

## **HKA Primary Library Summer Reading Suggestions 2014 – A starting point to discover some great books to read!**

*(Included descriptions, unless marked otherwise, were taken from [Goodreads](#).)*

The following is a compilation of just a few (fiction) titles that I read (and enjoyed) and/or came across recently and of which I think they might appeal to our students. While it is my hope that your child will discover something that sparks his/her curiosity, should this not be the case, please explore “Summer Reading 2014” on our [Library2clicks page](#) for further suggestions and/or take your child to a public library or bookstore to browse the shelves for more ideas. Having a say in what to read is the most powerful reading motivator.

While the grade-level boundaries are very loose, they are to be understood according to where your child currently is (and not where he/she will be after the summer). Since reading levels vary within grade-levels, as each reader develops at his/her own pace, the recommendations are more geared towards interest level. Please also keep in mind that books can be used and read in various ways, depending on the child’s developmental stage, as reading can take place in many different forms, e.g. your child reading independently, you and your child sharing the reading, you reading the book out loud to your child, your child listening to an audio book etc.

Happy Summer Reading!

### **Some suggestions for students in PK1-K**

#### **1. Chu’s Day (Neil Gaiman)**

“Chu is a little panda with a big sneeze.  
When Chu sneezes, bad things happen.  
Will Chu sneeze today?”

#### **2. Open This Little Book (Jesse Klausmeier)**

“What will you find when you open this little book? A fun story? Sweet characters? Enticing pictures? Yes! But much more. Open this book and you will find...another book...and another...and another. Debut author Jesse Klausmeier and master book creator Suzy Lee have combined their creative visions to craft a seemingly simple book about colors for the very youngest readers, an imaginative exploration of the art of book making for more sophisticated aficionados, and a charming story of friendship and the power of books for all.”

#### **3. Flora and the Flamingo (Molly Idle)**

“In this innovative wordless picture book with interactive flaps, Flora and her graceful flamingo friend explore the trials and joys of friendship through an elaborate synchronized dance. With a twist, a turn, and even a flop, these unlikely friends learn at last how to dance together in perfect harmony. Full of humor and heart, this stunning performance (and splashy ending!) will have readers clapping for more!”

#### **4. The Silver Button (Bob Graham)**

“At 9:59 on a Thursday morning, Jodie draws a duck. As her pen hovers in the air, ready to add a silver button to the duck’s boot, her little brother Jonathan pushes to his feet, sways, and takes his first step. At the exact same moment, their mom plays a pennywhistle in the kitchen, a man buys fresh bread at the bakery, a baby is born, a soldier says good-bye to his mom, a granddad and granddaughter play with leaves in the park, a blackbird finds a worm... From an ordinary scene of an apartment strewn with child’s artwork and toys to a bird’s-eye view of a city morning pulsing with life, Bob Graham celebrates a whole world-vision in a single moment, encouraging readers to stop, observe, and savor the world around them.”

### 5. Mr Wuffles (David Wiesner)

**“A 2014 Caldecott Honor Book** - In a near wordless masterpiece that could only have been devised by David Wiesner, a cat named Mr. Wuffles doesn't care about toy mice or toy goldfish. He's *much* more interested in playing with a little spaceship full of actual aliens—but the ship wasn't designed for this kind of rough treatment. Between motion sickness and damaged equipment, the aliens are in deep trouble. When the space visitors dodge the cat and take shelter behind the radiator to repair the damage, they make a host of insect friends. The result? A humorous exploration of cooperation between aliens and insects, and of the universal nature of communication involving symbols, “cave” paintings, and gestures of friendship.”

### 6. This Moose Belongs to Me (and other picture books by Oliver Jeffers)

“Wilfred owned a moose. He hadn't always owned a moose. The moose came to him a while ago and he knew, just KNEW, that it was meant to be his. He thought he would call him Marcel. Most of the time Marcel is very obedient, abiding by the many rules of *How to Be a Good Pet*. But imagine Wilfred's surprise when one dark day, while deep in the woods, someone else claims the moose as their own...”

### 7. Hooray for Hat (Brian Won)

“Elephant wakes up grumpy—until *ding, dong!* What's in the surprise box at the front door? A hat! HOORAY FOR HAT! Elephant marches off to show Zebra, but Zebra is having a grumpy day, too—until Elephant shares his new hat and cheers up his friend. Off they march to show Turtle! The parade continues as every animal brightens the day of a grumpy friend. An irresistible celebration of friendship, sharing, and fabulous hats.”

