

Amina's Voice

Hena Khan

Salaam Reads, 2017

197 pages

SUMMARY:

Amina is a Pakistani-American Muslim girl grappling with her identity. She is a talented singer but suffers from extreme stage fright. And now that she's in middle school, she feels like she's losing her best friend Soojin, who starts hanging out with the "cool" girls and even begins thinking about changing her name to something more American. On top of that, her local mosque is vandalized, leaving Amina with questions about her faith and her family's place in the community. The joys and challenges that Amina faces will resonate with many middle graders, and the story ends on a hopeful tone as the diverse community comes together.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Same Sun Here*, Silas House
- *A Long Pitch Home*, Natalie Dias Lorenzi
- *Stella Diaz Has Something to Say*, Angela Dominguez

WEBSITES:

Amina's Voice: Reading Group Guide, <http://bit.ly/2KxvdYf>, reading group guide by the publisher

Anti-Defamation League discussion guide, <http://bit.ly/2KuarIT>, discussion guides written by the ADL for educators and parents/family

Amina's Voice: A book based on my own experiences, <https://youtu.be/u3B1NIB562Y>, video interview with author Hena Khan

BOOKTALK:

Amina is a new middle-schooler struggling to find her place in school, her family, and her faith. She is a Pakistani-American Muslim girl who just wants to be a singer, but because of a disastrous experience in 2nd grade, she can't perform on stage. Her family believes her singing is "anti-Muslim" and has signed her up for a Quran recitation competition. Her best friend has started hanging out with the "cool" girls, and Amina feels all alone at school. On top of that, her local mosque has been vandalized, leaving Amina with many questions about her faith and her place as a Muslim in America. Will Amina be able to face her challenges and find the answers to her questions? Read *Amina's Voice* to find out.

Prepared by:

Jill Tyner, Bethel Elementary, jmtynr@greenville.k12.sc.us

Bolivar

Sean Rubin

Archaia, a division of Boom Entertainment, Inc., 2017

224 pages

SUMMARY:

What would you do if your neighbor was a dinosaur? Sybil knows that there is something off about her next door neighbor, but she can't seem to get anyone to believe her. Everyone is so busy going about their days in the busy streets of New York City that they don't notice Bolivar. They don't notice his odd height, his tiny arms, or his long tail. No one but Sybil sees that Bolivar is a dinosaur. When an unlikely parking ticket pulls Bolivar into an adventure from City Hall to New York's Natural History Museum, he must finally make a choice: Bolivar can continue to live unnoticed, or he can let the city see who he really is. (Junior Library Guild Selection)

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Nightlights*, Lorena Alvarez
- *Tyrannosaurus Rex vs. Edna the Very First Chicken*, Douglas Rees
- *Hello, Universe*, Erin Entrada Kelly

WEBSITES:

Sean Rubin (author's website), <http://seanrubin.com>. This website gives you information about the author as well as his creative process. There is also information about the book being made into a movie!

'Bolivar': A Q&A with Sean Rubin, <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/comics/article/75486-bolivar-a-q-a-with-sean-rubin.html>, an interview with the author by Publishers Weekly.

BOOKTALK:

How well do you know your neighbors? Could you describe them in detail? Do you pay attention to the people around you? Can you tell what is going on? You might be surprised at all the things happening around you that you never notice. But, would you notice if your neighbor was a dinosaur?! Bolivar is a graphic novel with beautifully detailed illustrations that will test your powers of observation.

Prepared by:

Jeanette Pine, Riverbank Elementary School, jpine@lex2.org

Chester and Gus

Cammie McGovern

HarperCollins, 2017

249 pages

SUMMARY:

Chester has always wanted to become a service dog. When he fails his certification test, though, it seems like that dream will never come true--until a family adopts him. They want him to be a companion for their ten-year-old son, Gus, who has autism. But Gus acts so differently than anyone Chester has ever met. He never wants to pet Chester, and sometimes he doesn't even want Chester in the room. Chester's not sure how to help Gus since this isn't exactly the job he trained for--but he's determined to figure it out. Because after all, Gus is now his person.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Because of Winn-Dixie*, Kate DiCamillo
- *Shiloh*, Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
- *Souder*, William H. Armstrong
- *Rain Reign*, Ann M. Martin
- *Duke*, Kirby Larson
- *Gaby Lost and Found*, Angela Cervantes
- *Mountain Dog*, Margarita Engle

WEBSITES:

