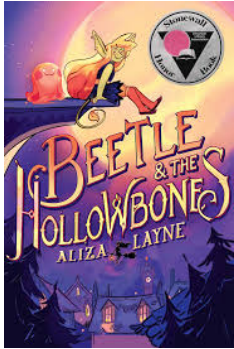


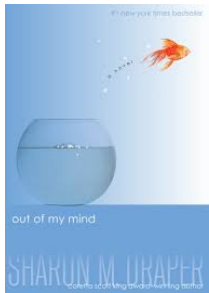
Summer Reading Rising 5th Grade 2026

***Beetle and the Hollow Bones* by Aliza Layne (graphic novel)**



In the eerie town of 'Allows, some people get to be magical sorceresses, while other people have their spirits trapped in the mall for all ghastly eternity.

Then there's a twelve-year-old goblin-witch Beetle, who's caught in between. She'd rather skip being homeschooled completely and spend time with her best friend, Blob Glost. But the mall is getting boring, and B.G. is cursed to haunt it, tethered there by some unseen force. And now Beetle's old best friend, Kat, is back in town for a sorcery apprenticeship with her Aunt Hollowbone. Kat is everything Beetle wants to be: beautiful, cool, great at magic, and kind of famous online. Beetle's quickly being left in the dust. But Kat's mentor has set her own vile scheme in motion. If Blob Ghost doesn't escape the mall soon, their afterlife might be coming to a very sticky end. Now, Beetle has less than a week to rescue her best ghost, encourage Kat to stand up for herself, and confront the magic she's been avoiding for far too long. And hopefully ride a broom without crashing.



***Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper (realistic fiction)**

Eleven-year-old Melody is not like most people. She can't walk. She can't talk. She can't write. All because she has cerebral palsy. But she also has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She's the smartest kid in her whole school, but NO ONE knows it. Most people—her teachers, her doctors, her classmates—dismiss her as mentally challenged because she can't tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by her disability. And she's determined to let everyone know it...somehow.

***Lion of the Sky* by Ritu Hemnani (historical fiction)**

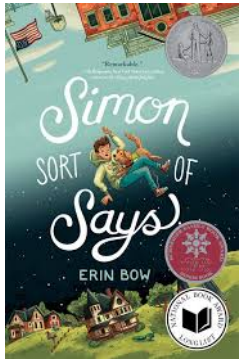


An evocative historical novel in verse about a boy and his family who are forced to flee their home and become refugees after the British Partition of India. Perfect for fans of *Other Words for Home*. Twelve-year-old Raj is happiest flying kites with his best friend, Iqbal. As their kites soar, Raj feels free, like his beloved India soon will be, and he can't wait to celebrate their independence. But when a British lawyer draws a line across a map, splitting India in two, Raj is thrust into a fractured world. With Partition declared, Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim families are torn apart—and Raj's Hindu and Iqbal's Muslim families are among them. Forced to flee and become refugees, Raj's family is left to start over in a new country. After suffering devastating losses, Raj must summon the courage to survive the brutal upheaval of both his country and his heart. Inspired by the author's true family history, *Lion of the Sky* is a deeply moving coming-of-age tale about identity, belonging, and the power of hope.



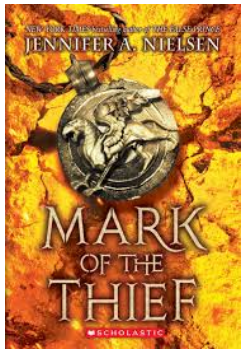
***Framed* by James Ponti (mystery)**

Twelve-year-old Florian Bates has just moved to Washington, DC, the latest of places he's lived for his dad's job a security specialist and his mom's an art conservator—now with the National Gallery of Art. Florian keeps busy developing his technique TOAST (Theory of All Small Things) that focuses on details to solve life's little mysteries such as where to sit on the on the first day of school or which Chinese restaurant has the best eggrolls. His observational skills haven't earned him many friends in the past, but his neighbor Margaret turns out to be a kindred spirit and an excellent student of TOAST. While testing their talents in the National Gallery, they uncover a valuable lead about a piece of stolen art! After calling in their tip, Florian and Margaret catch the attention of the FBI...and a notorious crime syndicate known as EEL. Can these amateur sleuths foil an art theft and forgery ring by looking at the small things, or will they find the devil is in the details?