### 8. The Paper Dolls (and other picture books by Julia Donaldson)

“The breathtakingly beautiful story of one little girl and her five paper dolls.”

### 9. Xander's Panda Party (Linda Sue Park)

*“Xander planned a panda party. Yes, a dandy whoop-de-do!  
But Xander was the only panda. Just one panda at the zoo.*

The zoo's paucity of pandas doesn't impede Xander's party planning for long. He decides to invite *all* the bears. But Koala protests. She's not a bear—she's a marsupial! Does that mean she can't come? Xander rethinks his decision to invite only bears, and “Calling all bears” evolves into “Calling all creatures.” The Newbery Medal author Linda Sue Park introduces animal taxonomy in a wonderfully engaging way, and the celebrated artist Matt Phelan's charming ink and watercolor paintings are the icing on the cake. A read-aloud whoop-de-do!”

### 10. Three Bears in a Boat (David Soman)

**“From the co-creator of the *New York Times* bestselling *Ladybug Girl* series comes a high seas adventure inspired by the classic picture books *Little Bear* and *Where the Wild Things Are*.**

Three bear siblings break their mother's favorite blue seashell, and rather than tell her, they decide to set out in their sailboat to find her a new one. On their quest they encounter salty sailors, strange new islands, huge whales, and vast seas but no blue seashells. When a treacherous storm suddenly blows in, the three bears find themselves tossed about in their little boat, far from Mama. What will become of their search, and what will it take to bring them safely home? This read aloud shares its best qualities with classic picture books: breath-taking illustrations, epic adventure, and a subtle message about taking responsibility for your actions.”

And one additional recommendation that will delight especially your Kindergartener ready for slightly longer books:

### The Mercy Watson series (Kate DiCamillo).

“To Mr. and Mrs. Watson, Mercy is not just a pig — she's a porcine wonder. And to the portly and good-natured Mercy, the Watsons are an excellent source of buttered toast, not to mention that buttery-toasty feeling she gets when she snuggles into bed with them. This is not, however, so good for the Watsons' bed. BOOM! CRACK! As the bed and its occupants slowly sink through the floor, Mercy escapes in a flash — “to alert the fire department,” her owners assure themselves. But could Mercy possibly have another emergency in mind — like a sudden craving for their neighbors' sugar cookies? Welcome to the wry and endearing world of Mercy Watson — an ebullient new character for early chapter-book readers in a series that's destined to be a classic.”

## Some suggestions for students in G1-2

### 1. Lulu and the Brontosaurus - and other books in the series (Judith Viorst)

"Judith Viorst and Lane Smith team up to create an irresistibly fresh and funny story with an ending that will surprise you again and again and again."

### 2. The Year of Billy Miller (Kevin Henkes)

"Award-winning, nationally bestselling author Kevin Henkes introduces second-grader Billy Miller in this fast-paced and funny story about friendship, sibling rivalry, and elementary school. *The Year of Billy Miller* was named a 2014 Newbery Honor book by the American Library Association. *The Year of Billy Miller* includes black-and-white art by Kevin Henkes and is perfect for fans of the Ramona books; *Frindle*, by Andrew Clements; and the Clementine series. When Billy Miller has a mishap at the statue of the Jolly Green Giant at the end of summer vacation, he ends up with a big lump on his head. What a way to start second grade, with a lump on your head! As the year goes by, though, Billy figures out how to navigate elementary school, how to appreciate his little sister, and how to be a more grown up and responsible member of the family and a help to his busy working mom and stay-at-home dad. Newbery Honor author and Caldecott Medalist Kevin Henkes delivers a short, satisfying, laugh-out-loud-funny school and family story that features a diorama homework assignment, a school poetry slam, cancelled sleepovers, and epic sibling temper tantrums. This is a perfect short novel for the early elementary grades."

### 3. Anna Hibiscus - picture books and novels (Atinuke)

"Anna Hibiscus lives in amazing Africa with her mother, her father, her baby twin brothers, and lots and lots of her family. Join her as she splashes in the sea, prepares for a party, sells oranges, and hopes to see sweet, sweet snow."

### 4. Frankie Pickle and the Closet of Doom – and other books in the series (Eric Wright)

"Chapter book meets graphic novel in this first book in the series everyone will be talking about. Like most kids, Frankie Pickle hates cleaning his room. But what happens when his mom says he never has to clean it again? For Frankie and his unstoppable imagination, it means he and his sidekick, Argyle, can become explorers swinging on vines, forging paths through piles of clothes, and scooting past lava pits. They can perform flawless surgery on a broken action figure. They can spend time in the big house. They can even become superheroes. But when junk piles grow too high, will all this imagining be enough to conquer . . . the closet of DOOM?"