Animated Explanation of Autism <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fy7gUIp8Ms>

Merlin's KIDS is a non profit organization dedicated to providing individually trained service dogs to those in need. <http://www.merlinskids.org/>

Paws.org-Basic pet information and some great pet videos

<https://www.paws.org/kids/learn/pets/dogs/> and <https://www.paws.org/kids/paws-cast/>

BOOKTALK:

Do you love a good dog book? Bark, bark! Doesn't everyone? My name is Chester. I'm the dog in this story. I really wanted to become a service dog, just like my mom but that didn't work out. Now, a nice family wants to adopt me to help their son, Gus. Gus is autistic. I'm not sure what that means exactly, but I'm willing to learn and try to help him. Unfortunately, Gus doesn't seem to like me much and I'm not sure how much help I can be to him when he doesn't want me around. What's a dog to do? Read *Chester and Gus* to find out if we become a dynamic duo.

Prepared by:

Cynthia Symonds, Round Top Elementary School, csymonds@richland2.org

Confessions from the Principal's Kid

Robin Mellom

HMH Books for Young Readers, 2017

272 pages

SUMMARY:

"My mother is ruining my life," notes fifth-grader Allie West. Many kids come to that same conclusion, but Allie really can't escape her mom, who is the principal of her elementary school. Allie is stuck at school all day, long after everyone else has headed home, which is why she's such good friends with the kindly custodian. Allie has several things on her mind, especially the fact that her best friend, Chloe, hasn't spoken to her for months, ever since Allie mistakenly got her in big trouble—with the principal. Allie desperately wants to make things right and also hopes to be chosen for the school math team, of which Chloe just happens to be captain.

Confessions from the Principal's Kid has plenty of heart and soul, especially since author Robin Mellom actually *was* a principal's kid and weaves some of her own memories into the story.

"This novel is not a memoir nor an autobiography," she writes, "but it was inspired by my experiences as an After." After schoolers are the handful of faculty kids forced to hang out after school while their parents finish up their duties. Not only do the After schoolers know every nook and cranny of the school, their bonds go deeper than Allie realizes, especially Allie's friendship with a bullied boy named Graham. Like Allie, this tale is full of fun, pluck and longing as she learns to navigate difficult social situations while discovering the true and sometimes tricky meanings of friendship and loyalty.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *The Watson's Go to Birmingham*, Christopher Paul Curtis
- *Gone Crazy in Alabama*, Rita Williams-Garcia

WEBSITES:

The author's webpage at: https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/4575379.Robin_Mellom.

Find out more about the author and the books she writes here:

<https://www.kidsreads.com/authors/robin-mellom-0>.

BOOKTALK:

Can you imagine if one of your parents was the principal at your school? Well that's exactly the life fifth grade student, Allie West, has to go through. Allie finds that her mother being with her every day at school is a nightmare. I don't know if I would like to have my mom at school every day of the year. If she bans something or makes a new rule none of the children like, then the kids would get mad at me. Allie has to stay after school until her mother is finished with her work at school. I like staying after school. Only the kids whose parents work at the school can stay there. So, I would basically have the whole school to myself. In conclusion, I agree that having your mother be a principal at your school is kind of embarrassing. But I would enjoy staying after school.

Prepared by:

Jayda A. Williams, White Knoll Elementary School, williams4fam@live.com

The Exact Location of Home

Kate Messner

Bloomsbury Children's Book, 2018

250 pages

SUMMARY:

Thirteen-year-old Zig doesn't understand why he hasn't heard from his father and decides that his father is leaving clues at geocache sites around the area. As he and his mother struggle to have a roof over their heads, he focuses on looking for his father with the help of his trusty GPS.

IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Almost Home*, Joan Bauer
- *The Secret Life of Lincoln Jones*, Wendelin Van Draanen
- *Capture the Flag*, Kate Messner
- *Garvey's Choice*, Nikki Grimes

WEBSITES:

Geocaching, <https://www.geocaching.com/play>, Explore geocaching.com to learn more about geocaching and find geocaches near you. Online geocaches also exist. Let the treasure hunt begin!

Geocaching with Kids, <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/geocaching-kids.html>, This site provides information about the basics of geocaching.

