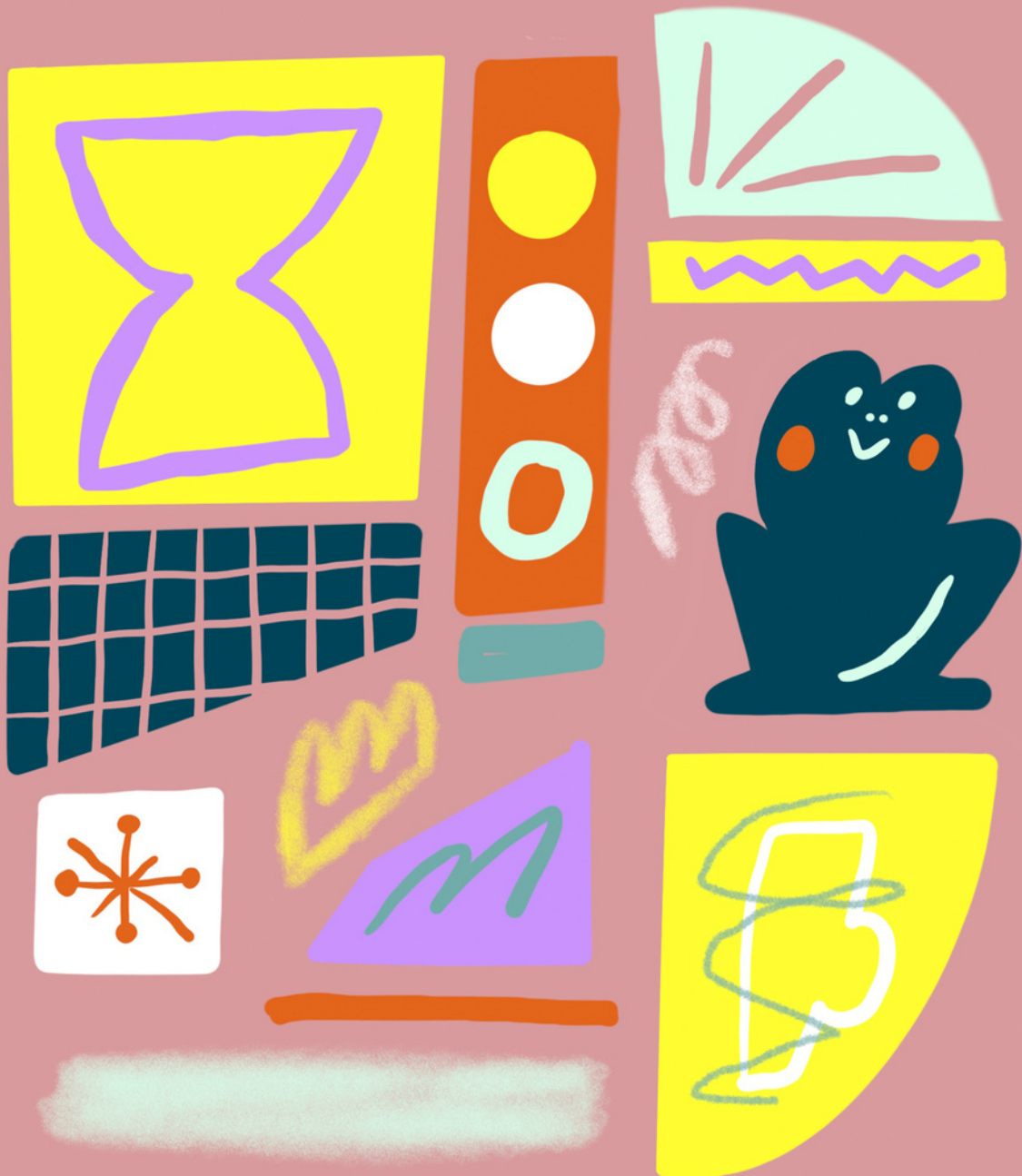
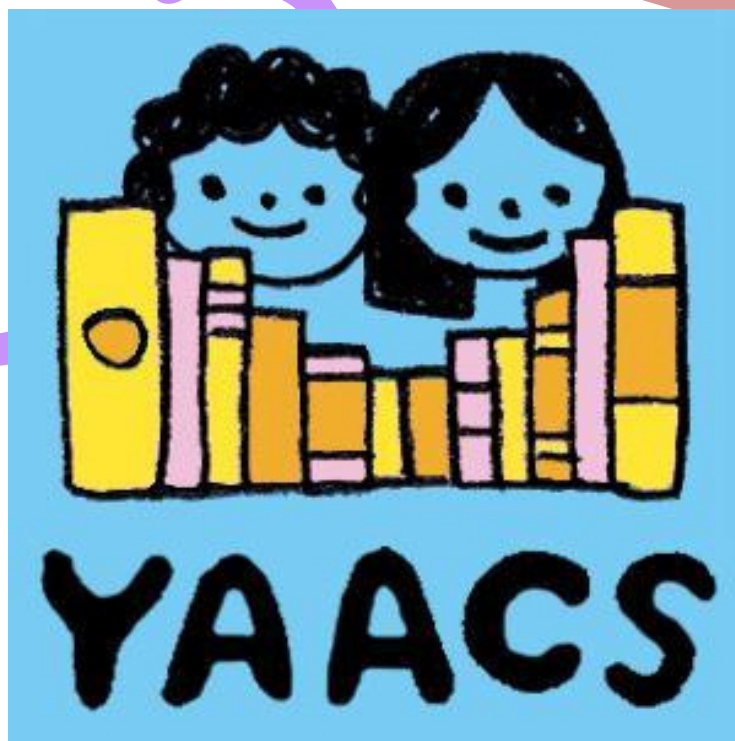


# YAAACING

MIDDLE YEARS ISSUE





YAACING is the newsletter of the Young Adults and Children's Services section of the British Columbia Library Association. We publish articles by library workers serving children and teens and students in library professional and paraprofessional programs. Topics range from program and event report-backs, to book reviews, storytime ideas, literacy tips and more! If you would like to submit something for consideration, please email [yaacing@gmail.com](mailto:yaacing@gmail.com)

# contents

## letters

letter from YAACS President

letter from YAACing Editor



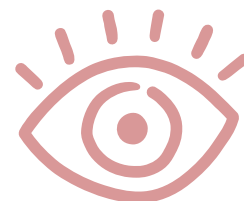
## news

SRC 2024: World of Curiosities - Stephanie Usher

## columns

JBrary's I'll link to that - Libraries and Artificial Intelligence -  
Lindsey Krabbenhoft

New & Noteworthy Books - Sadie Tucker



## features

SRC 2023 Roundup - Cool Things from our Journey Through  
Time - compiled by Sabrina Gurniak

Book Review: *Teaching Tough Topics: How do I use Children's Literature to Build a Deeper Understanding of Social Justice, Equity, and Diversity?* by Larry Swartz. - Andria Huculak

From Apple Pies to Astronauts Part X: Y & Z - Sarah Bagshaw

YAACING's editors would like to acknowledge that we work on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples including the Skwx̱ wú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓́ ʔəm (Musqueam) Nations. This issue features pieces from what is currently known as Metro Vancouver, Pemberton, and the Fraser Valley, which includes ancestral and unceded territory from many nations. If you would like to learn which territories you occupy, we recommend [native-land.ca](https://native-land.ca)

# letters

Dear YAACS members,

First and foremost, I would like to thank Sabrina for all of the hard work she has put into YAACing. After three years, this is Sabrina's last issue as Editor. Sabrina has played a key role in modernizing and streamlining the publishing process, helping ensure that we can keep publishing for years to come. As always, I would also like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue of YAACing. From regular columns to one-off contributions, YAACing would not be possible without your continued support!

While the spring still feels like the distant future, we are already beginning to plan the 2024 Youth Services Institute (YSI). We always aim to make YSI both inspiring and practical, but in order to do that, we need to hear from you! Please join us at our January 12th YAACS meeting to share ideas on potential presenters, topics and format. Can't make it to the meeting? Send us an email at [yaacsbc@gmail.com](mailto:yaacsbc@gmail.com).

Thank you again to everyone who has kept both YAACS and YAACing going this past year, and I look forward to what 2024 has in store.