### 5. Miss Klute is a Hoot – and other books from the My Weird School / My Weirder School series (Dan Gutman)

"With more than 7 million books sold, the My Weird School series really gets kids reading! The reading scores at Ella Mentry School are way down, so Mr. Macky has decided to hire a special new helper to whip the kids into shape—Miss Klute, a Labradoodle! A.J. and his friends don't understand why they have to read to a therapy dog every day at story time, until the first time they do it. Suddenly everyone wants a turn reading to Miss Klute! But when the kids decide that Miss Klute is spending too much time inside listening to stories—that their therapy dog herself needs therapy—they let her outside, and all chaos breaks loose! Perfect for reluctant readers and word lovers alike, Dan Gutman's hugely popular My Weird School series has something for everyone. Don't miss the hilarious adventures of A.J. and the gang." (Amazon)

### 6. Oliver and the Seawigs (Philip Reeve)

"Oliver grew up in a family of explorers - but his biggest adventure is about to begin! Along with his new friends, a grumpy old albatross, a short-sighted mermaid and a friendly island called Cliff, Oliver goes off in search of his missing parents. But before he can put his rescue plan into action there's the evil Stacey de Lacey and an army of greasy, green sea monkeys to contend with . . ."

### 7. Shu-Li and Tamara (Paul Yee)

"When Tamara moves to Shu-Li's neighbourhood they become best friends - but a rumour that Tamara is a thief threatens to spoil their relationship."

### 8. Pigsticks and Harold and the Incredible Journey (Alex Milway)

**“In a wry new early reader, the world’s most optimistic pig and his nervous hamster sidekick set out on an exploration to find the Ends of the Earth.**

Pigsticks is the last in a noble line of explorers, and he’s decided it’s time for him to follow in his forepigs’ footsteps — with an assistant to do the heavy lifting, of course. When his help-wanted ad draws a motley crew of candidates, he chooses a hapless delivery hamster named Harold. As the unlikely duo set off from Tuptown with plenty of tea cakes in tow, Pigsticks is breathless with excitement (and Harold is struggling for breath under all the gear). But after a long trek through jungles, over deserts, and up a giant ice-topped mountain, the last crumb of cake is stolen by a herd of thieving goats, and their goal is nowhere in sight. Will they ever discover the Ends of the Earth? Could it be in the last place they’d ever think to look?”

### 9. Atticus Claw Breaks the Law – and other books in the series (Jennifer Gray)

“Meet Atticus Grammaticus Cattypus Claw, the world’s greatest cat burglar. He’s a tabby who spells trouble. And he’s been hired by the fiendish Jimmy Magpie to steal all the jewels in Littleton-on-Sea.

Atticus needs a temporary home - preferably one with lots of sardines provided. But when he adopts Inspector Cheddar and his family, Atticus starts to wonder, is a life of crime really for him?”

### 10. Violet Mackerel’s Possible Friend – and other books in the series (Anna Branford)

“Violet Mackerel has moved into her new house. There is a girl next door who could be a possible friend. Her name is Rose and she has a pink and white bedroom and a doll’s house. Violet hopes that Rose might not be just a possible friend for very long. Instead, she would quite like Rose to be a very good friend.”

## Some suggestions for students in G3-4

### 1. Ghost Knight (Cornelia Funke)

“From international phenomenon Cornelia Funke, the bestselling author of *Reckless* and *Inkheart*.

Eleven-year-old Jon Whitcroft never expected to enjoy boarding school. Then again, he never expected to be confronted by a pack of vengeful ghosts, either. And then he meets Ella, a quirky new friend with a taste for adventure... Together, Jon and Ella must work to uncover the secrets of a centuries-old murder while being haunted by terrifying spirits, their bloodless faces set on revenge. So when Jon summons the ghost of the late knight Longspee for his protection, there’s just one question: Can Longspee truly be trusted?”

### 2. Fortunately, the Milk (Neil Gaiman)

“I bought the milk,” said my father. “I walked out of the corner shop, and heard a noise like this: T h u m m t h u m m. I looked up and saw a huge silver disc hovering in the air above Marshall Road.” *“Hullo,”* I said to myself. *“That’s not something you see every day.* And then something odd happened.” Find out just how odd things get in this hilarious story of time travel and breakfast cereal, expertly told by Newbery Medalist and bestselling author Neil Gaiman and illustrated by Skottie Young.”