BOOKTALK:

Geocaching is a treasure hunt using a GPS, and finding a cache is like solving a mystery. Zig wants to solve the mystery of where his dad is and why he isn't giving his mom child support right now. His mom is struggling with working and finishing school, and financial help from his dad would make a huge difference to Zig's life. Zig is worried because his mom can't pay the rent. When Zig finds a GPS at a garage sale, he goes geocaching and thinks he's found clues to solve the mystery of his dad. Read *The Exact Location of Home* to follow Zig's search for answers about his dad and why his mom is struggling so much!

Prepared by:

Melanie Starks, East Aiken School of the Arts, mstarks@acpsd.net

Family Game Night and Other Catastrophes

Mary E. Lambert

Scholastic, 2018

245 pages

SUMMARY:

Annabelle has a secret ... a secret so big she won't allow friends within five miles of her home. Her mom collects things - their house is overflowing with stuff. It gives Annabelle's sister nightmares, her brother spends as much time as he can at friends' houses, and her dad buries himself in his work. But when a stack of newspapers falls on Annabelle's sister, it sparks a catastrophic fight between their parents - one that might tear them all apart - and Annabelle starts to think that things at home might finally need to change. *Family Game Night* is a contemporary middle grade novel that tells the story of Annabelle and her family as they cope with difficult circumstances, exploring themes of forgiveness, trust, friendship, and changing family dynamics.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY ...

- *Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus*, Dusti Bowling
- *Fish in a Tree*, Lynda Mullaly Hunt
- *Short*, Holly Goldberg Sloan
- *Sunny Side Up*, Jennifer L. Holm

WEBSITES:

Visit Mary E. Lambert's website at maryelambert.com/ to learn more about her life, her book, and what books she recommends.

BOOKTALK:

Everyone wants to be normal, right? So what do you do when your family is anything but ordinary? You hide them from your friends! Annabelle feels like a normal kid, but her family is becoming more and more dysfunctional. Her mother is a hoarder ... to the point that Annabelle doesn't let anyone within a five mile radius of her house for fear that they will see the junk that her mother collects. But the hoarding isn't just her mother's problem: it affects everyone in the family in different ways. Her sister has nightmares and is terrified of death, her brother avoids the family, it feels like her father has given up on them, and Annabelle herself has some tendencies that could be considered unhealthy. Something drastic has to change in order to get this family back on track, but how do you fix what seems to be falling apart?

Prepared by:

Beth Gambrell, Spearman Elementary School, gambrellb@apps.anderson1.org

Grand Canyon

Jason Chin

Roaring Brook Press, 2017

54 pages

SUMMARY:

Grand Canyon by renowned author Jason Chin is an informational picture book celebrating the history, geology, and natural wonders of the Grand Canyon. As a father and daughter weave their way through the Canyon, we learn about the variety of plants and animals that have lived there. We see the Canyon's geological development and the layers of earth that formed it over millions of years. Chock full of detailed information and perfectly placed die cuts, *Grand Canyon's* beautiful illustrations and picture book-like quality are sure to please kids of many ages.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Her Right Foot*, Dave Eggers
- *Redwoods*, Jason Chin
- *Billions of Year, Amazing Changes: The Story of Evolution*, Laurence Pringle

WEBSITES:

Grand Canyon National Park website, <http://bit.ly/2KtOzgR>, website by the National Park

Service with information about the Grand Canyon, its history, and geology.

Q&A with Jason Chin, <http://bit.ly/2KtWMI6>, interview by Publishers Weekly.

Grand Canyon Teaching Ideas, <http://bit.ly/2KBK2t3>, teaching ideas from *The Classroom Bookshelf* blog.

BOOKTALK:

The Grand Canyon is more than just a hole in the ground - it's a whole lot more! In *Grand Canyon* by Jason Chin, we learn about this 18 mile wide, 277 miles long, and one mile deep natural wonder known as the Grand Canyon. The Grand Canyon was formed millions of years ago and has been growing ever since. Learn about the many colored layers of rock forming the canyon and the wide variety of plants and animals that have made the canyon their home over the millennia. You'll feel like an explorer yourself as you peer through cutaways in the pages to discover new wonders, explore a detailed map, and unfold a four-page illustration. Explore the Grand Canyon for yourself when you read Jason Chin's *Grand Canyon*!