Emily

President 2023/2024

# letters

Hello YAACers,

After 9 issues, 3 co-editors, and somewhat of a re-brand this is my last issue of YAACing. I have immensely enjoyed reading all of the cool things that library workers around the province are doing and I'm happy to be leaving YAACing in the very capable hands of Veronica Blott. Welcome, Veronica!

I'd also like to thank Kate, Raoul, and Emily for keeping me on track. The extremely overdue delivery of this issue only speaks to *your* skill and talent, and demonstrates that I should not be left to my own devices :)

This year I was also the SRC Provincial Assistant and through that role I got to see some of the amazing things that library staff around the province did to make the theme come to life. The SRC Content Creators are hard at work on the 2024 SRC Manual! This issue we also have a roundup of some extra cool things that happened around the province from our Journey Through Time while we prepare for a World of Curiosities.

We've also got a fascinating dive into the world of AI from Lindsey at JBrary, some excellent middle grade reads from Sadie (I'm listening to The Swifts right now and it's very charming), an excellent book review from Andria, and the close-to-culmination of Sarah's super impressive alphabet books saga. Now we know our ABCs y'all!

Thanks, as always, for reading and for all the awesome work you do!

Sincerely,  
Sabrina





# news

## Announcing BC SRC 2024: World of Curiosities

### 2024 Artist: Meneka Repka!

We are excited to share that the 2024 BC Summer Reading Club Artist is Meneka Repka! While we await her formal BC SRC artist page (which you will be able to find on the staff page of the BCSRC website), we just wanted to share a quick bio. Meneka is an incredibly talented Sri Lankan-Canadian illustrator and teacher with a background in art education and curriculum development. Her artwork is filled with playful whimsy and imaginative wonder, perfect for our World of Curiosities theme!



When it comes to her inspirations, you can clearly see her love for vintage and traditional illustrations and noted Richard Scarry as one of her favourite picture book authors. Her debut as a children's picture book illustrator will be hitting shelves in the Fall 2024, so be on the lookout for *The Mango Monster* written by Derek Mascarenhas! Originally from Calgary, AB, Meneka recently moved to BC and now calls Victoria home. If she wasn't an artist or a teacher, she would be an ice cream taste tester.

### 2024 Theme and Subthemes:



*Image: A sneak-peek of the 2024 poster!*

#### **World of Curiosities**



Mysterious Creatures

Dig Deep

Precious Mysteries

Natural Curiosities

Works of Art

Beyond Our World

Collections & Memories

# BC SRC Staff & Volunteers

We are excited to share some exciting updates over here at the BC SRC Team! We are thrilled to announce that Kate Wood is the new BC Summer Reading Club Provincial Assistant. Kate's name might be very familiar to you all as a former YAACS President and the Outgoing BC SRC Co-Chair for 2024. She will now be joining us in an official capacity and working closely with the BC SRC Coordinator, Stephanie Usher, and the Co-Chairs and Manual Content Creators.

We would also like to take this time to thank the amazing and brilliant Sabrina Gurniak, who was the interim BC SRC Provincial Assistant. Sabrina was responsible for getting the Manual formatted and the variety of online activities found on the BC SRC website this summer.

With Kate taking the reins of the Provincial Assistant role, we are incredibly fortunate to welcome Gen Zichy from the Pemberton and District Public Library to the BC SRC Team as a new Co-Chair. Gen will be joining Larissa Clotildes and Victoria Ellis from Prince George Public Library to round out our Co-Chair team. So without further ado, here are the updated SRC Co-Chair bios.

## Gen Zichy

Representing the Pemberton and District Public Library, located on the unceded territory of the Lílwat Nation.

Hi! I'm Gen, I am the Senior Library Assistant at the Pemberton and District Public Library. I'm originally from a small island off the coast of South Australia, but came to Canada for one winter season in Whistler back in 2007 and am still here! I love the BC SRC program, it is something I look forward to each year and it has become one of our most popular programs here at the library. My favourite thing about SRC is the time we spend interacting with our SRC members and the lasting connections we create. The enthusiasm and dedication for the program from our participants really fills my heart!

I am thankful to work on the Unceded Territory of the Lílwat Nation and I am proud to serve the Lílwat Nation, other Stát'yemc communities, and all peoples.





## Victoria Ellis

Representing the Prince George Public Library, located on the traditional and unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh

Hello! I'm Victoria and I'm a library assistant in the youth department at the Prince George Public Library, which is located on the traditional and unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh. I can't wait to share my love of literacy, reading, and bookie adventures with everyone! The Summer Reading Club is very near and dear to my heart. The opportunities for youths to share and learn from each other during the program, all while being creative, is

something truly special. When I'm not cooking up ideas as co-chair you'll find me kayaking in the Central Interior, gaming, or nose-deep in a good book.

## Larissa Clotildes

Representing the Prince George Public Library, located on the traditional and unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh.

Hi, I'm Larissa and I am the Community Engagement Librarian for Youth at the Prince George Public Library in Prince George, situated on the unceded ancestral territory of the Lheidli T'enneh people. I have worked at the PGPL for over a decade and in over half-a-dozen different positions, including a period as a Library Assistant in youth services, during which time I ran the Summer Reading Club at PGPL. After a few years away from children's programming to have a baby, finish my MLIS, and begin my librarianship career as the PGPL's Community Engagement Librarian for Adult, I am thrilled to have returned to children's and family programming. My areas of interest include language and literacy development, sensory environments, and sustainable programming strategies.







## BC SRC Provincial Assistant Kate Wood

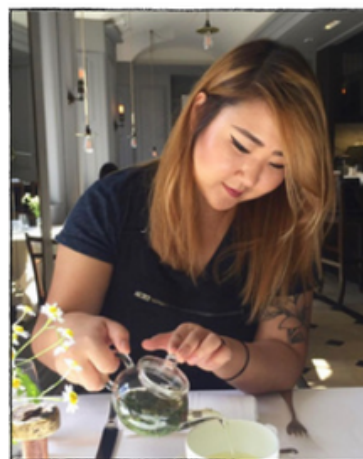
Representing from Victoria, the traditional homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations of the ləkʷəŋən (Lekwungen) Peoples

Summer Reading Club helps to support my fundamental librarian belief that everyone should have access to literacy, and that reading should be FUN!

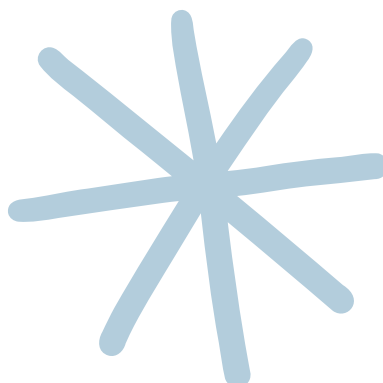
When I'm not brainstorming new SRC ideas with the rest of the team, you might find me telling terrible jokes, dancing like no one is watching (whoops, except they totally are!) or enjoying this incredible island that I call home. My favourite dino of SRC 2023 is the triceratops. What's yours?

## BC SRC Provincial Coordinator Stephanie Usher

Stephanie Usher lives, works, studies and plays on the traditional unceded homelands of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and sə́ilwətaɣ̓ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. She is the Provincial Coordinator for the BC Summer Reading Club, as well as a Childrens and Teens Services Librarian at the Vancouver Public Library and a recent graduate from UBC's iSchool.



Photos: <https://bcsrca.ca/staff/>



# columns



## I'll Link to That! Libraries and Artificial Intelligence

Love it? Hate it? Either way, artificial intelligence is changing the way we work and the way kids learn. As [media mentors](#), we have a responsibility to stay up-to-date with emerging technology trends so we can support families in learning about them too. School-age kids need to develop AI literacy as they continue to use it to learn and to play. At the same time, as a library worker I wonder what mundane tasks AI can replace, freeing up time to build in-person relationships with kids and families. Here are some things I've been reading and exploring to help answer these questions.

### What is AI, Exactly?

A quick Google search will give you myriad answers, but if you're looking for a library-specific explanation check out ALSC's Children and Technology Committee's [first ever podcast on the rise of AI](#). It covers recent advancements, the types of AI, how young people are using AI, issues of bias in AI, and how library staff use it in their work. School Libraries are weighing in too - the first 10 minutes of [this podcast](#) is a great overview for newbies. If you want an even deeper dive, watch this free webinar: [AI and Libraries: Enhancing Services and Engaging Communities](#) which includes an extensive list of resources.