### 3. Elvis and the Underdogs (Jenny Lee)

“In the tradition of funny and heartwarming bestsellers like *Wonder* and the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* books, this is the story of a sickly boy whose life is turned upside down when he gets a therapy dog...who can talk!

Benji Wendell Barnsworth is a small ten-year-old boy with a big personality. Born premature, Benji is sickly, accident prone, and at the hospital so often he even has his own punch card. That is, until the day Benji wakes up from a particularly bad spell. Concerned for Benji’s health, the doctor offers him two options: wear the world’s ugliest padded helmet or get a therapy dog. Benji chooses the dog, of course. But when a massive crate arrives at Benji’s house, out walks a two-hundred-pound Newfoundland. And that isn’t even the strangest thing about the dog. He announces that his name is Parker Elvis Pembroke IV. That’s right, this dog can talk! And boy, is he bossy. Having a bossy dog can come in handy, though. Elvis brings out the dog lover in the most surprising people and shows Benji that making new friends may not be as scary as he once thought.”

### 4. Flora & Ulysees (Kate DiCamillo)

“Holy unanticipated occurrences! A cynic meets an unlikely superhero in a genre-breaking new novel by master storyteller Kate DiCamillo. It begins, as the best superhero stories do, with a tragic accident that has unexpected consequences. The squirrel never saw the vacuum cleaner coming, but self-described cynic Flora Belle Buckman, who has read every issue of the comic book *Terrible Things Can Happen to You!*, is

the just the right person to step in and save him. What neither can predict is that Ulysses (the squirrel) has been born anew, with powers of strength, flight, and misspelled poetry—and that Flora will be changed too, as she discovers the possibility of hope and the promise of a capacious heart. From #1 New York Times best-selling author Kate DiCamillo comes a laugh-out-loud story filled with eccentric, endearing characters and featuring an exciting new format: a novel interspersed with comic-style graphic sequences and full-page illustrations, all rendered in black-and-white by up-and-coming artist K.G. Campbell.”

### 5. File Under: 13 Suspicious Incidents – and the other books in the series (Lemony Snicket)

“Match wits with Lemony Snicket to solve thirteen mini-mysteries. Paintings have been falling off of walls, a loud and loyal dog has gone missing, a specter has been seen walking the pier at midnight -- strange things are happening all over the town of Stain'd-By-The-Sea. Called upon to investigate thirteen suspicious incidents, young Lemony Snicket collects clues, questions witnesses, and cracks every case. Join the investigation and tackle the mysteries alongside Snicket, then turn to the back of the book to see the solution revealed. A delicious read that welcomes readers into Lemony Snicket's world of deep mystery, mysterious depth, deductive reasoning, and reasonable deductions.”

### 6. Rooftoppers (Katherine Rundell)

“Everyone thinks that Sophie is an orphan. True, there were no other recorded female survivors from the shipwreck which left baby Sophie floating in the English Channel in a cello case, but Sophie remembers seeing her mother wave for help. Her guardian tells her it is almost impossible that her mother is still alive, but that means still possible. You should never ignore a possible. So when the Welfare Agency writes to her guardian threatening to send Sophie to an orphanage, she takes matters into her own hands and flees to Paris to look for her mother, starting with the only clue she has - the address of the cello maker. Evading the French authorities, she meets Matteo and his network of rooftoppers - urchins who live in the sky. Together they scour the city for Sophie's mother before she is caught and sent back to London, and most importantly before she loses hope.”

### 7. Hagwitch (Mary Louise Fitzpatrick)

“Celtic legend, a malevolent faery queen and the dark underbelly of the theatre world come to life as two stories of 16th-century London and the modern day interweave in this gripping tale full of dark secrets and magic. 16th-century London, Flea Nettleworth, apprentice to a playwright, watches as his struggling master's fortunes turn, and all of a sudden London is in his thrall. But soon Flea's master can no longer tell where the imagined world ends and the real one begins. Could the arrival of a mysterious Faery Elder trunk hold the answer? Modern day, Lally lives on a barge, roaming the canal ways and performing shows with her puppeteer father. Then, after Lally's father pulls an ancient piece of wood from the canal and fashions it into a puppet, his success seems unstoppable. As her father's obsession with his puppet grows and his plays become darker, Lally begins to wonder if there is something rather sinister, dangerous even, about the wooden doll.”