***Simon Sort of Says* by Erin Bow (written in verse)**

Simon O'Keeffe's biggest claim to fame *should* be the time his dad accidentally gave a squirrel a holy sacrament. Or maybe the alpaca disaster that went viral on YouTube. But the story the whole world wants to tell about Simon is the one he'd do anything to forget: the story in which he's the only kid in his class who survived a school shooting. Two years after the infamous event, twelve-year-old Simon and his family move to the National Quiet Zone—the only place in America where the internet is banned. Instead of talking about Simon, the astronomers who flock to the area are busy listening for signs of life in space. And when Simon makes a friend who's determined to give the scientists what they're looking for, he'll finally have the chance to spin a new story for the world to tell.



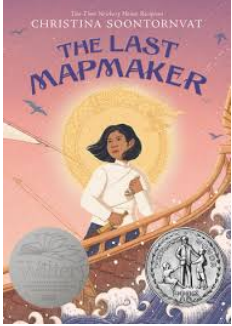
***Mark of the Thief* by Jennifer Nielsen (fantasy)**

When Nic, a slave in the mines outside of Rome, is forced to enter a sealed cavern containing the lost treasures of Julius Caesar, he finds much more than gold and gemstones: He discovers an ancient bulla, an amulet that belonged to the great Caesar and is filled with a magic once reserved for the Gods -- magic some Romans would kill for. Now, with the deadly power of the bulla pulsing through his veins, Nic is determined to become free. But instead, he finds himself at the center of a ruthless conspiracy to overthrow the emperor and spark the Praetor War, a battle to destroy Rome from within. Traitors and spies lurk at every turn, each more desperate than the next to use Nic's newfound powers for their own dark purposes. In a quest to stop the rebellion, save Rome, and secure his own freedom, Nic must harness the magic within himself and defeat the empire's most powerful and savage leaders.



***Three Times Lucky* by Sheila Turnage (mystery)**

Rising sixth grader Miss Moses LoBeau lives in the small town of Tupelo Landing, NC, where everyone's business is fair game and no secret is sacred. She washed ashore in a hurricane eleven years ago, and she's been making waves ever since. Although Mo hopes someday to find her "upstream mother," she's found a home with the Colonel—a café owner with a forgotten past of his own--and Miss Lana, the fabulous café hostess. She will protect those she loves with every bit of her strong will and tough attitude. So when a lawman comes to town asking about a murder, Mo and her best friend, Dale Earnhardt Johnson III, set out to uncover the truth in hopes of saving the only family Mo has ever known.



***The Last Map Maker* by Christina Soontornvat (fantasy)**

In a fantasy adventure every bit as compelling and confident in its world building as her Newbery Honor Book *A Wish in the Dark*, Christina Soontornvat explores a young woman's struggle to unburden herself of the past and chart her own destiny in a world of secrets. As assistant to Mangkon's most celebrated mapmaker, twelve-year-old Sai plays the part of a well-bred young lady with a glittering future. In reality, her father is a conman—and in a kingdom where the status of one's ancestors dictates their social position, the truth could ruin her. Sai seizes the chance to join an expedition to chart the southern seas, but she isn't the only one aboard with secrets. When Sai learns that the ship might be heading for the fabled Sunderlands—a land of dragons, dangers, and riches beyond imagining—she must weigh the cost of her dreams. Vivid, suspenseful, and thought-provoking, this tale of identity and integrity is as beautiful and intricate as the maps of old.

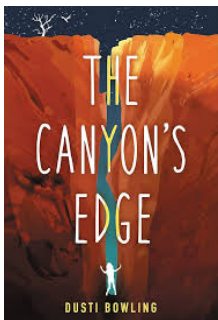


***Alone* by Megan E. Freeman (written in verse)**

When twelve-year-old Maddie hatches a scheme for a secret sleepover with her two best friends, she ends up waking up to a nightmare. She's alone—left behind in a town that has been mysteriously evacuated and abandoned. With no one to rely on, no power, and no working phone lines or internet access, Maddie slowly learns to survive on her own. Her only companions are a Rottweiler named George and all the books she can read. After a rough start, Maddie learns to trust her own ingenuity and invents clever ways to survive in a place that has been deserted and forgotten.