### Design Tools

Think about the amount of time you spend trying to market the library to kids and families in a way that grabs their interest. Have you ever spent too long searching for just the right image for a display, poster, or program material? Generative AI could save time. [Canva's free AI Image Generator](#) gets the AI to transform text to image. [Craiyon](#) is another good option. Kids and teens are often first exposed to generative AI on social media. If you do digital literacy programming, think about incorporating how to [detect deep fakes](#) and how to evaluate images for bias.

## Program Development

Bookriot provided suggestions for how libraries can make the [most out of ChatGPT](#). I see potential for program planning especially. It can recommend craft activities, make quizzes, suggest book club questions, and more (Write me a D&D campaign - genius!). Introducing a new STEM toy to kids? Ask it to write a simple explanation of how to use it that a 6-year-old would understand. For emerging technology, I recommend checking how current the data is on AI tools like ChatGPT. At current writing, ChatGPT-4 includes data up to January 2022.\*

## Reference Work

You know when a kid can't remember the name of a book but it had a red cover and maybe dragons? AI like [Talpa Search](#) is designed to help. You know that parent who comes in asking for tutoring help for their 10-year-old who is struggling in math? Companies like Khan Academy are developing AI tutors like [Khanmigo](#). And AI is not just helping kids find books and information - it could help us too! A school media specialist [interviewed by SLJ](#) says in the future AI could be used to "help us create better collections when we're making book orders. AI can give us a diversity audit, tell us where we have holes in our collection, look at usage data to find emerging topics, and make better book orders. It can help us with weeding and resource allocation."

This small sampling of resources hopefully gives library staff an idea of the possibilities, and potential ramifications, of using AI to serve children and families. When researching for this column I came upon an excellent article called [AI in Early Childhood - Six Things Teachers Need to Know](#). One quotation stuck out to me, and I think it applies to children of all ages. I'll leave this as final food for thought: "Machines are not humans and they are not good at ethical decision making, making moral choices, or applying social-emotional intelligence. These are skills teachers must nurture in children as they will be especially important as children begin to interface more with AI."

*Lindsey Krabbenhoft is a Children's Librarian in Vancouver, British Columbia and one half of Jbrary, the online children's librarian treasure trove. She is also the co-founder of the [Library Services for Children Journal Club](#) and encourages any other research nerds to join. You can find Jbrary in its own little corner of the internet at [jbrary.com](#)*

\*edited to update Chat-GPT's data range on Jan. 4, 2023

Please note that this edit is due to the quickly changing nature of the tech, and because the editor took a very long time to edit the submissions.

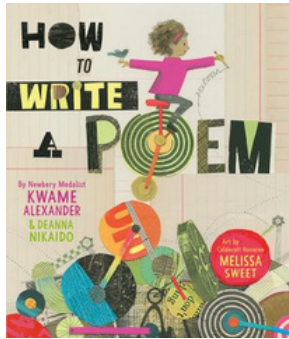
# columns

## New & Noteworthy Books for School-Aged Kids

Just a couple of the titles for school aged kids that I am excited to read...

*From Sadie Tucker*

### Primary Grades



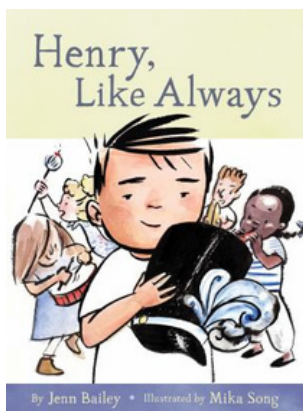
#### **How to Write a Poem**

Alexander, Kwame

Picture book

6+ years

A poem all about the process of writing poetry. From starting with a question to following your inspiration, this piece emphasises free-spirited exploration. The collage illustrations embody the sometimes chaotic experience of creativity.



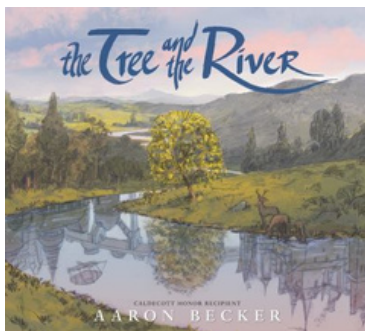
#### **Henry, Like Always**

Bailey, Jenn

Chapter book

4-7 years

Henry is appalled that the teacher has changed the weekly schedule in order to have a parade on Friday. Not only is Sharing Time now on the wrong day(!), but Henry is expected to shake a tambourine which is far too loud. Will Henry be able to adapt or find a way to enjoy the parade in a different way?



#### **The Tree and the River**

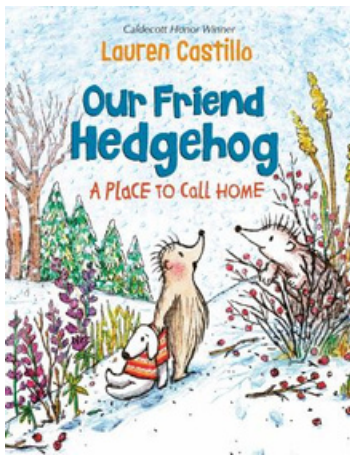
Becker, Aaron

Picture book (wordless)

5+ years

A bucolic valley with a river winding through it is followed through time. From a single farm to a city at war to eventual environmental collapse and recovery. Detailed illustrations encourage flipping back-and-forth between the pages while a sobering message is accompanied by a sliver of hope.





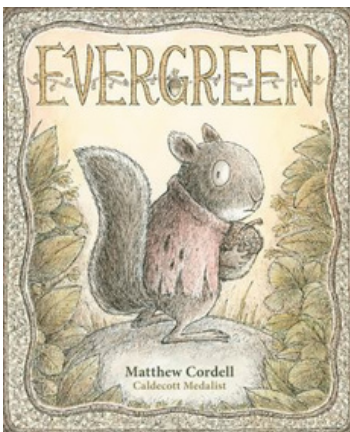
### **A Place to Call Home**

Castillo, Lauren

Illustrated chapter book

6-9 years

Hedgehog is happy with her close-knit group of friends. She is especially looking forward to the coming winter. When she discovers a community of hedgehogs - animals that look just like her - who are getting ready to hibernate, she begins to question where she belongs. A story about identity and the importance of family of the heart.



### **Evergreen**

Cordell, Matthew

Picture book/Chapter book

5-8 year olds

When Evergreen, a young and timid squirrel, is tasked with delivering soup to Granny Oak, she unknowingly embarks on an adventure. Along the way, she helps those in need and gains confidence. This picture book is divided into chapters, a nice introduction to the structure of longer stories.



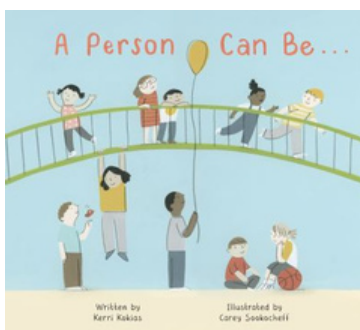
### **Year of the Cat**

Ho, Richard

Picture book

5-9 year olds

Rat and the other lunar animals embark on a journey to apologise to Cat for leaving them out during the legendary race. The other animals eventually turn aside so Rat approaches Cat alone - will Cat forgive them... or eat them? A good option for seasonal storytimes.



### **A Person Can Be 🍁**

Kokias, Kerri

Picture book

4-8 year olds

People can feel two very different emotions at once! Every page features two contrasting words paired with an illustration depicting a situation that might match the words (for example, "Safe and scared" is accompanied by a child riding a bike with their grown-up). A great book for both lap reading and group discussions.



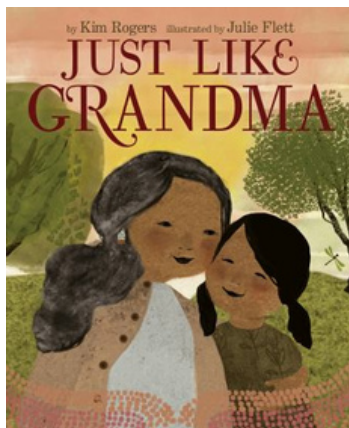
## **Paradise Sands: A Story of Enchantment**

Pinfold, Levi

Picture book

6-10 year olds

A girl and her brothers are lured to a mysterious structure. There, the brothers avail themselves of the food and drink inside; but the girl, remembering a rhyme that her mother used to say, abstains. Soon, the girl finds herself negotiating for her brothers' release. Understated text adds to the creep factor and the stunning, detailed illustrations make this a book to pore over.



