



Youth Staff Picks

February 2021

The Blackbird Girls

by Anne Blankman — j Bla | Historical Fiction, Suspense

It's spring 1986. Valentina and Oksana are neighbors and lifelong enemies. One morning, they wake up to a red sky, and their fathers have not returned from their shift at the nuclear power plant – Chernobyl. Though life seems to go forward normally that first morning, everything is about to drastically change. Both girls must find tremendous bravery and trust when it seems impossible. Family secrets are discovered, and keeping them is a matter of life and death. A very powerful alternating-perspective story of friendship and survival. (EK)

Station Jim

by Louis de Bernières, performed by Andrew Wincott — j CDAB DeB | Fiction, Storytelling

Blimey, what an entertaining British story! Station Jim is a mongrel, a puppy, found by the local railway stationmaster “back in the days when all the trains were driven by steam.” How Jim got his name and charmed the whole seaside town, not to also mention the cat who lives with stationmaster Mr. Ginger Leghorn and his rambunctious family, is just one of the many anecdotes by which you will be entertained in this rambling, occasionally outspoken dog story. (AE)

McTavish Goes Wild

by Meg Rosoff; illustrated by Grace Easton — j Ros v. 2 | Fiction

McTavish the rescue dog has his paws full when the eccentric Peachey family goes camping. They aren't very good at it and tend to complain rather than enjoy their surroundings. It's up to McTavish to turn things around! This short, funny, illustrated chapter book would make a good read-aloud. (PS)

Made for Each Other: Why Dogs and People are Perfect Partners

by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent — j 636.7 Pat | Nonfiction, Dogs

Anyone who has had a dog knows that we understand each other's language. But when did that start? Scientists have studied the evolution of prehistoric wolves to the domestic dogs of today. Science shows us how perfectly we go together. Dogs make us feel safe, give us love, and can work alongside us! (JL)



Once Upon a Winter Day

by Lisa Woodruff — E Woo | Picture Book

Milo goes out to play in the snow while his mother is busy with work. He has an adventure following tiny mouse tracks in the snow, wondering about all of the things that he sees along the way. The woods are alive with signs of life, even in winter. How exciting it will be to tell his mother about his adventures when he gets home! (LD)

My Creepy Valentine

by Arthur Howard — E How | Picture Book, Holiday

Mitzi the witch has never made a valentine for anyone, because she does not do Valentine's Day, but that all changes when she meets Spencer, a boy who can spurt milk out of his nose. (EM)

*

Raven, Rabbit, Deer

by Sue Farrell Holler — E Hol | Picture Book

A little boy wants to show his grandpa how to jump in the snow and play on a cold winter day. Then boy takes good care of his grandpa, taking his hand to make sure he doesn't fall. Grandpa, in turn, shows the boy how to greet the Raven and find deer tracks. This is a sweet story that ends like a good snow day should – with a snuggle in a big chair next to a glowing fire! (JL)

Twins

by Varian Johnson — Graphic Novel Joh v.1 | Contemporary Fiction, Graphic Novel

Maureen and Francine have been inseparable friends (and sisters!) since birth. But middle school opens doors and opportunities for each in different ways. Can friends still be shared? One bedroom has certainly become too tight. What happens when each of the twins decides to run for class president – and they are the only 2 candidates? Spot-on portrayal of school and family dynamics. (AE)

A Sporting Chance: How Ludwig Guttmann Created the Paralympic Games

by Lori Alexander; illustrated by Allan Drummond — j 796 Ale | Nonfiction, Neurology, Sports, Biography

For millennia, paraplegia—paralysis resulting from a spinal injury—was considered incurable and untreatable; frequently it was a death sentence. Thanks to a German Jewish neurologist who left Germany when Hitler came to power, treatment changed dramatically and encouraged more care, more socialization, and participation in sports! The sports were so successful that his hospital began hosting games for paraplegic patients in 1948. The Stoke Mandeville Games grew, and finally in 1960, the games were played alongside (“para”) the Olympics. This is a fascinating and inspiring account of the history of the Paralympic Games, the people who participate, and the man who had the vision to start them. (PS)



This Way, Charlie

by Caron Levis and Charles Santoso — E Lev | ebook on [HOOPLA](#)

A beautiful tale of animal friendship and kindness based on a true story. When Charlie, a horse, arrives at the ranch, newly learning to see out of only one eye, he makes a friend in the most unlikely place – with Jack, a goat, who really prefers to be left alone! Soft illustrations and a sweet story tell the tale of the two friends who find out how much they need each other. (EK)

The Trouble with Penguins

by Rebecca Jordan-Glum — E Jor | Picture Book

One day, a penguin met a person roasting marshmallows. They had a wonderful time around the fire. When the penguin's friends learned of his adventure, they wanted their own marshmallows. Unfortunately, they forgot about sharing. How much more fun can you have when you share what you have with others (people and penguins)?! (LD)