### 8. Alvin Ho: Allergic to Babies, Burglars and Other Bumps in the Night – and other books in the series (Lenore Look)

“Alvin Ho has come face to face with many scary things in the past:

- School
- Camping
- Birthday parties
- Even dead bodies

But this time he only has one issue, and it's da bomb: **his mom is having a baby!**”

### 9. Beyond the Moongate: True Stories of 1920s China (Elizabeth Quan)

“MOONGATES DOTTED THE LANDSCAPE OF OLD CHINA. Ancient Chinese architects had sculpted stone piled on sculpted stone to form round doorways, with the spiritual symbolism of the full moon. To step through one of these doorways was to step into a world of peace and happiness... And so it was in the 1920s that the Lee King family - father, mother, and six children, aged ten months to seven years - traveled from their home in Canada, across the Pacific Ocean, to inland China. There, they had the opportunity to step beyond the moongate into a land not yet touched by modern warfare or political unrest. The story of the moongate, tells of the two "golden" years the family spent with Grandmother in a remote village in the south, which hadn't changed for centuries. Step inside and live the long lazy days of a China forever gone. The moongate beckons...”

## 10. Song for a Scarlett Runner (Julie Hunt)

"A gripping tale...Both magical and superbly true, this new world draws us into universal struggles of survival, loyalty and freedom, as secrets build and break around us like weather.' ANNA FIENBERG - Peat is on the run - forced to flee for her life when she's blamed for bringing bad luck to her village. She heads for the endless marshes, where she's caught by an old healer-woman who makes Peat her apprentice and teaches her the skill of storytelling. But a story can be a dangerous thing. It can take you out of one world and leave you stranded in another - and Peat finds herself trapped in an eerie place beyond the Silver River where time stands still. Her only friends are a 900-year-old boy and his ghost hound, plus a small and slippery sleek - a cunning creature that might sink his teeth into your leg one minute, and save your life the next." (Allen & Unwin)

## Some suggestions for students in G5

### 1. Half a Chance (Cynthia Lord)

"A moving new middle-grade novel from the Newbery Honor author of RULES.

When Lucy's family moves to an old house on a lake, Lucy tries to see her new home through her camera's lens, as her father has taught her -- he's a famous photographer, away on a shoot. Will her photos ever meet his high standards? When she discovers that he's judging a photo contest, Lucy decides to enter anonymously. She wants to find out if her eye for photography is really special -- or only good enough. As she seeks out subjects for her photos, Lucy gets to know Nate, the boy next door. But slowly the camera reveals what Nate doesn't want to see: his grandmother's memory is slipping away, and with it much of what he cherishes about his summers on the lake. This summer, Nate will learn about the power of art to show truth. And Lucy will learn how beauty can change lives . . . including her own."

### 2. The Mark of the Dragonfly (Jaleigh Johnson)

"Piper has never seen the Mark of the Dragonfly until she finds the girl amid the wreckage of a caravan in the Meteor Fields. The girl doesn't remember a thing about her life, but the intricate tattoo on her arm is proof that she's from the Dragonfly Territories and that she's protected by the king. Which means a reward for Piper if she can get the girl home. The one sure way to the Territories is the 401, a great old beauty of a train. But a ticket costs more coin than Piper could make in a year. And stowing away is a difficult prospect-- everyone knows that getting past the peculiar green-eyed boy who stands guard is nearly impossible. Life for Piper just turned dangerous. A little bit magical. And very exciting, if she can manage to survive the journey."

### 3. The Children of the King (Sonya Hartnett)

**"Internationally acclaimed author Sonya Hartnett tells a hauntingly beautiful story set during World War II.**

Cecily and Jeremy have been sent to live with their uncle Peregrine in the English countryside, safe from the war, along with a young refugee named May. But when Cecily and May find two mysterious boys hiding in the ruins of a nearby castle, an extraordinary adventure begins."

### 4. A Snicker of Magic (Natalie Llyod)

"Introducing an extraordinary new voice---a magical debut that will make your skin tingle, your eyes glisten . . .and your heart sing.

Midnight Gulch used to be a magical place, a town where people could sing up thunderstorms and dance up sunflowers. But that was long ago, before a curse drove the magic away. Twelve-year-old Felicity knows all about things like that; her nomadic mother is cursed with a wandering heart. But when she arrives in Midnight Gulch, Felicity thinks her luck's about to change. A "word collector," Felicity sees words everywhere---shining above strangers, tucked into church eaves, and tangled up her dog's floppy ears---but Midnight Gulch is the first place she's ever seen the word "home." And then there's Jonah, a mysterious, spiky-haired do-gooder who shimmers with words Felicity's never seen before, words that make Felicity's heart beat a little faster. Felicity wants to stay in Midnight Gulch more than anything, but first, she'll need to figure out how to bring back the magic, breaking the spell that's been cast over the town . . . and her mother's broken heart."