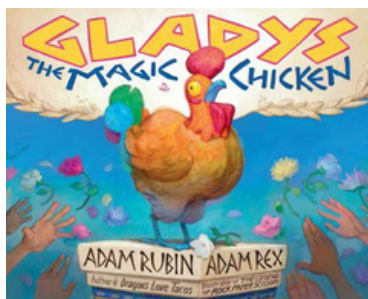
## **Just Like Grandma 🍁**

Rogers, Kim

Picture book

4-8 year olds

Becca wants to be just like her grandmother. Grandma beads, paints, and dances beautifully. Becca might be surprised, however, to learn about who inspires Grandma. A sweet book about a grandparent's love. Flett's muted palette is suitable for small groups but the illustrations may be lost with larger crowds.



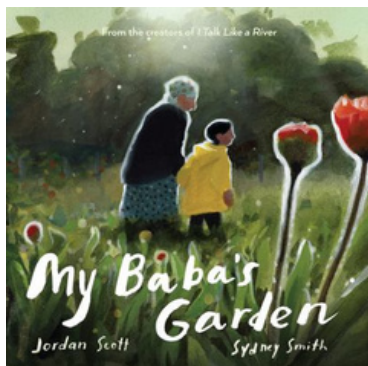
## **Gladys the Magic Chicken**

Rubin, Adam

Picture book

5-9 year olds

When a shepherd decides that his chicken, Gladys, is actually a magical wish-fulfilling chicken he sells her to a travelling merchant. Thus begins Gladys' ridiculous adventures. Could it be that she really can grant wishes? A silly story sure to entertain. Perfect for class read-alouds.



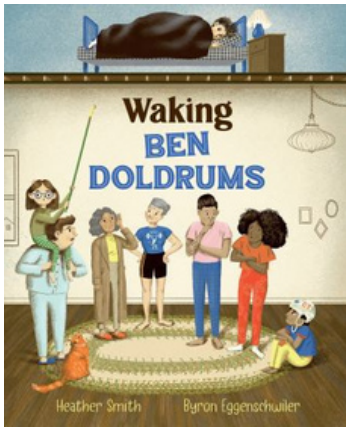
## **My Baba's Garden 🍁**

Scott, Jordan

Picture book

5-8 year olds

Every morning, a boy is dropped off at his Baba's house where she feeds him a big breakfast and then walks him to school. A survivor of World War II, Baba has a number of quirks, but the bond between the two is palpable despite a language barrier. A good discussion starter about the impact of trauma.



### **Waking Ben Doldrums** 🍁

Smith, Heather

Picture book

5-8 year olds

A girl and her father live in a close-knit apartment building. When one of the residents becomes depressed, the neighbours try everything they can think of to cheer him up. In the end, just being there helps Ben during his depressive state. While CM magazine critiques the title for the neighbours' overly simplistic reaction to Ben's depression, the book demonstrates that sometimes mental illness has no easy solution and all you can do to help is be present.



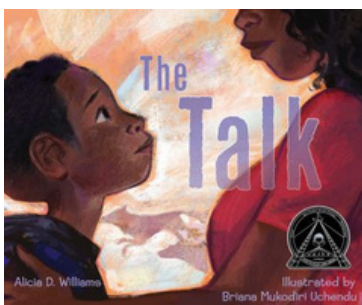
### **The Secret of the Jade Bangle** 🍁

Trinh, Linda

Chapter book

6-9 year olds

The ghost of 9-year-old Anne's grandmother has appeared to tell her that she and other ancestors wish to feast on traditional Vietnamese food during the new moon. Her grandma never taught Anne's dad Vietnamese recipes, so Grandmother has decided that Anne will be the one to learn them. Meanwhile, Anne also faces her ballet teacher's microaggressions. First in a charming new series.



### **The Talk**

Williams, Alicia

Picture book

6-10 year olds

A young narrator recounts how he and his best friends, all Black, hang out and play in their neighbourhood. As the boy grows, his family begins to caution him about being too loud, hanging out in large groups, and being unaware of his surroundings. Adult facilitation is a must with this one.



### **This is not my Home**

Yoh, Eugenia

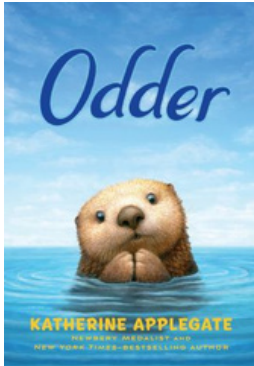
Picture book

4-8 year olds

Lily is devastated to be moving to Taiwan from the US. As she explores her new city, attends her new school, and participates in family events she takes every opportunity to announce (with a dramatic, yet cute grumpy expression) that this is not her home. But can it become her home over time?



## Intermediate Grades



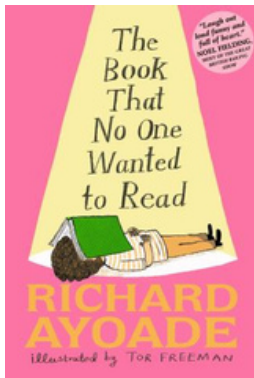
### **Odder**

Applegate, Katherine

Novel in verse/Animal fiction

8-11 years

When Odder was young, she was taken in by a rehab centre and then released back to the wild when she was ready. This time, her injuries from an encounter with a great white shark may mean that she lives at the aquarium for good. When her best friend, Kairi, arrives having recently lost her newborn, the humans pair Kairi with an abandoned pup. Odder has some very mixed feelings.



### **The Book That No One Wanted to Read**

Ayoade, Richard

Meta/humour

8-12 years

A book that is constantly overlooked at its library forms a telepathic bond with a young reader and, together, they embark on a unique storytelling journey. Told using second-person narration, this oddball tale just might find its place in classroom units about creative writing.



### **Like a Hurricane** 🍁

Bécotte, Jonathan

Novel in verse/Contemporary

9-12 years

A young man struggles with revealing his queer identity to family and friends. The text in its brevity is emotional and impactful, making the narrator's inner turmoil visceral.



### **Simon Sort of Says** 🍁

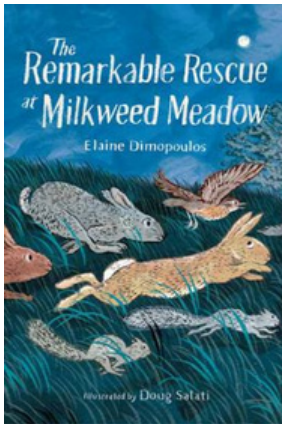
Bow, Erin

Contemporary/Humour

10-13 years

Simon, who is in 7th grade, is ecstatic to move to a town where residents are not allowed to have electronic devices. The chances of anyone finding out that he survived a school shooting is next to nil. When everyone finds out, Simon faces his past. Reviewers have praised this novel for balancing the realities of trauma with laugh-out-loud humour.





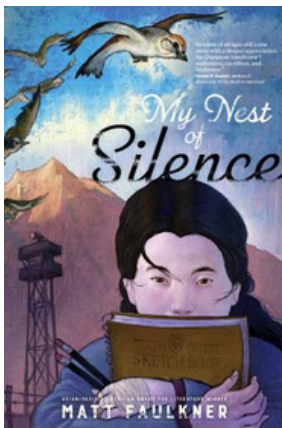
### **The Remarkable Rescue at Milkweed Meadow**

Dimopoulos, Elaine

Animal fiction/adventure

8-11 years

Butternut is a gifted storyteller who worries. Her rabbit family has always taught her that to stay safe she must keep to her own species and mind her business. After befriendng an alliterative robin, Butternut finds her community growing well beyond rabbits. Soon, she and her new friends find themselves helping others in need. Is the risk worth it?



### **My Nest of Silence**

Faulkner, Matt

Illustrated fiction/ Historical

9-13 years

Mari's family has been sent to the Manzanar Japanese internment camp - a barren place prone to dust storms. Things are pretty miserable but at least she has her family with her. Then, her brother enlists to fight in the war overseas. Throughout the three years that her family is imprisoned in the concentration camp, Mari draws what she sees and experiences.