The Alphabet's Alphabet

by Chris Harris — E Har | Picture Book

Even though alphabet letters are all unique, they resemble each other – just like people in a family do! (EM)

*

Every Night is Pizza Night

by J. Kenji Lopez-Alt — E Lop | Picture Book

Pipo loves pizza more than anything else in the world. She decides to do a survey of her neighbors and comes to the conclusion that there is room for other kinds of food in her heart. Included is a pizza crust recipe from the author (a renowned chef, cookbook author, and journalist). (LD)

Summer at Meadow Wood

by Amy Rebecca Tan — j Tan | Contemporary Fiction

Vic Brown has always loved Meadow Wood and has been looking forward to being a senior camper this year—but her usual joy is dampened by the knowledge that her parents are having problems, and her mom wants her out of the way. Friends old and new, a precocious little “camp sister,” introduction to the camp vegetable garden, and a touch of romance make the summer go quickly and help Vic see things from a new perspective. Camp – the way it should be! (PS)



Ikenga

by Nnedi Okorafor — j Oko | Fiction, Magical Realism

A year after Nnamdi Ichiteka's father (Kaleria's police chief) was murdered, Nnamdi accepts the Ikenga, a magical figure, from his father's spirit. The Ikenga fills him with Hulk-like powers in order to avenge his father's murder and complete the task of clearing the village of corruption, criminal by criminal. Nnamdi learns the hard way that power, like emotions, can serve you or derail you. This coming-of-age-superhero novel incorporates a bonus layer of interest, because it is set in today's Nigerian culture. (AE)

'Ohana Means Family'

by Ilima Loomis — E Loo | Picture Book

This wonderful read-aloud picture book with rhythmic text and warm illustrations describes the long-standing tradition of preparing for an 'Ohana's lu'au. A wonderful story of family. (EK)

Hoot and Peep

by Lita Judge — E Jud | Picture Book

Peep looks up to her big brother, Hoot, and Hoot has decided that she is finally old enough to learn all of his owly wisdom! But Peep is so taken by the magical sounds of the city at night that she starts to sing her own song. This frustrates Hoot, and he tries to explain why owls only HOOO! Does Peep listen to her big brother and stop singing her own song? The adorable art in this book helps one to feel the magic of the city at night. (JL)

The Stitchers

by Lorien Lawrence — j Law | Fiction, Horror, Suspense | ebook and audiobook on [HOOPLA](#)

The "Oldies" on Goodie Lane have been acting strange for quite some time. After Quinn and her neighbor Mike see their elderly neighbor, Mr. Brown, sprint past them with the same calf scar that Quinn's late father had, they become determined to uncover the truth. (EM)

*

The Tale of the Valiant Ninja Frog

by Alastair Chisholm — E Chi | Picture Book

It is fireside story time with Dad, and Jamie and Abby have very specific demands on what it should be about. They want a prince and princess, witch and an ogre, and bears, of course, but don't forget the frog! Unfortunately, Dad's frog is boring. Thank goodness Abby saves the Frog and the whole story when she steps in and tells the rest of the story! (JL)



How Big is Love?

by Emma Dodd — E Dod | Picture Book

Mama Goose explains to her five newly born goslings how much she loves them and what love means. Love is all around you every day. The more you love, the bigger your love grows. There is always more love to go around! (LD)

Something to Say

by Lisa Moore Ramée — j Ram | Realistic Fiction

Jenae is eleven years old and prefers solitude. She doesn't have anyone she considers a friend, and she is perfectly happy with that. Until a bright red-haired boy, Aubrey, comes along one day, determined to be her friend, and it changes everything. Suddenly she finds herself in the middle of a major school and community debate over a school name change, all while dealing with an interesting and somewhat dramatic family dynamic, including a brother unexpectedly home from college, an absentee father and an aging grandfather. (EK)

If You Take Away the Otter

by Susannah Buhrman-Deaver — j 599.76 Buh | Nonfiction, Ecology, Conservation

Near where the Pacific ocean meets the shore, in underwater forests of kelp, there exists a wondrous ecosystem of many different living things, including the adorable sea otters. What changed when the sea otters were hunted almost out of existence? The lush illustrations will make you feel like you are right there in the water! (AE)

Swish! The Slam-Dunking, Alley-Ooping, High-Flying Harlem Globetrotters

by Suzanne Slade — j 796.323 Sla | Nonfiction, Sports

Read about how the Harlem Globetrotters got started, the racial barriers they endured, and their rise to popularity. (EM)

In the Red

by Christopher Swiedler — j Swi | Science Fiction, Survival

Survival outside the Martian colony dome requires wearing environment suits. Michael Prasad has failed his basic test for going outside the dome: he has panic attacks when he's suited up. So how has he ended up on the Mars surface with his friend, Lilith, during a life-threatening solar flare? They're running out of food and water and must find shelter before the sun rises. Readers of science fiction and survival fiction will not want to miss this one. (PS)