



# Forest Of Reading<sup>®</sup>

## 2024 Kid Committee List Silver Birch Fiction Readers

Ages 8–12, Grades 3–6

Official Wholesaler

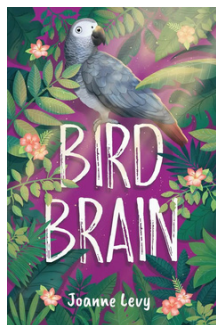
**tinlids**  
best books for schools and libraries

[forest@accessola.com](mailto:forest@accessola.com) | [forestofreading.com](http://forestofreading.com)



# Suggested Reading List

Silver Birch Readers (Ages 8-12, Grades 3-6)



## ***Bird Brain* by Joanne Levy (Orca Book Publishers)**

Arden Sachs has always wanted a pet: a purring kitten or an adorable puppy, or even a fuzzy guinea pig. But living in a cramped condo with her mom and siblings means she's unhappily pet-free. Then her Uncle Eli, a professor and scientist, asks Arden to look after Ludwig, his African Grey parrot, while he's away on sabbatical in Guinea. A little afraid of the bird, Arden reluctantly agrees to prove that she can handle pet ownership. But when Ludwig goes beyond his usual sounds and imitations to spout numbers and words that seem way too complex for a parrot, Arden wonders if there's more to this bird than meets the eye. As they get to know each other, Arden realizes Ludwig is not only super smart, he's also fiercely loyal, helping her with everything from her school presentation to her bully problems, and her pursuit of a spot on the Science Bowl team. Ludwig may not be the pet Arden wanted, but he might turn out to be exactly the pet she needed.



## ***Blue to the Sky* by Sylvia McNicoll (DCB Young Readers)**

The journey to conquering your fears starts with 1,776 steps. Starting sixth grade after years of homeschooling, Ella is tired of being known as Allergic-to-Everything Girl. She just wants to eat pizza without breaking into hives, convince her mom to adopt a Whoodle dog, and get over her stage fright so she can perform her poem to her class. When her best friend signs up for a CN Tower climb for charity, Ella knows she has to join. If she can climb to the top and summon the courage to recite her poem over the city, she's convinced she'll finally be cured of her fears.



## ***The Grace of Wild Things* by Heather Fawcett (Balzer + Bray)**

Grace has never been good at anything except magic—not that anyone believes her. While other children are adopted from the orphanage, nobody wants Grace. So she decides to make a home for herself by running away and offering herself as an apprentice to the witch in the nearby woods. After all, who better to teach Grace to use her magic? Surely the witch can't be that bad. But the witch is that bad—she steals souls for spells and gobbles up hearts. So Grace offers a deal: If she can learn all 100½ spells in the witch's grimoire, the witch will make Grace her apprentice. But if Grace fails, the witch can take her magic. The witch agrees, and soon an unexpected bond develops between them. But the spells are much harder than Grace expected, and when a monster from the witch's past threatens the home Grace has built, she may have to sacrifice more than her magic to save it.

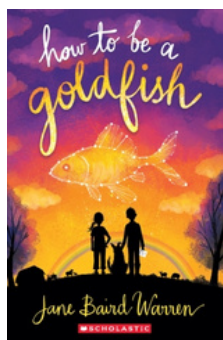
# Suggested Reading List

Silver Birch Readers (Ages 8-12, Grades 3-6)



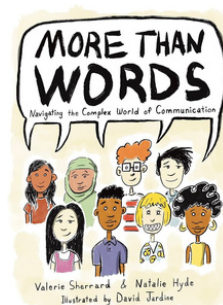
## ***The Grover School Pledge* by Wanda Taylor (HarperCollins)**