### **The Grace of Wild Things** 🍁

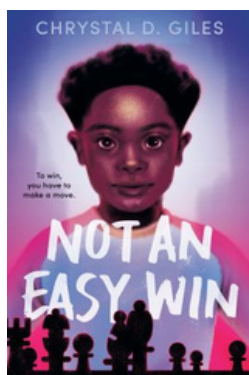
Fawcett, Heather

Fantasy/retelling

9-12 years

Having escaped from her orphanage, Grace sets out to find the evil witch in the woods. Grace needs help mastering her magic and the witch can't be as bad as everyone says. Well, the witch is pretty terrible and has set Grace a nearly insurmountable challenge. If she fails, she'll lose her soul. A surprisingly sweet story that remains true to its inspiration while creating a new tale all its own.





### **Not an Easy Win**

Giles, Chrystal D.

Realistic/contemporary

9-12 years

12-year-old Lawrence, his mom, and his sister moved in with his strict grandmother and cousins after his father went to prison. Now Lawrence has been suspended for fighting back against his bullies. Again. Hanging out at the local rec centre, Lawrence discovers chess and a supportive community that will help him sort through his complicated emotions.



### **Hazel Hill is Gonna Win This One**

Horne, Maggie

Realistic/contemporary

9-12 years

12-year-old Hazel is determined to win the speech competition this year. Her biggest obstacle? Ella. When Hazel discovers that Ella is being harassed online by classmate Tyler, she realises that stopping Tyler is far more important than the upcoming match. Reviewers praise the wry narrator for lightening the tone and also for the realistic portrayal of middle school concerns.



### **Ellie Engle Saves Herself!**

Johnson, Leah

Fantasy/humour

9-13 years

Seventh grader Ellie's best friend (and her crush), Abby, craves popularity. Reserved Ellie is more than happy to remain in the background, but when Ellie suddenly gains the power to reanimate dead creatures with a touch she no longer has the luxury of going with the flow.



### **Good Different**

Kuyatt, Meg Eden

Novel in verse/contemporary

9-12 years

Selah is a star pupil at school, but inside she feels like a monster. Despite also being neurodivergent, Selah's mother insists that Selah



do everything in her power to appear "normal". After a meltdown at school, Selah becomes persona non grata and wonders if she will ever lead a regular life. Then she attends a con and discovers that neurodivergent people are everywhere and they aren't ashamed of who they are.



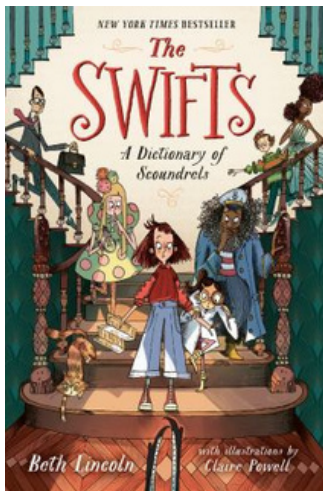
### **Ruby Lost and Found**

Li, Christina

Contemporary/realistic

9-12 years

Seventh-grader Ruby is struggling after the unexpected death of her beloved Ye-Ye. To make matters worse, no one in her family seems to understand her. As she begins to spend time with her Nai-Nai and concocts plans for saving a local bakery, Ruby slowly comes to terms with her grief and finds her footing in her Chinatown community.



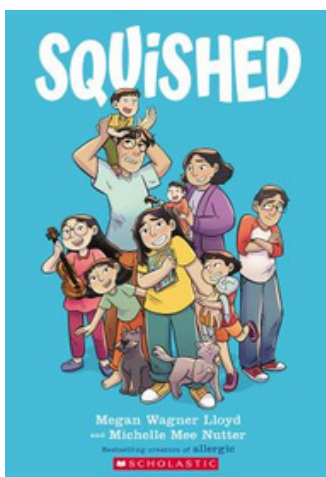
### **The Swifts: A Dictionary of Scoundrels**

Lincoln, Beth

Mystery/humour

9-13 years

Like everyone in her family, Shenanigan was named from the clan's holy dictionary. Despite her name, Shenanigan has never been much of a troublemaker, but she is a pretty good sleuth. When her great aunt's life is threatened and then a series of murders take place at a family reunion, Shenanigan joins forces with her sister and cousin to find the culprit. A number of reviews have compared this debut title with "A Series of Unfortunate Events" and "Knives Out".



### **Squished**

Lloyd, Megan Wagner

Graphic novel/Contemporary

8-11 years

11-year-old Avery has six siblings. She's sick of sharing her space and sick of taking care of her younger sibs. As she spends the summer hanging out with her friends and scheming to get her own room, she is faced with the possibility that her parents might be planning a big move. Lightly humorous and full of heart.





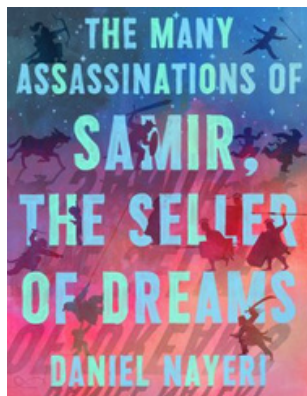
### **Aniana Del Mar Jumps In**

Méndez, Jasminne

Novel in verse/contemporary

10-13 years

12-year-old Ani is an accomplished competitive swimmer, but must swim in secret due to her mother's terror of the water. When Ani becomes temporarily bed-ridden due to idiopathic arthritis, her mother is convinced it is God's punishment for lying. Will Ani ever be able to return to the sport she loves?



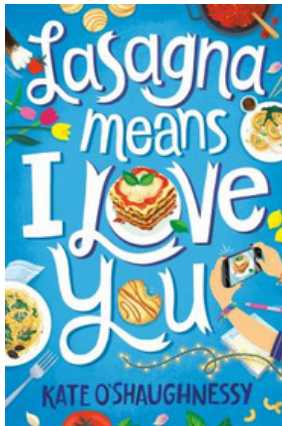
### **The Many Assassinations of Samir, the Seller of Dreams**

Nayeri, Daniel

Historical/adventure/humour

10-13 years

At the approximate age of 12, Monkey has been sold to a merchant called Samir. During their travels, he realises that Samir tells more lies than truths and that there are more than a few people who would like to see him dead. As Monkey and Samir travel along the Silk Road, he also notices that Samir has a hidden kindness. But try telling that to Samir's assassins.



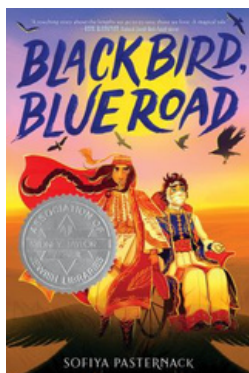
### **Lasagna Means I Love You**

O'Shaughnessy, Kate

Epistolary/contemporary

9-12 years

11-year-old Mo has the rug pulled out from under her when she is thrust into foster care after her grandmother's death. Struggling to find her footing, she begins to collect other people's family recipes. As Mo tries to adapt to her new life and is faced with even more change, she writes letters to her grandmother in an effort to make sense of it all.



### **Black Bird, Blue Road**

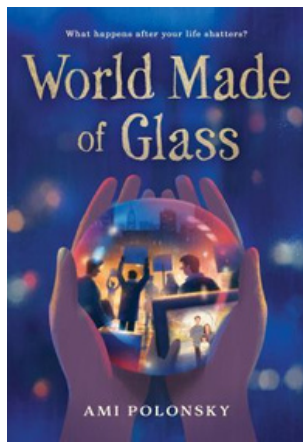
Pasternack, Sofiya

Fantasy/Adventure

9-12 years

Ziva's brother, Pesah, has leprosy and has seen his death on Rosh Hashanah. In a desperate effort to save her brother, they set off to the Byzantine Empire in order to find a healer. Along the way, they encounter a half-demon boy and the Angel of Death itself.





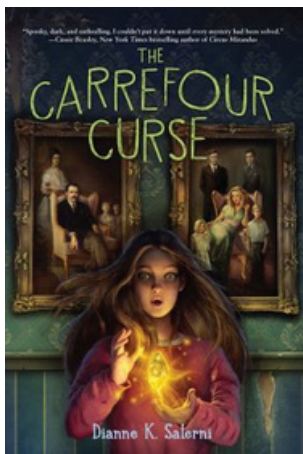
### **World Made of Glass**

Polonsky, Ami

Historical/realistic

10-14 years

7th-grader Iris's dad is dying of AIDS and she doesn't have anyone to talk about it because telling would expose her to extreme stigma. When word gets out anyway, Iris stands up and commits to staring homophobia and prejudice right in the face.