## 5. The Julian Chapter (R.J. Palacio)

“Over 1 million people have read *Wonder* and have fallen in love with Auggie Pullman, an ordinary boy with an extraordinary face. Now readers will have a chance to hear from the book’s most controversial character—Julian. From the very first day Auggie and Julian met in the pages of the #1 New York Times bestseller *Wonder*, it was clear they were never going to be friends, with Julian treating Auggie like he had the plague. And while *Wonder* told Auggie’s story through six different viewpoints, Julian’s perspective was never shared. Readers could only guess what he was thinking. Until now. The Julian Chapter will finally reveal the bully’s side of the story. Why is Julian so unkind to Auggie? And does he have a chance for redemption?”

## 6. My Life as an Alphabet (Barry Jonsberg)

*“This isn’t just about me. It’s also about the other people in my life - my mother, my father, my dead sister Sky, my penpal Denille, Rich Uncle Brian, Earth-Pig Fish and Douglas Benson From Another Dimension. These are people [with the exception of Earth-Pig Fish, who is a fish] who have shaped me, made me what I am. I cannot recount my life without recounting elements of theirs. This is a big task, but I am confident I am up to it.* Introducing Candice Phee: twelve years old, hilariously honest and a little ... odd. But she has a big heart, the very best of intentions and an unwavering determination to ensure everyone is happy. So she sets about trying to ‘fix’ all the problems of all the people [and pets] in her life. Laugh-out-loud funny and wonderfully touching, *My Life as an Alphabet* is a delightful novel about an unusual girl who goes to great lengths to bring love and laughter into the lives of everyone she cares about.”

## 7. Goblins (Philip Reeve)

“The squabbling goblins who live in the great towers of Clovenstone spend their time fighting and looting. Only clever young Skarper understands that dark magic created by a vanquished sorcerer is rising again.”

## 8. Kimchi and Calamari (Rose Kent)

“Kimchi and calamari. It sounds like a quirky food fusion of Korean and Italian cuisine, and it’s exactly how Joseph Calderaro feels about himself. Why wouldn’t an adopted Korean drummer-comic book junkie feel like a combo platter given:

- (1) his face in the mirror
- (2) his proud Italian family.

And now Joseph has to write an essay about his ancestors for social studies. All he knows is that his birth family shipped his diapered butt on a plane to the USA. End of story. But what he writes leads to a catastrophe messier than a table of shattered dishes—and self-discovery that Joseph never could have imagined.”

## 9. Doll Bones (Holly Black)

“Zach, Poppy and Alice have been friends for ever. They love playing with their action figure toys, imagining a magical world of adventure and heroism. But disaster strikes when, without warning, Zach’s father throws out all his toys, declaring he’s too old for them. Zach is furious, confused and embarrassed, deciding that the only way to cope is to stop playing . . . and stop being friends with Poppy and Alice. But one night the girls pay Zach a visit, and tell him about a series of mysterious occurrences. Poppy swears that she is now being haunted by a china doll – who claims that it is made from the ground-up bones of a murdered girl. They must return the doll to where the girl lived, and bury it. Otherwise the three children will be cursed for eternity.”

## 10. Under the Egg (Laura Marx Fitzgerald)

***“From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler meets Chasing Vermeer in this clever middle grade debut***

When Theodora Tenpenny spills a bottle of rubbing alcohol on her late grandfather’s painting, she discovers what seems to be an old Renaissance masterpiece underneath. That’s great news for Theo, who’s struggling to hang onto her family’s two-hundred-year-old townhouse and support her unstable mother on her grandfather’s legacy of \$463. There’s just one problem: Theo’s grandfather was a security guard at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and she worries the painting may be stolen.

With the help of some unusual new friends, Theo’s search for answers takes her all around Manhattan, and introduces her to a side of the city—and her grandfather—that she never knew. To solve the mystery, she’ll have to abandon her hard-won self-reliance and build a community, one serendipitous friendship at a time.”

... and here a few title suggestions for those fifth graders eager to get their hands on Middle School books:

### Middle School, the Worst Years of My Life (James Patterson and Chris Tebbetts)

"Rafe Khatchadorian has enough problems at home without throwing his first year of middle school into the mix. Luckily, he's got an ace plan for the best year ever, if only he can pull it off: With his best friend Leonardo the Silent awarding him points, Rafe tries to break every rule in his school's oppressive Code of Conduct. Chewing gum in class-5,000 points! Running in the hallway-10,000 points! Pulling the fire alarm-50,000 points! But when Rafe's game starts to catch up with him, he'll have to decide if winning is all that matters, or if he's finally ready to face the rules, bullies, and truths he's been avoiding.

