



Forest Of Reading[®]

2022 Kid Committee List

Silver Birch Fiction Readers

Ages 8–12, Grades 3–6

Official Wholesaler

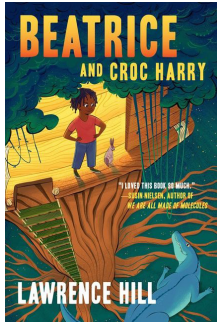
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Suggested Reading List

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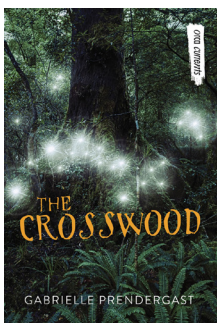
***Beatrice and Croc Harry* by Lawrence Hill (HarperCollins Canada)**

Beatrice, a young girl of uncertain age, wakes up all alone in a tree house in the forest. How did she arrive in this cozy dwelling, stocked carefully with bookshelves and oatmeal accoutrements? And who has been leaving a trail of clues, composed in delicate purple handwriting? So begins the adventure of a brave and resilient Black girl's search for identity and healing in bestselling author Lawrence Hill's middle-grade debut. Though Beatrice cannot recall how or why she arrived in the magical forest of Argilia—where every conceivable fish, bird, mammal and reptile coexist, and any creature with a beating heart can communicate with any other—something within tells her that beyond this forest is a family that is waiting anxiously for her return. Just outside her tree-house door lives Beatrice's most unlikely ally, the enormous and mercurial King Crocodile Croc Harry, who just may have a secret of his own. As they form an unusual truce and work toward their common goal, Beatrice and Croc Harry will learn more about their forest home than they ever could have imagined. And what they learn about themselves may destroy Beatrice's chances of returning home forever.



***Children of the Fox (Thieves of Shadow, Book 1)* by Kevin Sands (Penguin Random House Canada)**

A magic-infused fantasy that brings together a ragtag group of kids to pull off a crime so difficult, countless adults have already tried and failed. Lured by the promise of more money than they've ever dreamed of, five young criminals are hired to steal a heavily guarded treasure from the most powerful sorcerer in the city. There's Callan the con artist, Meriel the expert at acrobatics (and knives!), Gareth the researcher, Lachlan who can obtain anything, and Foxtail, whose mysterious eyeless mask doesn't hinder her ability to climb walls like a spider. Though their shadowy backgrounds mean that they've never trusted anyone but themselves, the five must learn to rely on each other in order to get the job done. But as Callan has been warned most of his life, it's best to stay away from magic. It can turn on you at any moment, and make you think you're the one running the con game, when in reality you're the one being fooled. Faced with these insurmountable odds, can the new friends pull off this legendary heist, or has their luck finally run out?

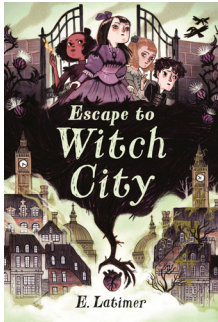


***The Crosswood (Faerie Woods, Book 1)* by Gabrielle Prendergast (Orca Book Publishers)**

Blue must find his way into the magical forest known as the Crosswood and through the dangerous Faerie lands beyond it. Fourteen-year-old Blue Jasper takes his younger siblings, twins Indigo and Violet, out for a hike to give their mother a break. One moment the twins are scampering in the trees right ahead of him, and the next moment they are gone. As Blue frantically searches for them, a strange woman appears in the forest claiming to be the Faerie Queen Olea of Nearwood and the twins' real mother. Now because of a magical pact, Blue's mother's life will be in danger if he can't find the twins before the next sunset. Will he be able to find the twins in time? And will they be able to find their way out again?

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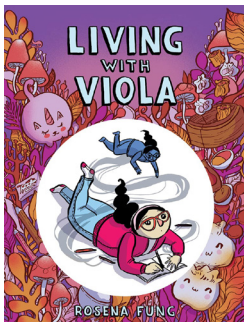
***Escape to Witch City* by E. Latimer (Tundra Books)**

Emmaline Black has a secret. She can hear the rhythm of heartbeats. Not just her own, but others' too. It's a rhythm she's learned to control, and that can only mean one thing...Emma's a witch. In a world where a sentence of witchcraft comes with dire consequences and all children who have reached the age of thirteen are tested to ensure they have no witch blood, Emma must attempt to stamp out her power before her own test comes. But the more she researches, the more she begins to suspect that her radically anti-witch aunt and mother are hiding something — the truth about their sister, her Aunt Lenore, who disappeared under mysterious circumstances years ago. The day of the test comes, and Emma's results not only pair her up with strange new friends, but set her on a course to challenge everything she's ever been taught about magic, and reveal long-buried family secrets. It seems witches may not have been so easy to banish after all. Secret cities, untapped powers, missing family members — Emma is about to discover a whole new world.



