stories, authors touch upon a wide variety of important topical issues - police brutality protests, LGBTQIA+ rights, mental health, Covid-19 - and the way these topics intersect with the discussion of race. I thought that each of these themes was treated very thoughtfully and honestly, while still remaining appropriate for younger readers.

I wish I had a book like this as a kid. While it is technically juvenile fiction, I would strongly recommend it to anyone - adult or child, Asian or not - who would like a glimpse at what it's like growing up Asian-American in America today. I'll certainly be picking up a copy for my own shelves.



Christina

Title: *Day Trips® New England* (3rd edition)

Author: Maria Olia

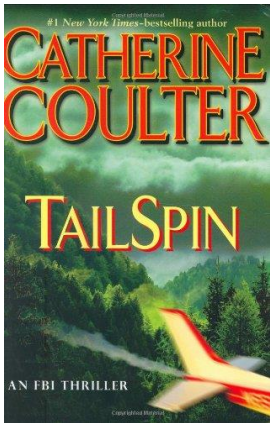
Guidebook

It's getting to that "travel bug" time of year again, or maybe some of us are already there. But what new and exciting things are there for locals who might not have enough time or money to go on a long, tropical vacation? Don't fret - there are plenty of options throughout our six-state region!

- Are you a history buff? Head to Lexington and Concord to visit the grounds of the first battle of the American Revolution, or make the trek into Boston to follow the Freedom Trail.
- Just want a day with nature? Cape Cod or southeastern Maine (Old Orchard Beach, Bath, Ogunquit) could be your best bet, but if you're looking to get away from the mainland, you may want to "sail away on the Block Island Ferry" instead.
- Trying to escape huge crowds but still have fun? Vermont tends to be much quieter than many other New England seaside towns and cities - check out the Billings Farm & Museum in Woodstock, or sign up for a class at King Arthur Baking Company in Norwich.

There are myriad opportunities for sightseeing, fun, learning, and relaxation right in our own backyard(s) - all we need to do is look for them.

One thing to note if you do pick up this book is that it's a bit outdated (2017), so you may want to double-check pricing in and around your destination. Safe travels, everyone!



Jen

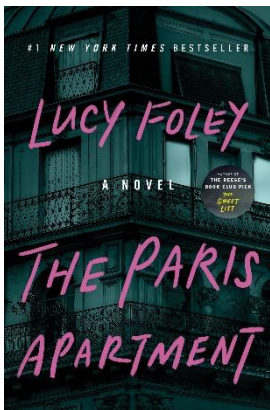
Title: *Tailspin*

Author: Catherine Coulter

Fiction

Action/Thriller

FBI Special Agent Jackson Crowne is flying his Cessna over the Appalachians with a very important passenger – Dr. Timothy MacLean, renowned psychiatrist, their destination Washington, D.C. Upon their arrival, the FBI will protect the doctor – and find out just who wants him dead.



Kaya

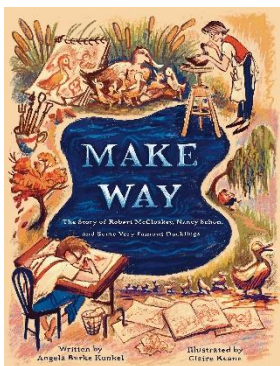
Title: *The Paris Apartment*

Author: Lucy Foley

Mystery

When Jess asks to stay with her brother at his Paris apartment, he doesn't exactly seem thrilled. But when she shows up and he doesn't let her in or answer her calls, Jess's frustration turns to concern. Something about the building and its occupants doesn't seem right, and when Jess starts asking questions about her brother, the responses are strange. Desperate for answers, Jess begins to realize that the apartment isn't the safe haven she thought she was running toward, and that no one who lives there is what they seem.

Foley creates layered characters who keep you questioning how you feel about them. The Paris apartment itself seems like its own character, with eerie corridors, hidden passages, and rooms plunged into darkness when lights with set timers run out. Her plot was interesting - surprises until the very end - with short chapters that kept me motivated to read on. I would recommend this to adults who enjoy Foley's other works, or 'who dunnit' mysteries with Parisian settings.