Blockbuster author James Patterson delivers a genuinely hilarious-and surprisingly poignant-story of a wildly imaginative, one-of-kind kid that you won't soon forget."

### The Jade Boy (Cate Cain)

"Sorcery and mystery with a dose of horror and history.

Eleven-year old Jem Green works as a kitchen boy in the London household of a powerful Duke. He doesn't know who his father is and his life consists of never ending drudgery. But when the sinister Count Cazalon pays a visit to the Duke, Jem's world is turned upside down. The count is planning something terrible and Jem appears to be central to his wicked scheme. With the help of newfound friends - apprentice sorceress Ann, mind-speaking mute Ptolemy and his pet monkey Cleo, all prisoners of the Count in his macabre mansion - Jem must find out why he is so important to Cazalon and stop the devastation the count is about to unleash. An absorbing adventure set in the reign of Charles II, just before the Great Fire of London."

### The Child's Elephant (Rachel Campbell-Johnston)

"*I cannot trumpet this book loudly enough. Scary, funny, romantic, heartwarming; an elephant book you won't forget*' - **Michael Morpurgo** - When a baby elephant is abandoned on the African savannah, a young boy named Bat takes her back to his village and cares for her. But Bat's grandmother explains that Meya cannot stay with them for ever - the call of the wild will always be sounding in her soul. Then frightening rumours arrive at the village; rumours of kidnapping, suffering and war. Bat and his friend Muka are snatched, and catapulted into a new life of unimaginable terror. Will the bond between Bat and Meya be strong enough to save them? - A thrilling, heartbreaking and beautiful novel from an exciting new voice in children's books, Rachel Campbell-Johnston."

### A Song for Bijou (Josh Farrar)

"Life for Alex Schrader has never involved girls. He goes to an all-boys prep school and spends most of his time goofing around with his friends. But all that changes the first time he meets Bijou Doucet, a Haitian girl recently relocated to Brooklyn after the earthquake-and he is determined to win her heart. For Bijou, change is the only constant, and she's surprised every day by how different life is in America, especially when a boy asks her out. Alex quickly learns that there are rules when it comes to girls-both in Haitian culture and with his own friends. And Bijou soon learns that she doesn't have to let go of her roots to find joy in her new life. - Told in alternating viewpoints against the vibrant backdrop of Haitian-American culture, Alex and Bijou take their first tender steps toward love in this heartwarming story."

### Mr Orange (Truus Matti)

"The year: 1943. The place: Manhattan. Linus Muller works at the family grocery store in the east 70s. When his oldest brother, Albie, leaves to fight in World War II, Linus takes over the grocery deliveries. One of his customers is an artist from somewhere in Europe who arranges to have a crate of oranges delivered every other week. Over the course of these deliveries, an intimacy develops between Linus and the man, whom he knows only by the name he gives him, Mister Orange. In the peacefulness of Mister Orange's spare kitchen, they discuss the war, the future, freedom and imagination. Through these conversations, Linus begins to grow up as he wrestles with the realities of war and the place of comic books, superheroes and the imagination in human life."

And because it is so important that we, as the adults model being readers for our children, here **a few suggestions for parents** (but you can of course also pick from the lists above – I read children’s literature all the time ;) )

### Mr. Penumbra’s 24h Bookstore (Robin Sloan)

“A Winner of the Alex Award, a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for First Fiction, named a Best Book of the Year by NPR, Los Angeles Times, and San Francisco Chronicle. - The Great Recession has shuffled Clay Jannon away from life as a San Francisco web-design drone and into the aisles of Mr. Penumbra’s 24-Hour Bookstore. But after a few days on the job, Clay discovers that the store is more curious than either its name or its gnomish owner might suggest. The customers are few, and they never seem to buy anything—instead, they “check out” large, obscure volumes from strange corners of the store. Suspicious, Clay engineers an analysis of the clientele’s behavior, seeking help from his variously talented friends. But when they bring their findings to Mr. Penumbra, they discover the bookstore’s secrets extend far beyond its walls. Rendered with irresistible brio and dazzling intelligence, Robin Sloan’s Mr. Penumbra’s 24-Hour Bookstore is exactly what it sounds like: an establishment you have to enter and will never want to leave. (description from Amazon.com).”