***The Gryphon's Lair (A Royal Guide to Monster Slaying, Book 2)* by Kelley Armstrong (Puffin Canada)**

Rowan is now the Royal Monster Hunter, and her twin brother, Rhydd, is destined to be king. But her mother's cousin Heward is still determined that his children be the ones to inherit the titles, and will stop at nothing to show that Rowan and Rhydd are too immature to properly lead. After the gryphon that Rowan captured in Book One gives birth but then dies, Rowan is left with a baby gryphon she knows she cannot keep. And it grows faster than anyone can imagine... In order to save face after an accident involving the troublesome gryphon, Rowan, with the help of her friends Dain and Alianor, along with an entourage of monstrous companions, must make a journey to the mountains to release the gryphon back into the wild. What starts off as a simple enough task soon becomes a dangerous quest, as the group encounters numerous rare and deadly monsters along the way, including wyverns and ceffyl-dwrs. Nothing is easy when you're a "monster magnet" like Rowan. Can she prove herself worthy of the title of Royal Monster Hunter? Find out in this exciting second book in the Royal Guide to Monster Slaying series!



***Living with Viola* by Rosena Fung (Annick Press)**

Livy is already having trouble fitting in as the new girl at school—and then there's Viola. Viola is Livy's anxiety brought to life, a shadowy twin that only Livy can see or hear. Livy tries to push back against Viola's relentless judgement, but nothing seems to work until she strikes up new friendships at school. Livy hopes that Viola's days are numbered. But when tensions arise both at home and at school, Viola rears her head stronger than ever. Only when Livy learns how to ask for help and face her anxiety does she finally figure out living with Viola. Rosena Fung draws on her own early experiences with anxiety and the pressures of growing up as the child of Chinese immigrant parents to craft a charming, deeply personal story that combines the poignancy of Raina Telgemeier's *Guts* with the wacky humour of *Lumberjanes*. Exuberant, colourful art brings Livy's rich imaginative world—filled with everything from sentient dumplings to flying unicorns—to life on the page.

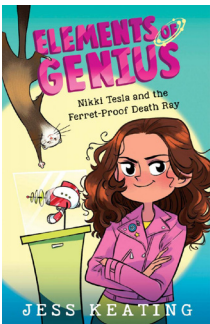
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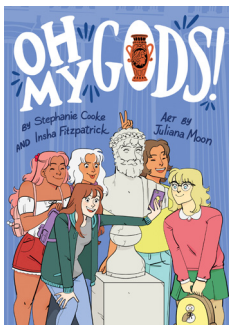
***Lone Runner* by Dirk McLean (James Lorimer & Company Ltd.)**

Set in a diverse neighbourhood in Scarborough, Ontario, this book follows Michaela as she goes from a solitary runner to an athlete who contributes to the success of her cross-country team. Discouraged by an incident at her mostly-white summer camp, Michaela comes into her own as part of her racially diverse school track team. Focusing on themes of persistence, friendship and overcoming rivalries, this book illuminates traits of connection, empathy and forgiveness.



***Nikki Tesla and the Ferret-Proof Death Ray (Elements of Genius #1)* by Jess Keating, Illustrated by Lissy Marlin (Scholastic Inc.)**

There are only so many times a kid can invent an instrument of global destruction without getting grounded. So when Nikki's death ray accidentally blows up her bedroom (if you can call a pet ferret with an itchy trigger finger an accident), she's sent to the only place that can handle her. Genius Academy is a school for history's greatest brains. Leo da Vinci? Charlotte Darwin? Bert Einstein? All extraordinary. Yet even among her fellow prodigies, Nikki feels like an outsider thanks to a terrible secret she can't let anyone discover. Ever. But when her death ray is stolen, Nikki must stop worrying about fitting in and learn to play nice with her new classmates. Because it doesn't take a genius to track a thief around the world, outwit the authorities, and keep a French fry-fanatic ferret happy. It takes all of them.