Marcia

Title: *Make Way: The Story of Robert McCloskey, Nancy Schon, and Some Very Famous Ducklings*

Author: Angela Burke Kunkel

Illustrator: Claire Keane

Non-Fiction Picture Book Biography

Spring has sprung and when we go into Boston, many of us make a side trip to the Common to ride the Swan Boats, and take pictures with our famous ducklings. This title tells the story of how the duckling statues came to be and the lives of the artists behind them. Both artists spent decades honing their craft, and children will be surprised at how much effort, attention to detail, and quest for perfection went into both the book, MAKE WAY FOR DUCKLINGS and the sculpture.

So today, more than 30 years after the installation of Mrs. Mallard and her ducklings and 80 years after the book's publication, we still delight in their story and presence in our historic park.



Mel

Title: *The Medici Manuscript* (The Glass Library Series – Book 2)

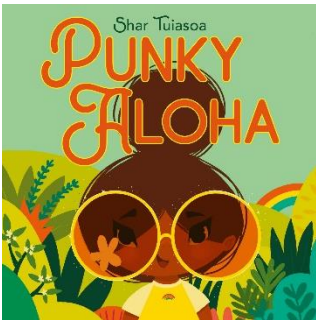
Author: C.J. Archer

Fantasy/Mystery

A spin-off series from Archer's *Glass and Steel* series, this is the 2nd book regarding the Glass Library on Crooked Lane in London. This library houses only books that are either physically magic or are written about magic - the science of magic, the occult, the arcane, the history of magical artifacts, and information on magicians/magical families.

The series follows Sylvia and her experiences and adventures as the newest librarian on staff. In this instance, the story revolves around a mysterious, possibly magical, book purported to have been part of the infamous Medici's collection at some point. Of course, there is more to the story with romance and intrigue afoot in entwined storylines, but it's essentially a light read with engaging characters, a solid plot, and enough twists to keep a reader compelled to continue.

Week of 5/8-5/13/2023



Bri

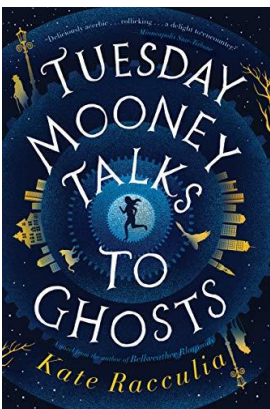
Title: *Punky Aloha*

Author/Illustrator: Shar Tuiasoa

Picture book

Aloha, and happy AAPI month! Shar Tuiasoa is a Hawaiian-based artist whose work I've been following for a while; so, I was so excited when I heard that she was releasing her first picture book! As expected, the illustrations are done in the tropical, colorful style that Shar's "Punky Aloha" art studio is best known for. It invokes memories of warmer days with my family on Oahu, for sure! The story follows Punky, a young Polynesian girl, who makes lots of new friends on her adventure to the store to get butter for grandma's fresh banana bread. Punky is very shy, but with the power of her grandma's magic sunglasses, Punky realizes she can make it to the store on her own. As she races around the island, she keeps both courage and aloha in her heart. And you can ask any islander, a little aloha goes a long way!

More info on Shar - click the following link: [Punky Aloha](#).



Christina

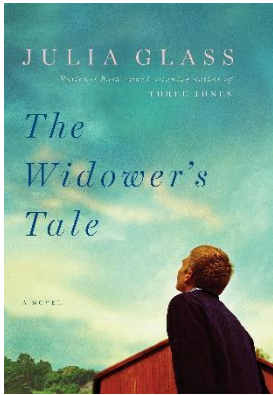
Title: *Tuesday Mooney Talks to Ghosts*

Author: Kate Racculia

Mystery

When eccentric billionaire Vincent Pryce dies, he leaves behind pieces of his estate in a "game" that none of the participants will soon forget. Various items, including money and art, have been hidden all over the city of Boston and are up for grabs by anyone who wants to play. Enter Tuesday Mooney (who's always been a bit of an outsider) and a cast of other characters who range in personality from insecure to brilliant to pure evil. One of them, known as Archie, had a special connection with the deceased, but the story of his family's relationship with Pryce is a complex one that was cleverly tied into the hunt for pieces of Pryce's legacy. When Tuesday manages to get tangled up with Archie, she tries to use her unmatched skills for research and logic to help solve a mystery that's plagued him for years. But someone else in Archie's family, who's watching their movements very closely, will stop at nothing to make sure the mystery remains unsolved.