### Z: A Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald (Therese Ann Fowler)

“When beautiful, reckless Southern belle Zelda Sayre meets F. Scott Fitzgerald at a country club dance in 1918, she is seventeen years old and he is a young army lieutenant stationed in Alabama. Before long, the “ungettable” Zelda has fallen for him despite his unsuitability: Scott isn’t wealthy or prominent or even a Southerner, and keeps insisting, absurdly, that his writing will bring him both fortune and fame. Her father is deeply unimpressed. But after Scott sells his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, to Scribner’s, Zelda optimistically boards a train north, to marry him in the vestry of St. Patrick’s Cathedral and take the rest as it comes. What comes, here at the dawn of the Jazz Age, is unimagined attention and success and celebrity that will make Scott and Zelda legends in their own time. Everyone wants to meet the dashing young author of the scandalous novel—and his witty, perhaps even more scandalous wife. Zelda bobs her hair, adopts daring new fashions, and revels in this wild new world. Each place they go becomes a playground: New York City, Long Island, Hollywood, Paris, and the French Riviera—where they join the endless party of the glamorous, sometimes doomed Lost Generation that includes Ernest Hemingway, Sara and Gerald Murphy, and Gertrude Stein. Everything seems new and possible. Troubles, at first, seem to fade like morning mist. But not even Jay Gatsby’s parties go on forever. Who is Zelda, other than the wife of a famous—sometimes infamous—husband? How can she forge her own identity while fighting her demons and Scott’s, too? With brilliant insight and imagination, Therese Anne Fowler brings us Zelda’s irresistible story as she herself might have told it.”

### The Water Dragon (Andrew Woodward)

“It’s Hong Kong in August and DI John Chambers is feeling the heat. The trail of the murder suspect he followed to Hong Kong has gone cold, his boss wants him back in London and another dead body has turned up in Mong Kok. Meanwhile, his attraction to Detective Lucy Li isn’t helping his usually impressive powers of deduction. - Hong Kong — 2011: A killer documents the elaborate preparations, murders and subsequent media coverage of the gruesome crimes. DI Chambers, seconded to the Hong Kong police, teams up with local Detective Li, to search for the prime suspect. In the process they inadvertently discovering links between a seemingly random spate of deaths. The victims include a young man bludgeoned to death in Kowloon Park’s aviary; a minor Triad found drowned in his bathtub in Mong Kok surrounded by dead rats; and the body of an ex-soldier discovered near a secluded beach on Lantau Island close to a herd of feral water buffalo. Can Chambers and Li discover the killer’s identity before it’s too late? Will the maniac dare to claim another victim at the Chinese New Year celebrations that mark the beginning of the year of the Water Dragon?”

### Or how about trying a Young Adult novel (I love reading those too):

#### Eleanor and Park (Rainbow Rowell)

“*Two misfits.*

*One extraordinary love.*

*Eleanor...* Red hair, wrong clothes. Standing behind him until he turns his head. Lying beside him until he wakes up. Making everyone else seem drabber and flatter and never good enough...Eleanor.

*Park...* He knows she’ll love a song before he plays it for her. He laughs at her jokes before she ever gets to the punch line. There’s a place on his chest, just below his throat, that makes her want to keep promises...Park.

Set over the course of one school year, this is the story of two star-crossed sixteen-year-olds—smart enough to know that first love almost never lasts, but brave and desperate enough to try.”

### The Living (Matt de la Pena)

“Shy took the summer job to make some money. In a few months on a luxury cruise liner, he'll rake in the tips and be able to help his mom and sister out with the bills. And how bad can it be? Bikinis, free food, maybe even a girl or two—every cruise has different passengers, after all.

But everything changes when the Big One hits. Shy's only weeks out at sea when an earthquake more massive than ever before recorded hits California, and his life is forever changed.

The earthquake is only the first disaster. Suddenly it's a fight to survive for those left living.”

### Looking for Alaska (John Green)

“**Before.** Miles "Pudge" Halter's whole existence has been one big nonevent, and his obsession with famous last words has only made him crave the "Great Perhaps" (François Rabelais, poet) even more. He heads off to the sometimes crazy, possibly unstable, and anything-but-boring world of Culver Creek Boarding School, and his life becomes the opposite of safe. Because down the hall is Alaska Young. The gorgeous, clever, funny, sexy, self-destructive, screwed-up, and utterly fascinating Alaska Young, who is an event unto herself. She pulls Pudge into her world, launches him into the Great Perhaps, and steals his heart.

**After.** Nothing is ever the same.”