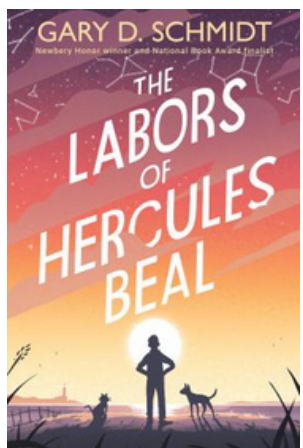
### **The Carrefour Curse**

Salerni, Dianne K.

Paranormal/mystery

9-12 years

12-year-old Garnet's mom has done her best to keep the two of them away from the rest of the Carrefour family. When Garnet is summoned to the ancestral home, she discovers that her grandfather is stealing life from the rest of the family - and they're too busy squabbling to notice.



### **The Labors of Hercules Beal**

Schmidt, Gary D.

Realistic/humour

9-12 years

Following the death of his parents, 12-year-old Herc lives with his brother and helps to keep the family plant nursery running. After starting at a new school, his teacher assigns him the task of completing Hercules' 12 labors. Herc considers the challenge wildly impossible, but over the next year he manages to encounter situations that vaguely resemble the mythical tasks and discovers that he doesn't need to face challenges alone.



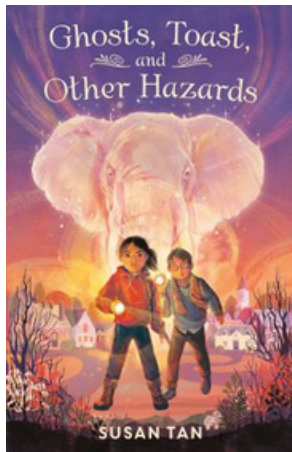
### **Sir Callie and the Champions of Helston**

Symes-Smith, Esme

Fantasy/Romance

9-13 years

A war is looming for Helston, but another fight is also brewing: One for equality and cultural change. Callie, who is non-binary, finds the rigid gender roles of Helston to be infuriating. When they visit the royal family alongside their father, they befriend the young royals and become determined to change the rules that Helston has enforced on its people for generations. First in a series.



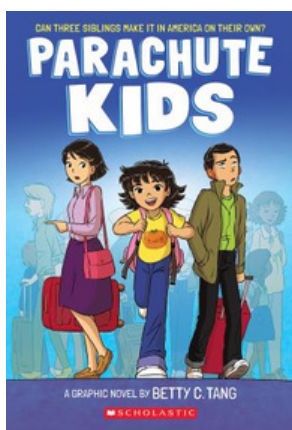
## **Ghosts, Toast, and Other Hazards**

Tan, Susan

Magical realism

9-12 years

12-year-old Mo is trying to keep what is left of her family together after her step-father leaves. Her mom is depressed and they have all moved to a new town in order to move in with Mo's uncle. As Mo navigates racism at school, an array of irrational fears, and a ghostly elephant who visits her dreams, she ends up investigating a local legend alongside a newfound friend.



## **Parachute Kids**

Tang, Betty C.

Graphic novel/historical

9-13 years

At the end of a month-long vacation in the US, 10-year-old Feng-Li and her two older siblings are shocked to hear that they will not be returning home to Taiwan alongside their parents. Instead, the siblings will be living on their own in LA until their parents can return. So begins a trial by fire as they learn English, begin attending American school, and scramble to manage a household on their own.

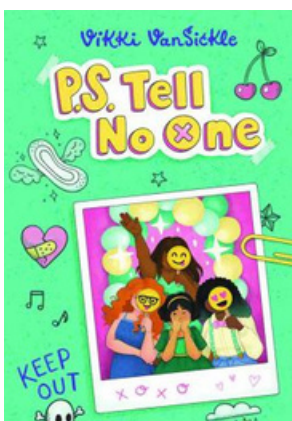


## **The Manifestor Prophecy**

Thomas, Angie

Fantasy/adventure

12-year-old Nic is anxious to learn how to wield magic, but her father refuses to teach her. After her father is wrongfully arrested, Nic discovers that he has been keeping secrets - big ones. Now Nic not only needs to exonerate her father, but also figure out how to stop a terrible prophecy from coming true. Reviewers have praised the careful world-building and nuanced characters in this innovative new series.



## **P.S. Tell No One** 🍁

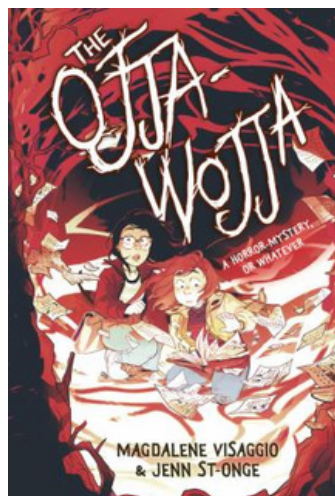
VanSickle, Vikki

Contemporary/Epistolary

10-12 years

A modern-day Judy Blume. When their teacher bans cell phones in the classroom, four friends decide to pass around a diary instead.

Full of secrets, gossip, and confessions, this book will have adult readers flashing back to childhood and young readers eagerly turning the pages. Professional reviews are scant, so you should read a chapter or three before recommending it.



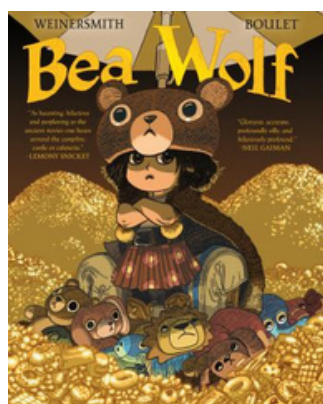
### **The Ojja-wojja: A Horror-mystery, or Whatever 🍁**

Visaggio, Magdalene

Graphic novel/Horror

10-14 years

Val and Lanie - who are queer and on the spectrum, respectively - are both outcasts. That's OK, though, because they have each other. When a research project into the paranormal leads to the inadvertent release of a demon in their small town, Val and Lanie are faced with possessed bullies and other ghostly phenomena. Is it possible to send the demon back to where it came from?



### **Bea Wolf**

Weinersmith, Zach

Graphic novel/retelling

9+ years

When a children's hideout is threatened by a monstrous middle-aged neighbour who can make a child grow up with a single touch, the children despair. Then Bea Wolf arrives and there is hope once again. Written in the style of its original (using language current-day readers will understand) this modern retelling of Beowulf manages to be hilarious, poignant, and stirring all at the same time. Sadly, the illustrations are black and white.



### **You Are Here: Connecting Flights**

Interconnected short stories

9-12 years

A possibly racist event at a TSA checkpoint starts a cascade of events and confusion, impacting 12 Asian American kids in the airport. As their stories intersect and overlap, they all learn different lessons while navigating an uncertain situation.

*Sadie is a children and teens' librarian at the Vancouver Public Library.*

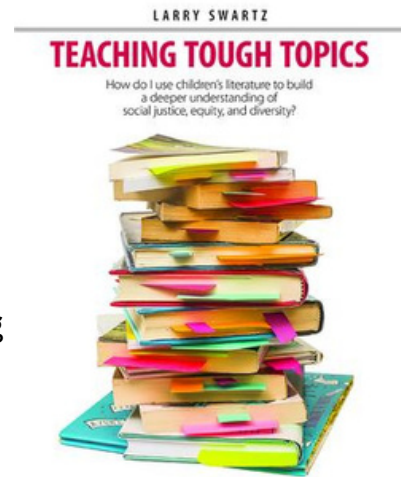


# features

## Book Review: Teaching Tough Topics by Larry Swartz

Reviewed by Andria Huculak

Larry Swartz, *Teaching Tough Topics: How do I use Children's Literature to Build a Deeper Understanding of Social Justice, Equity, and Diversity?*  
Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers, 2020. 166 pp.  
ISBN: 9781551383415, CA\$28.95 (pbk)



*Teaching Tough Topics: How do I use Children's Literature to Build a Deeper Understanding of Social Justice, Equity, and Diversity?* can best be described as a guidebook and teaching support utilizing children's literature as a critical gateway. Incorporating literature reviews and evidence-based scholarship, the book is academic in nature but remains concise and accessible for any adult reader. While the book's intended audience is primary-school teachers, it is also an appropriate read for academics or non-academics interested in childhood development, psychology, sociology, and education; those interested in critical analyses of children's literature; parents or caregivers; early childhood educators; or librarians. Furthermore, while the book's main focus is on elementary-aged children, discussions regarding young adult literature and themes are also included.