Arlaina Jefferson is eager to prove herself. Tasked with caring for her cousin's rabbit, Obeena, Arlaina knows all that stands between her and the grown-up world of middle school is one year of staying out of trouble and making sure to clean up Obeena's turds. It would be easy—if growing up didn't also mean growing wiser. Having faced thoughtless comments from fellow students, Arlaina is already struggling to explain the hurt she feels to her best friend, Tina. But when their teacher, Mr. Matthews, asks an ignorant question about classmate Nadia's headscarf, Arlaina has the confirmation she needs: Mr. Matthews is part of a larger problem that plagues Grover School. All those comments that Arlaina—and several other students—once brushed off suddenly seethe under the light of truth. Some things just can't be fixed by Obeena's warm and fuzzy charms. Bolstered by her father's childhood experience in the Million Man March, Arlaina teams up with no-nonsense Nadia and a host of other Grover School students to right a systemic wrong. After all, proving you're grown up doesn't always mean staying out of trouble!



## ***How to Be A Goldfish* by Jane Baird Warren (Scholastic Canada)**

When her class is assigned a family tree project, Lizzie knows hers will become fodder for Scotch Gully's town gossips. It's 1981, and she's the only one with an unmarried mom. So she turns to her neighbour Harry for advice, but he has problems of his own. A stranger has turned up, claiming to own his farm, and Harry is being forced out. For David, the new owner's son, everything is riding on this. The farm is his chance to escape the city and his bullies at school. And maybe even get his mom away from her horrible new fiancé. But he wasn't expecting to find someone else living there. Lizzie and David become surprising allies, and as their family stories crack wide open, they uncover the keys that could save Harry and his farm. But sharing long-buried secrets has a cost too. Can they trust themselves — and each other — to find the way forward together?



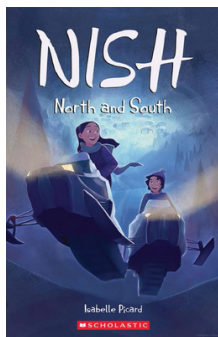
## ***More Than Words: Navigating the Complex World of Communication***

**by Valerie Sherrard & Natalie Hyde, Illustrated by David Jardine (DCB Young Readers)**

Maybe you've never thought about it, but you are constantly communicating, and with more than just words. Body language, hand gestures, facial expressions — they all have a lot to say. Are you aware of the silent signals you may be sending? How do you read verbal and nonverbal cues from other people? Through this illustrated book, you will learn how to communicate effectively — virtually and in person — with more confidence and fewer misunderstandings. You'll learn about active listening, speaking skills, empathy, conflict resolution, critical thinking, and more! Then you'll put your newfound knowledge into practice through individual exercises and group activities that will help you master your communication superpowers!

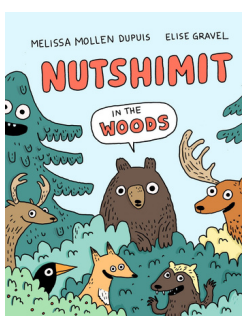
# Suggested Reading List

Silver Birch Readers (Ages 8-12, Grades 3-6)



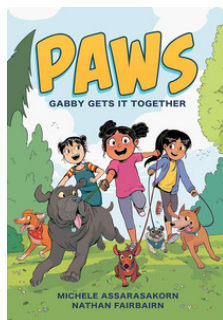
## ***Nish North and South* by Isabelle Picard (Scholastic Canada)**

In this acclaimed book, readers meet thirteen-year-old twins Leon and Eloise who live in Matimekush, an Innu community in Northern Quebec. While Leon spends all his free time playing hockey, and wondering how he can prove he has the talent to make it big in a place with no competition, Eloise works on a school project that opens her mind to the history of her people — their victories and their battles lost. But when their father gets sick and needs treatment almost 1000 km from home, and someone from their village mysteriously disappears, the twins learn lessons about the fragility of humanity and the dangers of the land they call home.



## ***Nutshimit* by Melissa Mollen Dupuis, Illustrated by Elise Gravel (North Winds Press)**

In this immersive first-person account, Innu author Melissa Mollen Dupuis teams up with award-winning author and illustrator Elise Gravel to take readers on a journey through Innu culture, from creation legends to life today. The Innu word Nutshimit signifies the physical and social space to practice traditional activities and language. Join author Melissa Mollen Dupuis on a guided walk deep through the forest to learn some of the rich culture of the Innu people. Readers will discover the importance of natural world and learn a few Innu words along the way. Thoughtfully brought to life by Elise Gravel's signature comic style illustrations, Melissa's colloquial narrative and anecdotes detailing her lived experiences offer a deeply personal look at Innu life.