This was one of the most entertaining, creative stories I've read in a *very* long time! Racculia does an amazing job of highlighting the characters' strengths and weaknesses while simultaneously tying them all together to create an extraordinary adventure.



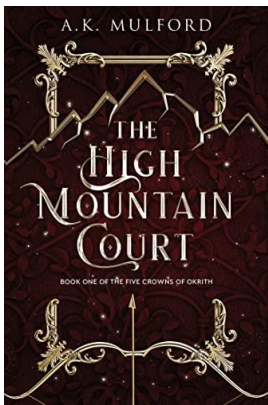
Jen

Title: *The Widower's Tale*

Author: **Julia Glass**

Fiction

As the character Percy sees his solitude overrun by children, parents and teachers, he must reexamine the solitary life he has made in the three decades since the sudden death of his wife. With both affection and humor, this is a captivating tale about a man who can no longer remain aloof from his community, his two grown daughters or the joy of falling in love.



Kaya

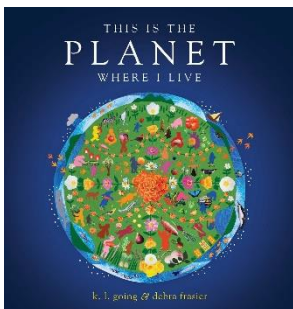
Title: *The High Mountain Court*

Author: **A. K. Mulford**

YA Mystery

As far as she knows, Remy is the last red witch alive. Her kind has been hunted and slaughtered, forcing her to live constantly on the run - her life full of secrecy and fear. One night four Fae warriors discover her and Remy thinks it is the end, but she soon realizes that this crossing will lead to a very different fate for her.

One of the warriors is the Prince of an endangered kingdom, and he needs Remy's help preventing his people from facing the same horrible end that her people did. Although she isn't sure if she can trust the Prince and his fellow warriors, Remy realizes this is a chance to reclaim her legacy, find vengeance for her people, and maybe even be reunited with them... if there are any left.



Marcia

Title: *This is the Planet Where I Live*

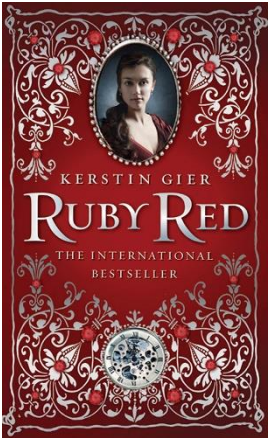
Author: **K.L. Going**

Illustrator: **Debra Frasier**

Informational Picture Book

This title teaches young children all about the earth and the interconnectedness of everything on the planet. It accomplishes this using a circular rhyme based on "The House that Jack Built." The book is deceptively simple; but, as you pour over the bright and highly detailed cut paper collages, you will be amazed at how much information is at your fingertips.

A beautiful first choice when your little one discovers the universe and wants to learn more about the planet where we live.



Mel

Title: *Ruby Red* (Trilogy – Book 1)

Author: Kerstin Gier

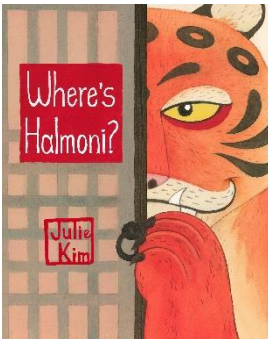
YA Fantasy – audio book version

Gwyneth, at 16, has watched her cousin Charlotte prepare since childhood to manifest the family gene for time travel...unfortunately for both of them, it's Gwynnie that suddenly finds herself dizzy and dazed in another century.