The book rests upon the premise that rather than shielding children from “tough topics” or from societal issues, they should be exposed to them in ways that are educational, nurturing, thoughtful, multicultural, and rooted in empathy, kindness, and acceptance. Throughout the book, Swartz includes perspectives and contributions from other writers, scholars, and working teachers, which positively contribute to the book's message and its practical applicability, as well as helping to solidify Swartz' argument and persuasiveness. For example, included is a piece by Maria José Botelho, a professor of Language, Literacy, and Culture, who discusses the continued importance of Rudine Sims Bishop's seminal piece “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors” (1990). Swartz extends Bishop's metaphor of using children's literature as “mirrors, windows, and doors” (to reflect one's own experience or shine light on others' experience) to that of bridges. Using children's literature, especially that with a multicultural lens, can assist with bridging cultural or social divides between children and their families (p. 12).

The “tough topics” discussed within the book include Race and Diverse Cultures (ch. 1), the Immigrant and Refugee Experience (ch. 2), Indigenous Identities (ch. 3), the Holocaust (ch. 4), Physical and Mental Challenges (ch. 5), Poverty (ch. 6), Death,



Loss, and Remembrance (ch. 7), Gender Identity and Homophobia (ch. 8), Bullying (ch. 9), and Ripples of Kindness (ch. 10). Thematically, issues of power, privilege, discrimination, intersectionality, ethnicity, behaviour, and emotionality are also included throughout. In the introductory chapter, Swartz states that this book is meant to inspire and assist with curriculum development:

The title Teaching Tough Topics was ultimately chosen to inspire educators to pause and think about their programs, their learning goals, and their instructional strategies and consider what books they are using to bring meaning to achieve best practices for best learning ... What is the curriculum we need to teach, choose to teach? (p. 9).

However, non-teachers should not be dissuaded from reading this book as what “we need to teach” or what we “choose to teach” can analogously be applied to a library’s selection policies or the choice of what books to read during a storytime, a child psychologist’s office book or toy selections, or parental decision-making about what types of books to read to or provide to their children.

Of value-add to the book are the extensively included practical frameworks, checklists, lesson plans, curated content-analysis booklists, and anecdotal responses from teachers and students. Examples include a “Cultural Responsiveness Checklist” (p. 15), glossaries of keywords throughout the book, classroom discussion or brainstorming prompts, i.e. “Assumption Guide to Disability” (p. 85), the inclusion of poems or comics to share with students, and detailed booklists in each chapter for various age groups.

Furthermore, the book is valuable as it is situated within a uniquely Canadian context. While still a great resource for American or global readers, Teaching Tough Topics considers Canadian society and its social and racial contexts, including localized Indigenous and immigrant issues such as colonialism and the Sixties Scoop. More broadly speaking, however, the book is beneficial as an introduction to imparting diverse and intersectional themes and topics in a digestible manner to young children, partly through the lens of instruction and partly through the lens of illustrative children’s fictional and non-fictional literature.

Considering the breadth of topics noted in the chapter titles above, climate change and environmental issues seem conspicuously missing from the book and would be a welcome chapter addition to later editions. Additionally, while social media and issues such as cyberbullying are occasionally but obliquely mentioned, a chapter on the Internet, social media, and digital wellbeing and safety would also be a worthwhile addition in future.

The author's background and experience lend significant credibility to Teaching Tough Topics. For nearly fifty years, Swartz has been teaching in some capacity, whether as an elementary school teacher, a drama teacher, or a university professor. Holding Reading Specialist and Dramatic Arts designations from the University of Toronto in addition to a Doctorate in Education, Swartz has also published and presented widely in the areas of education, reading, literacy, and dramaturgy. Swartz' narrative, his guest contributions, and the inclusion of hands-on, practical learning tips, lesson plans, and booklists make this a worthwhile read. Recently published and bound to be relevant for many years to come, this book would be a welcome addition to the bookshelf of anyone who cares about children and assisting them to become caring and ethical citizens.

## References

Bishop R S (1990) Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors. Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom 6(3): ix-xi.

Swartz L (n. d.) Larry A. Swartz, Ed.D. Curriculum Vitae. Retrieved from <https://larryswartz.ca/wp-content/uploads/LarryCV.pdf>



## features

### SRC Round-up: Cool things from around BC for our Journey Through Time

This year I had the unique experience of being the SRC Provincial Assistant while being YAACING's editor. So I got to read through the feedback surveys that everyone submitted, including the amazing impact that BC SRC and the workers and volunteers who run it have on their communities. I thought we should share some of the extra cool things that happened this past summer so here is a round-up of our Journey Through Time! - Sabrina Gurniak

### Pemberton Public Library's Activity Passports



We created an Activity Passport to complement the annual BC SRC Reading Log. Our Activity Passport contained seven weeks of fun activities based on this year's theme, plus a scavenger hunt clue to a secret location around Pemberton. This year we collaborated with the Whistler Public Library to create similar Activity Passports that our shared communities could use to make it even easier for children to participate. The Passport was really well-received, and both the staff and participants had a blast! It was a great way to connect with our youngest patrons and create some lasting memories. - Gen Zichy

Some activities from the passport:

- Ask an adult about their favourite dance move, book, or game from when they were a kid - tell a librarian about it
- Make a “fortune teller” and play with a friend
- Find the dinos! Hold this phrase up to a mirror and unscramble the letters to find the secret location of the Triceratops
- Make your own time capsule. What did you put in it?
- Imagine Pemberton 50 years from now. Create a futuristic building out of cardboard to add to our village
- Find the dinos! Tell a librarian a joke to get a map to the secret location of the Herrerasaurus

Every week also has a prize draw and a QR code that leads to a themed booklist!

## Chilliwack Library’s Dino Buttons & Window Clings

Using Canva, we made up 7 different dinosaur buttons, 1 for each of the SRC weeks. It was a first come, first serve situation for kids to collect these limited edition buttons as they would finish their weeks of reading. These were super popular and one of the things parents were vocal with us about loving this year. We definitely hope to continue on the tradition next year.



We also had star window clings that we made with our Cricut machine. As kids registered for SRC we would get them to write their name on a star and then put them up in our windows. We called them our “Reading Super Stars.” - Andrea Burriesci (FVRL)



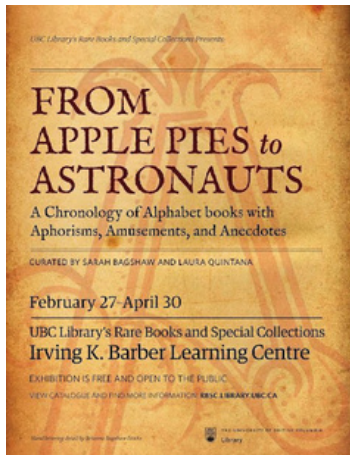
## Houston Public Library's Dinosaur Book Tracking Display

As books were read and tracked, the dinosaur baby left the nest and hopped along the theme wall. Pictures of the weekly themes were on the wall in between the blue squares that we recorded the number of books read. It ended at the life size, cardboard t-rex skeleton. - Jill MacKenzie



Thanks so much to Gen, Andrea, and Jill for sharing their creativity!

# features



## From Apple Pies to Astronauts: A Chronology of Alphabet Books with Aphorisms, Amusements, and Anecdotes – Part Ten

*Revisiting the curated display created for iSchool@UBC LIBR594 – Directed Study done in conjunction with UBC Library's Rare Books and Special Collections.*

*Adapted from the exhibit and case labels written by Sarah Bagshaw & Laura Quintana. Exhibition poster = Jeff Porter Designs. All photographs from Sarah Bagshaw.*

In February 2017 I mounted a display of alphabet books in the Rare Books and Special Collections library @ UBC. This was done with Laura for a directed study project under the supervision of Kathie Shoemaker and Chelsea Shriver. The display was opened in time for attendees of the Vancouver Children's Literature Round Table spring conference to visit on their breaks (held in Irving K. Barber building where Rare Books is). We had so much fun researching the development of children's literature, ABC books, picture book illustration, and looking at some incredibly old books as well as many new ones. I thought I could share some of the writing and images from this display in a multi-part series with YAACing members as a welcome distraction from our stressful library lives.

