



Summer Reading Suggestions for Parents and Students

June 2021

Summer is a wonderful time to catch up on the reading that you planned to do during the school year but did not have the time to complete. During this school year, we had a record number of author visits because we were able to schedule them virtually. Virtual author visits gave our students many opportunities to learn about writing, research, illustrating, and more. The authors we engaged told the students their life stories which included lessons about resilience, overcoming bullying and other adversities, and pursuing their interests despite being told not to do so. Our authors were inspiring and for this summer reading list, I am going to begin with their books.

Author visits varied by grade. Some authors visited with all Lower and Middle School students and some visited with only one or two grades. Julie Berry saw both the Middle and the Lower school students. She recently published a follow-up to *Happy Right Now: Cranky Right Now* (LS). Similarly, *Cranky Right Now* is a message to children and parents that sometimes we are a just cranky and dealing with emotions can be hard. Julie Berry's *Lovely War* (MS) is tale set during World War I as told by the Greek gods and goddesses who are controlling the events leading to the characters' interactions. Students in grades 7-8 visited with author Kwame Alexander who wrote *The Crossover*, a seventh grade required book for the past few years. *The Crossover* is a book in verse and Alexander's other titles written in verse include *Booked* (MS) and *Rebound* (MS). Kwame Alexander also collaborated with James Patterson to write a biography of Muhammad Ali in *Becoming Muhammad Ali* (LS & MS). And if your student likes to write poetry, Alexander has published a poetry notebook *Kwame Alexander's Free Write: A Poetry Notebook* (LS & MS). Author Sandra Markle visited Lower School students to talk about her nonfiction science books. Markle's most recent series of books are her *What If You Had* series (LS) (*What If You Had an Animal Tongue*, *What If You Had Animal Ears*, *What If You Had an Animal Tail*, and more). Each of these books has several animals spotlighted and explains what makes them unique. For older readers, Sandra Markle's Science Discoveries (LS & MS) series tackles real problems within our ecosystem due to changes in weather and changes in habitat. Titles include *The Case of the Vanishing Golden Frogs*, *The Great Penguin Rescue: Saving African Penguins*, *The Search for Olinguito: Discovering a New Species* and many more. Author and illustrator Maria Scrivan visited with grades 3-6 and talked about her career as an illustrator and graphic novelist. All students received a copy of *Nat Enough*. Her follow up titles include *Forget Me Nat* and *Absolutely Nat* (forthcoming 8/3/2021) (LS & MS).

This year, I enjoyed several titles in my adult reading life. *The Stationery Shop* by Marjan Kamali is the story of a girl in 1950's Tehran and a love story that just disappeared into the air of a revolution. *Circling the Sun* by Paula McClain is a fictionalized account of Beryl Markham, an English girl living in Kenya with her father, who grew to be one of Kenya's best horse trainers and female pilot in the 1920's. *The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise* (MS) by Dan Gemeinhart is a title I listened to on audio and it was read by a good friend of mine from high school, Khristine Hvam. It is a brilliant story of a girl who has lived on a bus with her father for five years and together they travel around the United States exploring. But in reality, they are running from reality, the death of Coyote's mother and sister. And Coyote is ready to go home. As a side note, audio books are a wonderful way for you to enjoy titles with your family in the car as you travel and I highly recommend borrowing them from your public library via CD or their cloud library option.

I ended the year with third-grade students talking about that singular concept: home. This year we may have had a lot of time in our houses, but we've also had a lot of time creating a home for our families. A home where our children are comfortable and feel welcome. Home – no just where we sleep but where love lives. My to-read list this summer is a list of books that all encompass different definitions of home: *Vanessa Yu's Magical Paris Tea Shop* by Roselle Lim, *Malibu Rising* by Taylor Jenkins Reid, and *The Last Thing He Told Me* by Laura Dave. And I plan to pick up a copy of *The Year of Cozy: 125 Recipes, Crafts, and Other Homemade Adventures* by Adrianna Adarme. These books could not be any more different in their settings and plots, but I've found that the more I read about things I do not totally understand, the more my heart opens to people that I do not completely understand.

Wishing you a summer of happy reading!

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