## ***PAWS: Gabby Gets It Together* by Nathan Fairbairn, Illustrated by Michele Assarasakorn (G. P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers)**

Meet best friends Gabby Jordan, Priya Gupta, and Mindy Park. They're different in just about every way — personalities, hobbies, family, and more — but they have a few important things in common: they're all in the same class, they absolutely love animals, and for reasons that are as varied as the trio themselves none of them can actually have any pets. Unable to resist the adorable temptation any longer, the girls decide to come up with a way to finally get their hands on some furry friends. And, as luck would have it, it seems like their neighbourhood is in need of some afterschool dog-walkers. So, just like that, PAWS is born! But it turns out that running a business is harder than it looks, especially with three co-owners who are such different people. The girls soon argue about everything, from how to prioritize their commitments to the best way to keep their doggy clients happy. And when their fighting ultimately leads to a doggo crisis, will it tear their business and friendship apart or will they be able to get it together to save the day?



# Suggested Reading List

Silver Birch Readers (Ages 8-12, Grades 3-6)



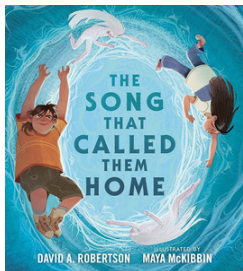
***The Racc Pack* by Stephanie Cooke, Illustrated by Whitney Gardner (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers)**

Meet the Bins family, a trio of raccoons in the risky business of dumpster diving for all their needs. With Dusty's brains, ReRe's muscle, and Scraps's gadgets (please don't tell him he's almost definitely an opossum), the Binses are determined to leave no garbage bin unturned in their pursuit of the tastiest, most delicious trash they can find. When the family discovers a new upscale grocery store that's throwing away their perfectly good food at the end of each day, the Binses hatch a heist so daring it'll have them rolling in garbage all winter long. But a critter-despising CEO, Jeff Beans, and the high-tech defense system he's installed means liberating that trash is going to take all the skills the Racc Pack have...and maybe some help from a cat burglar with a mysterious past.



***The Secret Diary of Mona Hasan* by Salma Hussain (Tundra Books)**

Mona Hasan is a young Muslim girl growing up in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, when the first Gulf War breaks out in 1991. The war isn't what she expects – "We didn't even get any days off school! Just my luck" – especially when the ground offensive is over so quickly and her family peels the masking tape off their windows. Her parents, however, fear there is no peace in the region, and it sparks a major change in their lives. Over the course of one year, Mona falls in love, speaks up to protect her younger sister, loses her best friend to the new girl at school, has summer adventures with her cousins in Pakistan, immigrates to Canada, and pursues her ambition to be a feminist and a poet.



***The Song That Called Them Home* by David A. Robertson, Illustrated by Maya McKibbin (Tundra Books)**

One summer day, Lauren and her little brother, James, go on a trip to the land with their Moshom (grandfather). After they've arrived, the children decide to fish for dinner while Moshom naps. They are in their canoe in the middle of the lake when the water around them begins to swirl and crash. They are thrown overboard and when Lauren surfaces she sees her brother being pulled away by the Memekwesewak – creatures who live in and around water and like to interfere with humans. Lauren must follow the Memekwesewak through a portal and along a watery path to find and bring back James. But when she finally comes upon her brother, she too feels the lure of the Memekwesewak's song. Something even stronger must pull them back home.