We resume our journey through the alphabet with the case representing Y and Z and the early 2000s.

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## Y and Z

### New Millenium Alphabet Books

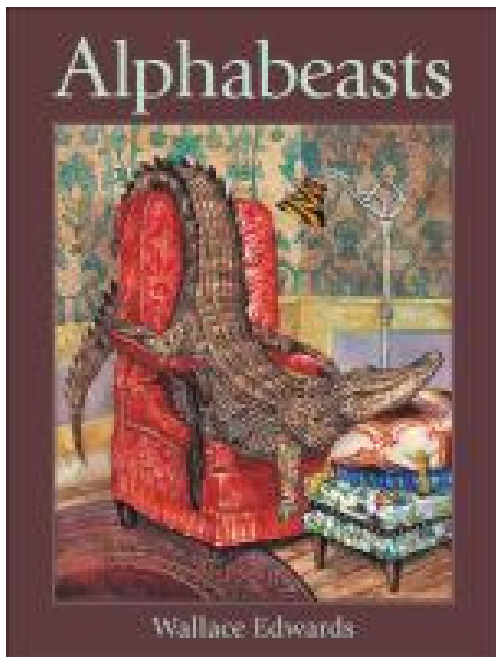


The familiar form and predictable pattern of an alphabet book continues to be published today. A is for Apple and B is for Ball are produced in sturdy board book form for early letter and sound recognition. As children grow older and their vocabulary grows, the alphabet book becomes a picture book to investigate and enjoy puzzling over. When alphabet books are shared with children in later elementary school they are usually pushed aside as “baby books”. However, themed alphabet books can be used to teach children other things beyond the letters on the page.

The alphabet books in this case were examples of the new world of alphabet books for children. These books incorporate visually stunning artwork with new letter and word combinations. Because the format is well-known, attention can be focused on the content within the text provided and in the visual imagery that accompanies it.

This chronological journey has gone from simple alphabets letter-pressed into rag paper to intricate alphabets printed in rich colours in all shapes and sizes. Over time, the words and illustrative styles on the page have changed. These changes reflect prevailing attitudes, cultural context, and children’s role in society. From Quince to Queen, Xerxes to Xylophone, and Apple Pie to Astronauts, the world of alphabet books has gone through many permutations. While the alphabet remains the same, its portrayal and publication is available in myriad forms and we are the luckier for it.

Case Ten representing Y and Z contained the following items plus extra information about a few:



Edwards, Wallace. Alphabeasts. Toronto: Kids Can Press. 2002

- Wallace Edwards trained at the Ontario College of Art. He creates pieces for public commissions, magazines, private collections, and children’s books. Alphabeasts introduces one animal for each letter all of which live in a fancy Victorian mansion.
- This picture book is about the art on each page. Edwards used the alphabet format as a vehicle to showcase his images that are at once bizarre, but captivating.
- Alphabeasts won the Governor General’s Literary Award for children’s book illustration in 2002. Edwards was shortlisted for the

Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Award and a finalist for the Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children’s Book Award.



Werner, Sharon & Forss, Sarah Nelson.  
 Alphabeasties and Other Amazing Types.  
 Maplewood: Blue Apple Books. 2009.

- Sharon Werner and Sarah Forss are another example of graphic designers trying their hand at a children's book. Werner is the founder of Werner Design Werks Inc., a branding and design company. Alphabeasties uses the familiar form of an alphabet book, the very common theme of animals, and (to graphic designers) the familiar forms of typography.
- This book has the clean lines of a modern product label combined with bright colours and fun animals created out of letters. It is an excellent example of an interactive alphabet book for learning and entertainment. Similar in purpose to the alphabet books produced at the turn of the previous century, but with very obvious modern production values.



Y Yootin  
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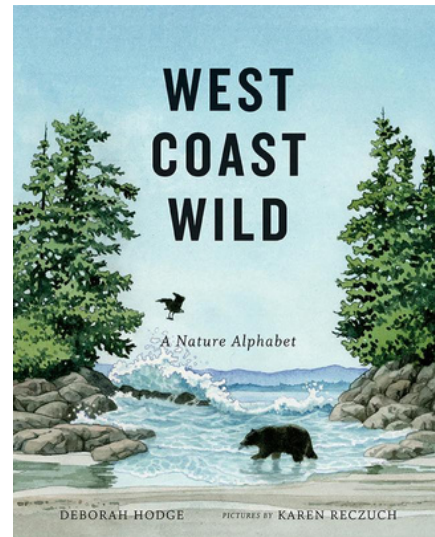
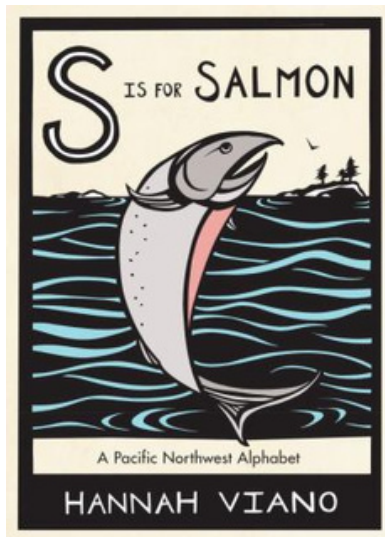
Flett, Julie. Lii Yiiiboo Nayaapiwak lii Swer –  
 L'Alfabet di Michif. Owls See Clearly at Night – A  
 Michif Alphabet. Translation by Grace (Ledoux)  
 Zoldy & Heather Souter. Vancouver: Simply Read  
 Books. 2010.

- Julie Flett trained in art at Concordia University and Emily Carr University of Art + Design. She is Cree-Métis and is the first-time recipient of the 2014 Aboriginal Literature Award. Owls See Clearly at Night is an alphabet book using words from the Michif language for the 26 letters. The English word is written underneath and both are paired with Flett's illustrations capturing the natural world.



- *Owls See Clearly at Night* won the Christie Harris Illustrated Children's Literature Prize, the 2010 Elizabeth Mazrik-Cleaver Award, and the BC Book Prize. It was also shortlisted for the 2011 Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Award and the Governor General's Literary Award for children's book illustration.

Viano, Hannah. *S is for Salmon: A Pacific Northwest Alphabet*. Seattle: Sasquatch Books. 2014.



Hodge, Deborah. *West Coast Wild: A Nature Alphabet*. Illustrated by Karen Reczuch. Toronto: Groundwood Books. 2015.

- *West Coast Wild* is a good example of a themed alphabet book focusing on a place. Many alphabet books use the theme of “place” to illustrate their letters. In this book, the usual format of words and sounds to teach the letters is there, but this type of theme means that non-fiction elements can be included.
- Her informative text for each letter is paired with Karen Reczuch's intensely realistic watercolour and pencil crayon pictures. Trained in commercial art and illustration, Reczuch went on to children's book illustration and has also won awards.
- *West Coast Wild* won the 2016 Information Book Award from the Children's Literature Roundtable of Canada. It was also shortlisted for the Ontario Library Association's Silver Birch Express Award and the Chocolate Lily Award.

## Y and Z

To be continued in the next YAACing newsletter... Yes there really is more!!

If you are interested in the full display text and accompanying bibliography, please e-mail Sarah directly: [Sarah.Bagshaw@vpl.ca](mailto:Sarah.Bagshaw@vpl.ca)



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# call for submissions

YAACING is always looking for submissions of interest to children's and teen specialists in BC libraries. We accept articles, program descriptions and ideas, conference reports, reviews, felt stories, and more. If you would like to write a regular column, send us a brief pitch. Submissions should be no more than 1500 words, and sent in an editable format (not PDF). Please include a byline with your job title and workplace; for students, please include a byline with your school/program.

We want to hear from you! What do you want to read in YAACING? Do you read every issue cover to cover or jump around to what's most interesting? Do you click on the links? If there are any recent contributions that have been especially helpful to you in your work we'd love to hear about it! Email us any time at [yaacing@gmail.com](mailto:yaacing@gmail.com)