The series follows Gwyneth's mysterious heritage, her induction into the illustrious company of the magical society controlling and facilitating the travel, and her journeys between contemporary London and Europe of earlier centuries. She is accompanied by the only other gifted traveler in existence – Gideon, an insufferably prepared, talented, humourous, and (of course) strikingly handsome young man - as they seek to resolve the mysteries of the time travel chronograph device and avoid the danger posed by the Saint Germaine society's endeavors.

I highly recommend listening to this series – it's engrossing and the talented narrator (Marisa Calin) brings the characters and this world to vivid life. Whenever I find any of Marisa's "reads," I'm ready for something special – regardless of the topic.

Week of 5/15-5/20/2023



Bri

Title: *Where's Halmoni?*

Author/Illustrator: Julie Kim

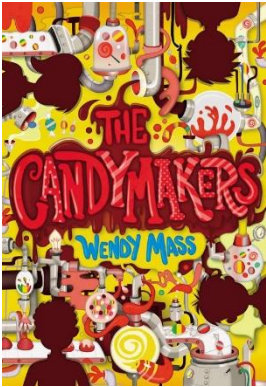
Korean-English Picture book

A really engaging and very unique Korean-English picture book - one of the more unique dual-language kid's books that I've come across. Generally, when kids' books are multilingual, I find that they have both languages featured on the same page, such as having "Hola!"

followed by "Hello!"

Where's Halmoni? is different, because the dialogue is written in Hangul, the Korean alphabet, without an accompanying translation. This works incredibly well within the story, which focuses on a young brother and sister duo who only speak English, as they go on a magical adventure looking for their halmoni (Korean for grandmother). As they go through a magical door (just like Narnia!), they come across an array of magical creatures from Korean folklore. As the moon rabbit, tiger, dokkebi, and gumiho talk to the siblings, they only speak in Korean, leaving many things lost in translation. This makes the story very immersive - unless young readers can read both English and Hangul, they will be just as lost as the siblings are as to what the animals are saying. Of course, at the end of the book there is a page of translations for those who are curious!

The illustrations are also very fun and energetic, done in nearly a comic book style. Altogether, the pictures along with the interesting use of language make it a really charming book to read through multiple times!



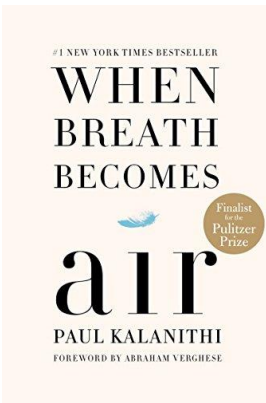
Christina

Title: *The Candymakers*

Author: **Wendy Mass**

Juvenile Mystery

Prepare to activate your sweet tooth as you read the story of Daisy, Logan, Miles, and Philip, four 12-year-old participants in a national candy-creating competition. The Life Is Sweet candy factory hosts the young contestants, who each have their own fears and challenges to overcome, and personal reasons for wanting to win. During their time at the factory, the children learn (among other things) that someone is planning to steal a secret ingredient that the factory uses in its candy. In the process of trying to solve this mystery and stop the theft, Daisy, Logan, Miles, and Philip learn valuable lessons about friendship, teamwork, and honesty; however, they also realize that other people in their lives are not who they appeared to be. Soon, the creative candy makers become more concerned with saving the factory's future than winning the contest, but it just might be possible that they can actually do both!



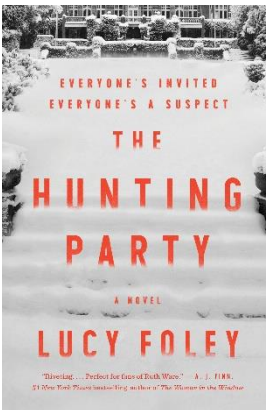
Jen

Title: *When Breath Becomes Air*

Author: **Paul Kalanithi**

Non-Fiction (based upon a true story)

A memoir of Paul Kalanithi, a neurosurgeon at Stanford University, who is diagnosed with terminal lung cancer in his mid-thirties. He uses this book to not only tell his story, but also shares his ideas on how to approach death with grace, and what it means to be fully alive. It is a sad story, but a heartfelt one of the determination to live life to the fullest.