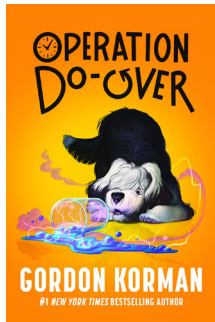


***Oh My Gods!* by Stephanie Cooke and Insha Fitzpatrick, Illustrated by Juliana Moon (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)**

Karen is just an average thirteen-year-old from New Jersey who loves to play video games with her friends and watch movies with her mom. But when she moves to Greece to live with her eccentric, mysterious father, Zed, suddenly everything she thought about herself—about life—is up in the air. Starting a new school can be difficult, but starting school at Mt. Olympus Junior High, where students are gods and goddesses, just might take the cake. Especially when fellow classmates start getting turned to stone. Greek mythology ... a little less myth, a little more eek! And if Karen's classmates are immortal beings, who does that make her?

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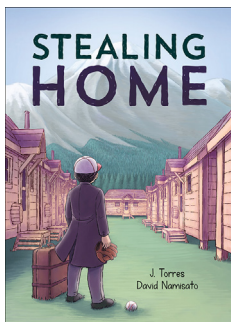
Operation Do-Over by Gordon Korman (Scholastic Canada)

Mason and Ty have been best friends since they were old enough to form thoughts. But one day an atomic warhead walks into their seventh-grade classroom ready to annihilate their friendship: Ava Petrakis, the new transfer student from New York. Mason finds himself competing against his best friend for the first time in his life, and it's not pretty. So they make a pact: a non-Ava treaty. If it worked for the Romulans and the Klingons, it has to work for them. At least that's what Mason thought until he realized Ava might actually like him back. Before he realizes it, he's kissing Ava beside the wrecked Tilt-a-Whirl sign in the middle of a freak storm, and his friendship with Ty is obliterated. Five years later, Mason's life is a mess. He has no friends, no girlfriend, his dog has been hit by a Roto-Rooter truck, his parents are divorced and he has just been expelled from school in his senior year. Everything has gone wrong and he can trace all of it back to that one day by the Tilt-a-Whirl sign. If he could go back he would do everything differently. That's exactly what he's thinking when his Volkswagen crashes into a furniture van. When he wakes up, he's 12 years old again. This is his chance for a do-over. Will Mason be able to fix everything, or are some things just a matter of fate?



Pink, Blue, and You!: Questions for Kids about Gender Stereotypes by Elise Gravel with Mykaell Blais (Anne Schwartz Books)

Simple, accessible, and direct, this picture book is perfect for kids and parents or teachers to read together, opening the door to conversations about gender stereotypes and everyone's right to be their true selves. Is it okay for boys to cry? Can girls be strong? Should girls and boys be given different toys to play with and different clothes to wear? Should we all feel free to love whoever we choose to love? In this incredibly kid-friendly and easy-to-grasp picture book, author-illustrator Elise Gravel and transgender collaborator Mykaell Blais raise these questions and others relating to gender roles, acceptance, and stereotyping. With its simple language, colourful illustrations, engaging backmatter that showcases how "appropriate" male and female fashion has changed through history, and even a poster kids can hang on their wall, here is the ideal tool to help in conversations about a multi-layered and important topic.

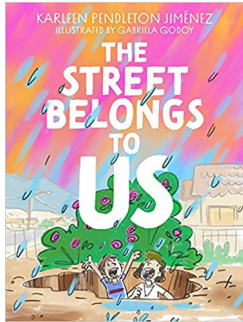


Stealing Home by J. Torres, Illustrated by David Namisato (Kids Can Press)

When a boy struggles after moving to a Japanese internment camp during WWII, baseball shows him another way to approach life. Sandy Saito is a happy boy who reads comic books and is obsessed with baseball — especially the Asahi team, the pride of his Japanese Canadian community. But when the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, his life, like that of every other North American of Japanese descent, changes forever. His family is forced to move to a remote internment camp, and his father must spend months away from them. Sandy, his mother and his brother cope as best they can with the difficulties at the camp. Over time, Sandy comes to realize that life is a lot like baseball. It's about dealing with whatever is thrown at you, however you can. And it's about finding your way home.