Prepared by:

Jill Tyner, Bethel Elementary, jmtynr@greenville.k12.sc.us

Granted

John David Anderson
Walden Pond Press, 2018
325 pages

SUMMARY:

Ophelia Delphinium Fidgets is proud to be a Granter, a diminutive fairy trained to make people's wishes come true. As magic dwindles, though, fewer can be granted. Ophelia receives her first assignment: fly 300 miles to Ohio to fulfill a girl's wish for a purple bicycle, retrieve the coin she tossed, dowse it with fairy dust, and return to the Haven. After encountering a plane, a car's windshield wiper, and a hawk, the fairy is lost and battered, but Sam, a homeless dog, enthusiastically helps her carry out her mission. Ophelia decides to defy her orders by granting more than one wish. --*Booklist*

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Wishtree*, Katherine Applegate
- *One Wish*, Michelle Harrison
- *The Forgetting Spell*, Lauren Myracle
- *The Seventh Wish*, Kate Messner

WEBSITES:

Granted Teacher's Guide: <https://b0f646cfbd7462424f7a-f9758a43fb7c33cc8adda0fd36101899.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/teaching-guides/TG-9780062643865.pdf>

Granted-John David Anderson's Website-<http://www.johndavidanderson.org/granted.html>

BOOKTALK:

Have you ever wished on a star, thrown a penny in a fountain, or blown out a birthday candle? If you have you know there is one rule; you can't tell anyone what you wished for. Even so there is someone out there who hears it. That someone is Ophelia, fairy in the business of granting wishes. Out on her first mission she soon learns that giving someone what they truly want sometimes takes more than a fairy dust.

Prepared by:

Cynthia Symonds, Round Top Elementary School, csymonds@richland2.org

Joplin, Wishing
Diane Stanley
HarperCollins Publishers, 2017
249 pages

SUMMARY:

A young girl named Joplin finds a beautifully painted broken platter in her grandfather's home and wishes the girl from the painting could come to life. The next day, the girl appears and offers to grant wishes if Joplin will help her get back to her seventeenth-century home.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Tumble & Blue*, Cassie Beasley
- *The Castle in the Mist*, Amy Ephron
- *Shadow Weaver*, MarcyKate Connolly
- *The Penderwicks*, Jeanne Birdsall

WEBSITES:

Diane Staley Author Site, <https://dianestanley.com/about/>, The website has biographical information about the author, details about her other books, awards won, and art done by the author.

Delft Blue, <https://www.holland.com/global/tourism/discover-holland/traditional/delft-blue.htm>, This website tells about the history of the pottery in Holland and shows pictures of what it looks like.

Netherlands Information,

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/countries/netherlands/#netherlands-tulip-fields.jpg>, This website from Culturegrams provides history, land, climate, population, language, and other facts about the country.

BOOKTALK:

A mysterious broken platter. A sinister antiques dealer. A witty and unusual eleven-year-old with a propensity for solving mysteries and a heart of gold. All these lead to a quest to save a 300-year-old girl trapped in a her version of a genie in a bottle. Team up with Joplin, Barrett, and Sofie as they race to find the key that unlocks the door to the past. A key that can undo terrible wrongs, a key that can rescue a little girl, and a key that can finally bring peace to Joplin's family.

Prepared by:

Jillian Stroud, Lake Carolina Elementary Upper Campus, jill.ringhausen@gmail.com

Let's Pretend We Never Met

Melissa Walker
HarperCollins, 2017
240 pages

SUMMARY:

Sixth grader Mattie Markham moves from North Carolina to Pennsylvania over Christmas break. When Mattie meets her next-door neighbor and classmate, she begins to think maybe she was silly to fear being the “new girl.” Agnes is like no one Mattie has ever met—she’s curious, hilarious, smart, and makes up the best games. If winter break is anything to go by, the rest of the school year should be a breeze. Only it isn’t, because when vacation ends and school starts, Mattie realizes something: At school Agnes is known as the weird girl who no one likes. All Mattie wants is to fit in (okay, and maybe be a little popular too), but is that worth ending her friendship with Agnes?

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Short*, Holly Goldberg Sloan
- *Ban This Book*, Alan Gatz
- *The Great Treehouse War*, Lisa Graff
- *This Would Make a Good Story Someday*, Dana Alison Levy

WEBSITES:

Visit the Let's Pretend We Never Met webpage at

<https://www.harpercollins.com/9780062567161/lets-pretend-we-never-met/> on the HarperCollins Publisher's website to find a summary and reviews.

Visit Melissa Walker's website at <http://www.melissacwalker.com/> to learn more about the author, information about other books she has written, resources, and more.