Kaya

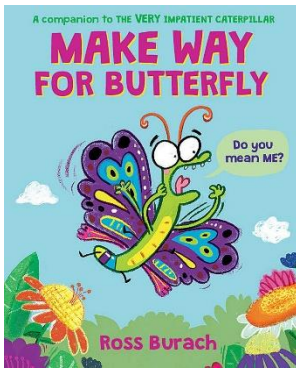
Title: *The Hunting Party*

Author: **Lucy Foley**

Mystery

In the Scottish Highlands, a group of old college friends rent a lodge to celebrate the New Year together. What should be a fun and festive trip turns sour when the group is snowed into the already isolated property. Tensions grow as strains in the relationships begin to show, and when a body is found, the group truly begins to realize how little each of them know the other, and how there is no one that they can truly trust.

Foley does an incredible job of writing a story that spirals around multiple points of view, giving the reader glimpses as to what is unfolding, and building complex layers one shocking discovery at a time. With an eerie and isolated setting, suspicious characters, and an ominous tone, *The Hunting Party* was a story that kept me invested and alarmed until the very end.



Marcia

Title: *Make Way for Butterfly*

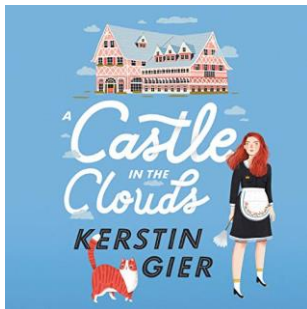
Author/Illustrator: Ross Burach

Picture Book

This is the fourth title in the *Very Impatient Caterpillar* series. All are hilarious - think of Mo Willem's *Pigeon* books on steroids. Children adore these stories. The illustrations and fonts are brightly colored, oversized, and outrageous.

They inform the reader about the life cycle and behaviors of a naïve, impatient caterpillar becoming the eventual butterfly.

I feel the most important attribute of these stories is that they explore important social-emotional themes such as patience, persistence, and staying true to yourself in a super silly way that children relate to. Read these and laugh and learn along with a child you care for.



Mel

Title: *A Castle in the Clouds*

Author: Kerstin Gier

YA Fiction – audio book version

After the completely miserable & scholastically challenging recent semester, Sophie Spark has taken a gap year from high school to intern at “Castle in the Clouds” situated way up in the Swiss mountains. Her role, encompassing everything from maid to babysitter, has her flitting

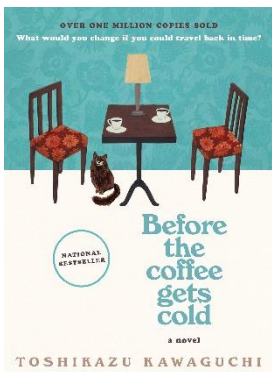
up and down stairs, through servant passages and laundry rooms, all the while trying to escape the attentions of both the strict housekeeper Frau Mueller and Don Burkhardt – a deliberately mischievous and entitled 8-year-old child.

The aging grand old hotel clings to splendor and tradition stubbornly still attracting the rich and famous, especially during the winter season for the extravagant New Year’s Eve Ball. Hallways teem with guests, and staff are busy making sure that all goes according to plan. However, not everyone at the hotel is who they claim to be, and problems from lost jewelry to missing children create a dangerous situation for Sophie and her charges.

Follow Sophie as she hilariously manages to best Don Burkhardt – who addresses her as “Sophie Spark, almost 17-year-old, high school dropout” - makes friends, acquires new talents, discovers her self-worth, and finds possible romance, all while exposing unexpected and truly devious imposters.

This is another of Marisa Calin’s narrated books - one that I return to again and again when I find myself in need of a smile, comfort food for my soul.