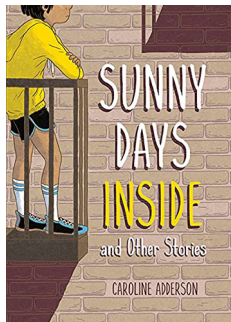
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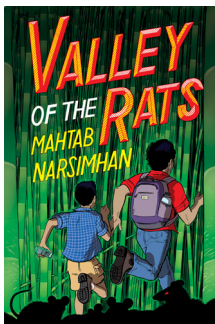
***The Street Belongs to Us* by Karleen Pendleton Jiménez, Illustrated by Gabriela Godoy (Arsenal Pulp Press)**

In 1984 Los Angeles, Alex is a tomboy who would rather wear her hair short and her older brother's hand-me-downs, and Wolf is a troubled kid who's been wearing the same soldier's uniform ever since his mom died. They temporarily set their worries aside when their street is torn up by digging machines and transformed into a muddy wonderland with endless possibilities. To pass the hot summer days, the two best friends seize the opportunity to turn Muscatel Avenue into a battleground and launch a gleeful street war against the rival neighbourhood kids. But when Alex and Wolf make their headquarters inside a deep trench, Alex's grandmother warns them that some buried things want to be found and some want to stay hidden and forgotten. Although she has the wisdom of someone who has survived the Mexican Revolution, the Spanish Flu, and immigration to a new country, the kids ignore her warning, unearthing more than they bargained for. The exuberant and expressive line drawings by Gabriela Godoy perfectly capture the summers of youth, when anything feels possible and an adventure is always around the corner. Bursting with life and feeling, both the people and the land come alive in a tale interwoven with Mexican-American identity, experience, and history. *The Street Belongs to Us* is a story of family, friendship, and unconditional acceptance, even when it breaks your heart.



***Sunny Days Inside and Other Stories* by Caroline Adderson (Groundwood Books)**

When the "grownup virus" hits, kids who live in the same apartment building must cope with strange new rules and extended time at home with parents and siblings. And they survive brilliantly, each in their own way. Twin boys throw themselves into an independent research assignment on prehistoric people and embrace their own devolution. A budding track star is encouraged to run laps on his balcony by a neighbour who has a secret crush on him. A classroom troublemaker reaches out to a teacher when his own father begins to exhibit signs of mental illness. A young entrepreneur saves himself and his hairdresser mother from financial collapse by renting out the family dog. And a girl finds a way to communicate with her hearing-impaired neighbour so that they can spy on the rest of the building. The stories follow the course of the pandemic, from the early measures through lockdown, as the kids in the building observe the stresses on the adults around them and use their own quirky kid ingenuity to come up with ways to make their lives better. Funny, poignant and wise, this book will long outlive even the pandemic.



***Valley of the Rats* by Mahtab Narsimhan (DCB)**

Book nerd Krish hates the outdoors, and camping. But especially germs. When Krish and his father, Kabir, take a camping trip to Ladakh, he convinces himself that they will bond, despite their differences. When they're lost in a bamboo forest, teeming with black rats, and germs, Krish is at an all-time low. His GF (gut feel) and a couple of rats lead them to a hidden village, Imdur, unmarked on any map. Krish and his father are allowed to stay, only if they follow rules. But Krish soon realizes the village has an odd custom of worshipping rats. They also have a secret. And so does his dad. Turns out, Krish has a secret too. When all the secrets explode into the open, Krish and Kabir are in grave danger. Can Krish overcome his fears and phobias to take the chance offered to him? Or are he and his dad doomed to spend the rest of their lives among rats?

The 2022 Committee

Met Virtually in May 2022



Silver Birch



Meredith Tutching — *Director of the Forest of Reading*, **Abby** — Simcoe County District School Board, **Emma** — Toronto District School Board, **Hudson** — Halton District School Board, **Kiran** — Simcoe County District School Board, **Margaret** — Toronto District School Board, **Olivia** — York Region District School Board, **Rachel** — Thames Valley District School Board, **Riley** — Upper Grand District School Board, **Robin** — Toronto District School Board

About Helen Kubiw, the Kid Committee — Silver Birch Facilitator:
Retired Teacher-Librarian, Former Forest of Reading Chair