BOOKTALK:

Have you ever moved schools? Have you ever worried about making? Have you ever wanted to be popular or fit in? In *Let's Pretend We Never Met*, Mattie moves over winter break. She spends a lot of her time worrying about how she will fit in at her new school until she meets her neighbor Agnes. Mattie is excited about starting school with a friend. However, Agnes is the “weird girl” at school. Read more to find out if Mattie and Agnes stay friends.

Prepared by:

Calli Collins, Lambs Elementary School, mary_collins@charleston.k12.sc.us

Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History

Vashti Harrison
Little Brown, 2017
96 pages

SUMMARY:

Little Leaders introduces 40 trailblazing black women from United States history. Each leader is described in a one-page mini-biography. The book features household names like Harriet Tubman and Oprah Winfrey; as well as lesser-known women including Mamie Phipps Clark and Alice Ball. Each concise biography includes the leader's background as a child or youth, touches on her major accomplishments, and ends with her legacy.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Little Dreamers*, Vashti Harrison
- *Young, Gifted and Black*, Jamia Wilson
- *Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women*, Andrea Davis Pinkney
- *Hidden Figures*, Margot Lee Shetterly

WEBSITES:

Vashti Harrison. <http://www.vashtiharrison.com/> This is the author website. It includes a list of books that Harrison has written and/or illustrated, information about her process for illustrating, news and updates, and contact information.

Little Brown Young Readers <https://www.lbyr.com/titles/vashti-harrison/little-leaders-bold-women-in-black-history/9780316475105/> This is the publisher website and it features biographical information about the author, other titles she has written, an audio excerpt from the book, reader and editorial reviews, as well as related reads.

PBS Explore Inspirational Women http://www.pbs.org/black-culture/explore/black-women-in-history/#.W_2iVehKiUk, This collection of videos and web exclusives from trusted PBS media partners features such women as Daisy Bates, Rosetta Tharpe and Barbara Conrad. Each woman featured has made a special mark on their communities and the world.

BOOKTALK:

Little Leaders offers an illuminating glance at the lives of extraordinary black women and their contributions to American history. Vashti Harrison surveys the lives and accomplishments of forty black women pioneers. Each mini-biography is accompanied by an adorable illustration which helps to make Little Leaders a book that will educate and inspire.

Prepared by:

Victoria Smith, Reidville Elementary School, victoria.smth@spart5.net

Mango Delight
Fracaswell Hyman
Sterling Children's Books, 2017
219 pages

SUMMARY:

When seventh-grader Mango Delight Fuller breaks her BFF Brooklyn's new cell phone, Brooklyn becomes her EFF—Ex-Friend-Forever—and Mango's life falls apart. In retaliation, Brooklyn signs Mango up for auditioning in the school musical, and it backfires. Mango gets the lead part and becomes a YouTube sensation! This attracts the attention of Hailey Jo, the school's very wealthy queen bee, who expects Mango to start doing things her way to maintain their popularity. Soon, Mango has to decide what kind of friends she wants in her life, and, more importantly, what kind of friend she wants to be.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *The Losers Club*, Andrew Clements
- *Confessions from a Principal's Kid*, Robin Mellom
- *The First Rule of Punk*, Celia C. Perez
- *Fish in a Tree*, Lynda Mullaly Hunt
- *The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary*, Laura Shovan

WEBSITES:

Fracaswell Hyman Author Site, <https://fracaswellhyman.com/>, The website has biographical information about the author, details about his other books and television shows, and his blog entries.

Mango Delight Discussion Guide, <https://e41d2e279e8f9f86d467-5df75b4f054767765b6702b13ddfc819.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/discussion-guides/DG-9781454923329.pdf>, This website provides discussion questions to use while reading the book to guide readers' thinking.

Author Interview, <http://liblaura5.blogspot.com/2017/07/5-with-fracaswell-hyman-author-of-mango.html>, This blog site provides a brief interview with the author where he answers questions about the background of *Mango Delight*, his inspiration, and books that have shaped his life.

BOOKTALK:

Everyone LOVES Queen Bey (aka Beyonce). Mango Delight can even SING like her. But only in front of her family and best friend forever, Brooklyn. But when best friend forever turns into public enemy #1, Mango is set up for a cruel prank. It backfires when she is cast as the star in the upcoming school play. But Mango quickly learns that people are more complicated than they seem and doing the right thing is not always the easy thing.