Week of 5/22-5/27/2023



Bri

Title: *Before the Coffee Gets Cold*

Author: Toshikazu Kawaguchi

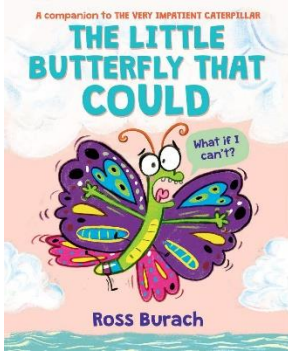
Translator: Geoffrey Trousselot

Fiction

A strange book, but the premise was so compelling I had to see it through. In a small alley in Tokyo, there is a special café that allows patrons to travel back in time, but only until their

cup of coffee goes cold. If you could go back, what would you do? Who would you talk to? As our cast of characters finds out, time travel is more complicated than it seems.

Before the Coffee Gets Cold originated as a popular play in Japan, before being written in novel form, and then eventually translated into English. Given it had to be translated across media format and then language, the writing is occasionally clunky and borderline repetitive. That small gripe aside, I thought the simplicity of the storyline and the magical realism of the setting gave it a surprising amount of emotional resonance. Through each attempt to return to the past, characters must reckon with their regrets, losses, and ultimately their ability to face reality. This is the first book in a series and I might pick up the second when I have the time.



Christina

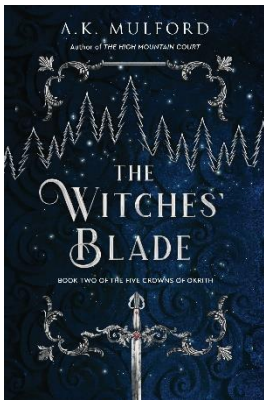
Title: *The Little Butterfly That Could*

Author/Illustrator: Ross Burach

Picture Book

A young butterfly is just getting used to its new form and is a bit intimidated about flying hundreds of miles to reunite with its friends and family. Along its journey, the butterfly meets and becomes friends with a whale, who encourages the butterfly and explains that we all get scared sometimes. The butterfly is still caught up with all the "what ifs" about flying so far - What if I get eaten, or lost, or caught in a storm? But the whale insists that the butterfly just needs to believe in itself and keep trying. After going back and forth between believing and fearing, the butterfly finally reaches its destination, only to find out that flying is just what they do for part of the year!

This is an incredibly relatable story for anyone entering a new phase of life and having doubts. With springtime here and butterflies starting to reappear, it's also a great way to teach children about the phases of a butterfly's life and the challenges it (and they) may face as they grow up.



Kaya

Title: *The Witches' Blade* (The Five Crowns of Okrith Series - Book 2)

Author: A. K. Mulford

Fantasy

Fae princess Rua is now armed with the Immortal Blade and is in a position to unite a war-torn land. Allied with a young Northern King, Renwick, who is known as 'The Witch Slayer,' Rua must decide if she believes the Northern King's reputation, or if she can trust that he is a different man than his evil predecessor. Working together, Rua and Renwick must quickly establish control in place of the late king before a new power arises, perhaps more evil and deadly than the last. This book is great for any fans of Nesta from Sarah J. Mass' *A Court of Silver Flames*. Rua is such a dynamic character. She's powerful, but not perfect, filled with an anger and darkness that she doesn't understand and isn't sure how to reconcile. Her development is just as much within herself as it is within her role as a major player in a kingdom at war. She's a certified baddie!



Marcia

Title: *Nic Blake and the Remarkables: The Manifestor Prophecy*

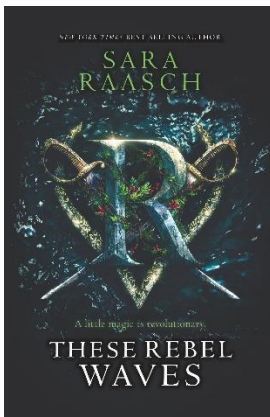
Author: Angie Thomas

Juvenile Fiction

This book is the first in a planned contemporary fantasy trilogy. The main characters are all African American, and what sets this title apart from others of its kind is the author's liberal use of African American folklore, mythology, and historical figures. Like the Percy Jackson series, it should inspire children to learn about the great Southern myths and heroes.