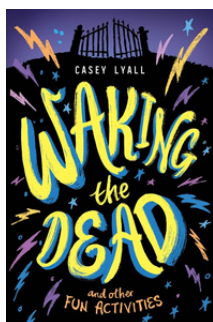
# Suggested Reading List

Silver Birch Readers (Ages 8-12, Grades 3-6)



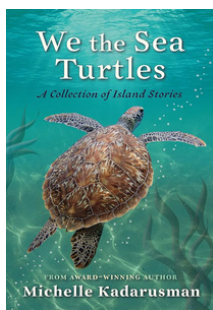
## ***Tegan and Sara: Junior High* by Tegan Quin and Sara Quin, Illustrated by Tillie Walden (Farrar, Strauss and Giroux)**

When growing up gets messy, find someone to hold on to. Before the indie-pop duo Tegan and Sara took the world by storm, Tegan and Sara Quin were identical twins trying to find their place in a new home and new school. *Tegan and Sara: Junior High* tells their story. From first crushes to the perils of puberty, surviving junior high is something the sisters plan to face side by side, just like they've always faced things. But growing up also means growing apart, as Tegan and Sara make different friends and take separate paths to understanding their queerness. For the first time ever, they ask who one sister is without the other. Set in the present day, this inspiring, lightly fictionalized autobiography offers a glimpse at Tegan and Sara before they became icons, exploring their shifting sisterhood, their own experiences coming out, and the first steps of their musical journey.



## ***Waking the Dead and other Fun Activities* by Casey Lyall (Greenwillow Books)**

Twelve-year-old Kimmy Jones wants to excel at the unique (and secret) aspect of her family's funeral home business. Under the watchful eye of Grandma Bev, Kimmy learns how to raise the recently deceased, request their last wish, and break the connection to send them on. But when Grandma unexpectedly dies herself, Kimmy can't reach her spirit, and nothing seems like it's ever going to be right again. Then a boy dies under mysterious circumstances on the night of a meteor shower. With no witnesses, Kimmy's the only one who can get answers about what happened. So she breaks into the hospital morgue, and for the first time in months, her power works. She Wakes the boy up. Except then Kimmy can't break the connection and so he stays Awake. Even worse, the boy has no memory of what happened to him. As Kimmy works to unravel the mystery, she discovers secrets about her heritage and learns about a witch who has been wreaking havoc for centuries.



## ***We the Sea Turtles: A Collection of Island Stories* by Michelle Kadarusman (Pajama Press)**

On islands around the world—from Manhattan to Phillip Island, Australia, to Komodo Island and beyond—nine children face life-changing moments: escaping a flood; embracing their identity; discovering that the adults in their lives can ease the burden of their eco-anxiety. And although each child couldn't be more different, one thing connects them all: a turtle swam into each of their lives at a critical moment, and left them changed. Author Michelle Kadarusman has lived and travelled all around the world, and her elegant writing captures the spirit of the places that have left their mark on her. In *We the Sea Turtles*, she explores relevant themes like eco-anxiety, natural disaster, and how people ground themselves when they've been uprooted. One way, as this collection shows, is to tell ourselves stories: stories that make sense of life.

# Suggested Reading List

Silver Birch Readers (Ages 8-12, Grades 3-6)



## ***Wednesday Wilson Fixes All Your Problems (Wednesday Wilson, Book 2)* by Bree Galbraith, Illustrated by Morgan Goble (Kids Can Press)**

Sometimes the best business ideas pop up when you least expect them. Or that's what happens to Wednesday Wilson, anyway, the morning her brother, Mister, locks himself in the bathroom because he's nervous about a school presentation. When classmate Emmet convinces Mister that a worry stone will calm his nerves, Wednesday offers Mister her marble – with the promise that a Worry Marble will fix all his problems! But then Wednesday starts thinking about just how many things kids get nervous about. And, hmm, she does happen to have a whole collection of marbles. Has Wednesday just hit entrepreneurial gold?

# The 2024 Committee

Met Virtually in May 2024



## Silver Birch



**Mila** — Halton District School Board, **Bhakti** — Peel District School Board, **Viha** — Halton District School Board, **Kassidy** — Peel District School Board, **Avery** — Halton District School Board, **Eleanor** — York Region District School Board, **Mae** — Toronto District School Board

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