Prepared by:

Jillian Stroud, Lake Carolina Elementary Upper Campus, jill.ringhausen@gmail.com

Real Friends

Shannon Hale

First Second Publishing, 2017

213 Pages

SUMMARY:

Real Friends is a graphic novel memoir by Shannon Hale. This book portrays her life from kindergarten to fifth grade as she was trying to find real friends. *Real Friends* portrays bullies, cliques and the need to fit. Shannon and Adrienne have been best friends ever since they were little. When Adrienne starts hanging out with Jen, the most popular girl in class and the leader of a circle of friends called The Group, Shannon is afraid she will lose her friend forever. Everyone in The Group wants to be Jen's #1, and some girls would do anything to stay on top . . . even if it means bullying others.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK TRY...

- *Sisters*, Raina Telgemeier
- *Smile*, Raina Telgemeier
- *Roller Girl*, Victoria Jamieson
- *Making Friends*, Kristen Gudsruk

WEBSITES:

Squeetus Blog, <https://www.squeetus.com/>, this website is the official blog of Shannon Hale.

BOOKTALK:

Have you ever had a friend that was so special you didn't want anyone else to be their friend? In this personal memoir, Adrienne and Shannon have been best friends since kindergarten.

However, after starting third grade Shannon finds that Adrienne has a new group of friends. A girl named Jen and her friends known as The Group have made Adrienne a member. Shannon is willing to do whatever it takes to maintain the friendship with Adrienne and be a part of the group. But just how far is she willing to go to fit in? When is being a mean girl and a bully too much for Shannon? Find out in this memoir about friendship, acceptance and making the right choice. Read *Real Friends* by Shannon Hale.

Prepared by:

Brandy Rollins, Lone Oak Elementary School, rollinsbr@spart6.org

Sergeant Reckless: The True Story of the Little Horse Who Became a Hero

Patricia McCormick

Harper Collins, 2017

40 pages

SUMMARY:

During the Korean War, US Marines found it difficult to move heavy equipment and ammunition. They found a malnourished mare and decided to turn her into a pack horse. Even in the thick of battle, the horse carried supplies and was honored by the military for her service with two purple hearts and the only animal ever given a rank.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *Sergeant Reckless: America's War Horse*, Robin Hutton
- *Nubs: The True Story of a Mutt, a Marine & a Miracle*, Major Brian Dennis
- *War Horse*, Michael Morphugo

WEBSITES:

Author Patricia McCormick's website <https://www.patriciamccormick.com/>, includes teacher resources for her books.

BOOKTALK:

A bedraggled, malnourished racehorse abandoned in Korea. US Marines exhausted from carrying equipment for a specialized rifle. Doesn't seem like this story could have a happy ending, does it? But Sergeant Reckless, as she became known, not only carried munitions for the troops, she stole their hearts. The Marines found this skinny mare and decided to try to turn her into a pack horse. She was a quick learner, had a large appetite and knew which Marines kept sweets in their tents! She marched bravely into battle over and over was the first, and only, animal ever to be given a rank in the military. With illustrations by Iacopo Bruno that bring the story to life, young readers will never forget this special horse.

Prepared by:

Barbara Stewart Zinkovich, OP Earle Elementary School, Landrum, SC

Spirit Hunters

Ellen Oh
Harper, 2017
276 pages

SUMMARY:

Harper Raine's family relocates to Washington DC for a fresh start. They move into an old home that they are renovating. Harper immediately feels like there is something evil in the house. She has always been able to notice signs from ghosts, and the spirit world. When her brother starts to act strange she knows that she must act on her beliefs in order to save him.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *The Old Willis Place*, Mary Downing Hahn
- *The Peculiar Incident on Shady Street*, Lindsay Currie
- *Ghostlight*, Sonia Gensler

WEBSITES:

Ellen Oh, <http://www.ellenoh.com/>. Visit author Ellen OH's website in order to learn more about this book and other books that she has written.

Texas Bluebonnet Award 2018-19, <https://texasbluebonnetaward2019.wordpress.com/spirit-hunters/>. This award page has a reader's theater along with several other activities.

BOOKTALK:

Harper's family moves from New York City down to Washington DC. As soon as the family moves into the old house, Harper gets a strange feeling about her new home. Her little brother has a new 'best friend' that nobody can see, and the house will have moments when it is suddenly freezing cold. Harper tries to explain her feelings to her parents, but they don't want to hear about it. When Harper realizes that her brother has been possessed by a ghost she knows that it is up to her to save him. With the help of her grandmother, Harper sets out to save her brother and get rid of the spirit that is haunting her house. Read, *Spirit Hunters* by Ellen Oh in order to find out if Harper is able to save the day... and her brother.