First and foremost, this is an action story with a great turny, twisty plot and secondly, a story of friendship and family. The three main protagonists are 12 years old - two of which are "Remarkables" with special powers. All the characters are well developed.

In this story the children have to retrieve a magical object and save their father. They accomplish their quest, but the threads of their continuing story begin to weave together. A great summer adventure read for 8 to 12 year olds! I can't wait to read the sequel.



Mel

Title: *These Rebel Waves* (The Stream Raider Series – Book 1) – audio book version

Author: Sara Raasch

Narrator: Kate Rudd

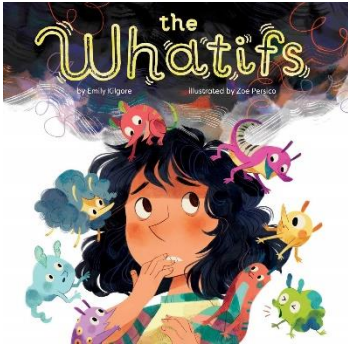
YA Fantasy Fiction

Deadly magic, dangerous deeds, double-crosses & betrayals, and a richly populated world of curious characters people the Island of Grace Loray. We follow the main character Lu (Adeluna) as she faces the possibility of her beloved island (with its magical plant life) becoming embroiled in ANOTHER war with the aggressive, obsessively devout, and highly political country of Argrid. After losing most of her childhood as a rebellion soldier in the successful attempt to overthrow their Argridian oppressors, she is determined not to succumb to the tyranny of the 'pious god' in the earthen vessel of the Argridian King again.

Follow the intricately woven story of diverse cultures clashing, connecting, and combating one another as they struggle to save their histories, traditions, and peoples from the threat of oblivion brought on by the use and misuse of the land's magic by the powerful usurper king. Fall in love with Lu, Vex, Ben, and the strangely appealing soldiers, raiders, islanders, and rebels as they face physical and emotional trials and upheavals of creating partnerships and surviving alliances. Hiss at the horribly adept and tricky king as he employs every advantage he can find to win his way to ultimate earthly leader. A book to keep you guessing and have you cheering for your favorites every step of the way.

I was completely swept away by Kate Rudd's excellent narration – her ability to personify the individual characters brings them to immediate life causing the story to instantly resonate with you personally. A great audio book to while away a summer day!

Week of 5/29-6/3/2023



Bri

Title: *The Whatifs*

Author: Emily Kilgore

Illustrator: Zoe Persico

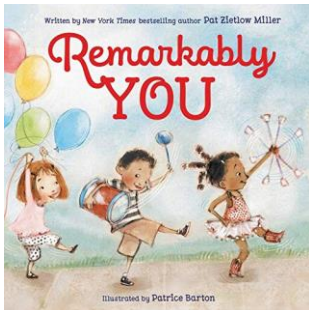
Picture Book

A great book for anyone with anxious young readers in their lives. It's a picture book I wish I had growing up, as someone who's typically quite anxious myself!

The story follows Cora, who's described as "a nervous girl: always jumpy, always on edge, always wondering if something grim was going to happen." Cora is constantly followed by "Whatifs" - What if her dog runs away? What if the sun stops shining? What if her crayon breaks? As the "Whatifs" pile up, they are depicted as tiny little creatures that sit on her shoulders, weighing her down, often to the point where Cora cannot focus on anything else.

However, Cora's friend Stella reaches out and to make sure that she's okay. Initially Cora spirals further - What if Stella thinks I'm a crybaby? What if she doesn't understand? But from Stella Cora learns that there can also be happy "Whatifs." - What if there's chocolate cake after our recital? What if I can do this? What if I make a new friend today? Slowly, Cora's heavy grumpy "Whatifs" start to disappear, and new softer, brighter ones begin to take their place. Cora learns there may always be "Whatifs," but we can spin our negatives into positives with a little practice. And when "Whatifs" begin to feel like too much, we can rely on our friends for support.