Prepared by:

Traci Nelson, Aiken Elementary, tnelson@acpsd.net

Stef Soto, Taco Queen
Jennifer Torres
Little Brown and Company, 2017
166 pages

SUMMARY:

Mexican-American Estefania “Stef” Soto is hoping to break free from her overprotective parents and embarrassing reputation from her family's taco truck business, but she soon learns that family, friendship, and the taco truck are important and wonderful parts of her life.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY ...

- *Bravo! Poems about Amazing Hispanics*, Margarita Engle
- *Flo and Miranda Steal the Show*, Jennifer Torres
- *The First Rules of Punk*, Celia C. Pérez
- *Food Trucks!*, Mark Todd
- *Food Truck Fest!*, Alexandra Penfold

WEBSITES:

Author's Website: <https://jenntorres.com/>

How to make homemade tortillas: <https://jenntorres.com/books/stef/activities-and-resources-stef-soto-taco-queen/homemade-tortillas/>

Kid-friendly Mexican recipes: <https://www.parenting.com/gallery/kid-friendly-mexican-dishes>

Design your own food truck: <https://restaurantsuccess.touchbistro.com/touchbistro-blog/food-truck-design-101-how-to-build-a-food-truck>

BOOKTALK:

Imagine waiting in the car pickup line at school and your dad arrives, not in the family car, but in a big run-down food truck named Tía Perla. In fact, you can smell the cilantro and onions before you even see Tía Perla pull up. Stef can't imagine anything more embarrassing than riding around town in the family taco truck! But when her best friend invites her to a concert, Stef has another worry: will her overprotective parents let her go? And what about the town's new food truck laws? Is their family business in trouble? What will Papi do for money? You'll love this fresh, honest story of what it means to be a family.

Prepared by:

Kellyanne Burbage, Mitchell Elementary School, kellyanneburbage@charleston.k12.sc.us

Super Max and the Mystery of Thornwood's Revenge

Susan Vaught

Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2017

335 pages

SUMMARY:

Max is a 12-year-old techie who lives with her grandfather and is frequently in trouble for blowing things up. When there is a hacker out to get her grandfather, Max is worried that she won't be able to crack the case. Max lives next to Thornwood Mansion, and she is afraid that the mansion is somehow connected to the trouble that her grandfather is having.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *The Old Willis Place*, Mary Downing Hahn
- *The Peculiar Incident on Shady Street*, Lindsay Currie
- *Ghostlight*, Sonia Gensler

WEBSITES:

Susan Vaught, <http://susanvaught.com/> , Visit author Susan Vaught's website in order to learn more about this book and other books that she has written.

Super Max Curriculum Guide, [Activity Guide](#), This guide has discussion questions, vocabulary, and reading and writing connections.

BOOKTALK:

Max is not your typical 12-year-old. Some people may think that is because she is in a wheelchair, but that is not the reason. Max is a technological whiz-kid who is not afraid of danger. When her grandfather falls victim to a hacker on social media, Max is determined to catch the person causing all of the problems and help her grandfather. Will Max succeed at helping her grandfather? Or will the Ghost of Thornwood finally get its revenge. Read *Super Max and the Mystery of Thornwood's Revenge* in order to find out what happens.

Prepared by:

Traci Nelson, Aiken Elementary, tnelson@acpsd.net

The Van Gogh Deception

Deron Hicks
HMH Books, 2017
320 pages

SUMMARY:

A young boy has forgotten almost everything about himself. What is his name? And why is a group of covert people after him? Perhaps it has to do with where he was found – sitting in the National Gallery of Art in front of a Degas sculpture. As the risks continue to rise, the boy must piece together the disjointed clues of his origins to stop one of the greatest art frauds ever attempted. This digitally interactive, suspenseful museum mystery has QR codes woven throughout, bringing famous paintings to readers' fingertips.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *The Broken Sun: a Jack Mason Adventure*, Darrell Pit
- *Sherlock Sam and the Missing Heirloom in Katong*, A.J. Low
- *Midnight Magic*, Avi
- *The Clue in the Trees*, Margi Preus

WEBSITES:

Deron Hicks. <http://deronhicks.com/>, This author website features biographical information, reviews and recognition of his work, author events, and contact information.

National Gallery of Art. <https://www.nga.gov/>, This website provides information for visitors, information about current and upcoming exhibits, lesson plans for teachers, downloadable images, a NGAKids section with interactives, and more.

Van Gogh Museum. <https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en>, The museum, in Amsterdam, boasts the largest collection of works by van Gogh. Visitors to the site can select and order prints of over 4000 of the artist's works. The site also features van Gogh's letters, drawings, stories about his life and highlights of the museum's collection.

BOOKTALK:

Art and Camille race around Washington DC on a wintry night, tangling with elite operatives and foiling crime they don't understand. Twelve-year-old Art was found on a bench in the National Gallery of Art, alone and struck with amnesia. He is placed with ten-year-old Camille and her mother in emergency foster care. Criminal mastermind Dorchek Palmer and his highly skilled covert operatives will stop at nothing to protect the sale of a forged Van Gogh, including hacking, and erasing security footage across the city and kidnapping Art and Camille.

Prepared by:

Victoria Smith, Reidville Elementary School, victoria.smith@spart5.net

Wishtree
Katherine Applegate
Feiwel and Friends, 2017
215 pages

SUMMARY:

Red is an oak tree that's been around for hundreds of years. Every year, the people of his town tie wishes on his branches. They call him the "Wishtree." In the story, a Muslim family moves into the house next to Red. Samar, the little girl, is lonely and needs a friend, so Red and his animal friends decide to take action to connect Samar and her neighbor, Stephen. Meanwhile, in an act of hatred, someone carves the word "Leave" in Red's trunk. The town decides it's time to cut down the tree. Red and his animal friends can stay quiet no more, and they launch a plan to save themselves and, just perhaps, spread a little love and acceptance.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

- *The One and Only Ivan*, Katherine Applegate
- *Crenshaw*, Katherine Applegate
- *Stella by Starlight*, Sharon Draper
- *Endling: The Last*, Katherine Applegate

WEBSITES:

Wishtree: All Are Welcome Here, <http://bit.ly/2KBKuHL>, resources for using *Wishtree* in the classroom.

A Teacher's Guide to *Wishtree*, <http://bit.ly/2Kt9YGW>, teaching guide from the publisher.

Wishtree Teaching Ideas, <http://bit.ly/2KtD5dr>, teaching ideas from *The Classroom Bookshelf* blog.

BOOKTALK:

Red is an old oak tree who is many rings old. He is known as the "Wishtree" - each year, people tie hundreds of wishes onto his branches. When Samar, a Muslim girl, moves into the house next to Red, he decides she needs a friend. So Red and his talking animal "tenants" pull out all the stops to connect Samar to Ben, a friendly boy next door who also needs a pal. But when someone carves a hateful word into the tree to scare away Samar and her family, the town decides it's time to cut Red down. This time, Red and his friends can stay silent no more. Will they be able to save the tree in time? Find out by reading this heartwarming adventure.

Prepared by:

Zoe Tyner, 5th-grade student, Pelham Road Elementary

You Go First
Erin Entrada Kelly
Greenwillow Books, 2018
288 pages

SUMMARY:

Twelve-year-old Charlotte and eleven-year-old Ben are highly-skilled competitors at online Scrabble and that connection helps both as they face family issues and the turmoil of middle school.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY....

- *Raymie Nightingale*, Kate DiCamillo.
- *Goodbye Stranger*, Rebecca Stead
- *When You Reach Me*, Rebecca Stead
- *Inside Out and Back Again*, Thanhha Lai

WEBSITES:

Q & A with Erin Entrada Kelly. Publisher's Weekly <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/76377-q-a-with-erin-entrada-kelly.html> ,provides insight into author's inspiration and intent in writing her characters.

Erin Entrada Kelly reads a chapter from *You Go First*.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGAg3d8vz_Q

Erin Entrada Kelly Educator's Guide.

<https://b0f646cfbd7462424f7a-f9758a43fb7c33cc8adda0fd36101899.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/teaching-guides/TG-9780062414151.pdf>

Booktalk by Mr. Colby Sharpe. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6quAMxgywwY>

BOOKTALK:

Middle school is a tough time for kids today. It is a time when you are in between being a kid and growing up into an adult. On the surface, Charlotte and Ben seemingly lead different lives, but the two have more in common than they think. Both are highly gifted and both are going through family turmoil. They are able to connect through a game of online Scrabble, and learn that your real friends accept you for who you are.

Prepared by:

Deborah Heath, Jefferson Elementary School, dheath2@acpsd.net