The author's note at the end talks about how one in eight children is affected by anxiety in America, and the importance of learning how to manage that anxiety so that "what was once frightening is now just uncomfortable."



Christina

Title: *Remarkably You*

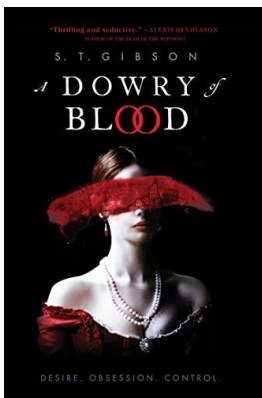
Author: Pat Zietlow Miller

Illustrator: Patrice Barton

Picture Book

If you're familiar with the saying "Variety is the spice of life," and you believe that incredible things can come in *all* shapes and sizes, then this could be your next read! Have you ever been in a group of people and felt like the odd one out? Well, you're not alone! Everyone gets that feeling now and then; but, as we find out in the story (and in real life), the key to overcoming it is learning to march to the beat of your own drum and finding your place.

Whether you're fast or slow, short or tall, athlete or bookworm (or both!), there's a space in the world that's waiting for you to claim it.



Kaya

Title: *A Dowry of Blood*

Author: S. T. Gibson

Fantasy

Written as a letter to Dracula from one of his brides (Constanta), S. T. Gibson shares a unique twist on a classic story, divulging the travels and experiences that take place over the centuries amidst a small but growing vampire family. Initially enthralled by her new husband and savior, Constanta doesn't realize at first just how much Dracula begins to control every aspect of her life. As she learns to read his mood and avoid his bad tempers, readers also

begin to understand just how manipulative and toxic the relationship is. When Constanta uncovers some horrible truths, she is driven to face the reality of her relationship with her husband, as well as learn how to best protect her fellow “wives.”

I would recommend this for readers who enjoy fantasy written like historical fiction, with poetic or lyrical writing. If you enjoy stories like *The Song of Achilles* or *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, this might be a great book for you!



Marcia

Title: *Some of These are Snails*

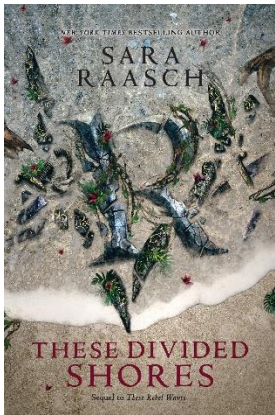
Author/Illustrator: Carter Higgins

Picture Book

A deceptively simple concept book geared to children aged 3 through 8. The colors used are beautiful, bright, and eye-catching. It is an interactive story and uses collage work in the shapes.

The author uses rhyme and rhythm in his captions and has the reader exploring colors, shapes, patterns, counting, and different ways of sorting. The reader will discover new ways of looking at familiar things.

I had fun going through this book and easily can see how a child might spend hours with this title. A great combination, like Herve Tullet's *Press Here* joined with Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.



Mel

Title: *These Divided Shores* (The Stream Raider Series – Book 2) – audio book version

Author: Sara Raasch

Narrator: Kate Rudd

YA Fantasy Fiction

A magnificent continuation of the deadly magic & double-crosses found in *These Rebel Waves*, as revolution overtakes our heroic (and mismatched) band of rebels. Even greater danger and grueling trials await Lu, Vex, Ben, and the Raiders as the remaining free armies form precarious alliances with the raider syndicates. So many leaders out for their own gain, all fighting to gain a greater foothold in choosing the future of the richly resourced island of Grace Loray.

Between shaking sickness, captivity in a magically shifting prison, the deaths of friends and loved ones, and horrible secrets coming to light, our fab three fight through betrayal and heartbreak to confront their pasts in order to gain a future.

A well-written tale of intrigue that delves nicely into personal growth and the acceptance of our own limitations. This book clearly acknowledges the need for diversity, cooperation, collaboration, and the joy in forming relationships with populations different than ourselves in order to find fulfilment and success in even the smallest achievements.

I encourage you to lose yourself in Raasch’s work as narrated by Rudd – a marvelous combination of talent that provides an incredible story experience.