***Witch Boy* by Molly Ostertag (graphic novel)** In thirteen-year-old Aster's family, all the girls are raised to be witches, while boys grow up to be shapeshifters. Anyone who dares cross those lines is exiled. Unfortunately for Aster, he still hasn't shifted . . . and he's still fascinated by witchery, no matter how forbidden it might be. When a mysterious danger threatens the other boys, Aster knows he can help -- as a witch. It will take the encouragement of a new friend, the non-magical and non-conforming Charlie, to convince Aster to try practicing his skills. And it will require even more courage to save his family . . . and be truly himself.



***The Canyon's Edge* by Dusti Bowling (written in verse)**

One year after a random shooting changed their family forever, Nora and her father are exploring a slot canyon deep in the Arizona desert, hoping it will help them find peace. Nora longs for things to go back to normal, like they were when her mother was still alive, while her father keeps them isolated in fear of other people. But when they reach the bottom of the canyon, the unthinkable happens: A flash flood rips across their path, sweeping away Nora's father and all of their supplies. Suddenly, Nora finds herself lost and alone in the desert, facing dehydration, deadly snakes, venomous scorpions, and, worst of all, the Beast who has terrorized her dreams for the past year. If Nora is going to save herself and her father, she must conquer her fears, defeat the Beast, and find the courage to live her new life.

***The Crown Heist* by Deron Hicks (mystery)**



No matter how dangerous his adventures have been, Art has always been able to count on his best friend, Camille. Now that Camille is meeting her estranged father, Art wants to be there for her—which means going to London. But Camille's history professor father, renowned for expertise in British legend, is missing. When they visit his apartment, Art and Camille find a long-missing object that suggests the professor could be in trouble and solving a mystery related to London's history. Follow Art and Camille as they visit the Tower of London, National Portrait Gallery, and ride the "tube" in hopes of uncovering the truth before it's too late.

***Crossover* by Kwame Alexander (sports fiction)**



"With a bolt of lightning on my kicks . . . The court is SIZZLING. My sweat is DRIZZLING. Stop all that quivering. Cuz tonight I'm delivering," announces dreadlocked, 12-year old Josh Bell. He and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood. He's got mad beats, too, that tell his family's story in verse, in this fast and furious middle grade novel of family and brotherhood from Kwame Alexander. Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story's heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.

***No Fixed Address* by Susan Nielsen (realistic fiction)**



Twelve-and-three-quarter-year-old Felix Knutsson has a knack for trivia. His favorite game show is *Who What Where When*; he even named his gerbil after the host. Felix's mom, Astrid, is loving but can't seem to hold on to a job. So when they get evicted from their latest shabby apartment, they have to move into a van. Astrid swears him to secrecy; he can't tell anyone about their living arrangement, not even Dylan and Winnie, his best friends at his new school. If he does, she warns him, he'll be taken away from her and put in foster care. As their circumstances go from bad to worse, Felix gets a chance to audition for a junior edition of *Who What Where When*, and he's determined to earn a spot on the show. Winning the cash prize could make everything okay again. But things don't turn out the way he expects. . . .

***The Burning Season* by Caroline Starr Rose (Realistic fiction)**



Twelve-year-old Opal has a secret: she's deathly afraid of fire. Still Opal is preparing to become a fourth-generation lookout on Wolf Mountain, deep in the New Mexico wilderness. She, Mom, and Gran live at ten thousand feet in a single room at the top of a fire tower. They are responsible for spotting any hint of smoke before it becomes an uncontrollable blaze.

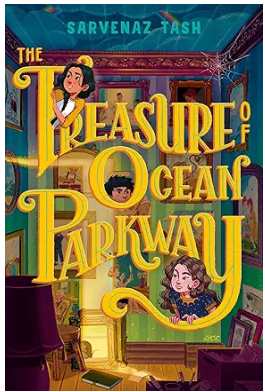
Instead of training for the lonely life of a lookout, Opal wishes she could be starting seventh grade in Silver City, attending real classes with kids her own age and even going to afterschool clubs like FFA. But Wolf Mountain has other ideas. When Mom makes the long trek to town for supplies and Gran goes missing, Opal is the only one to spot a tell-tale spiral of smoke moving up the mountainside. She'll have to be braver than she's ever been as she heads into the woods, beyond Wolf Ridge's old blackened burn scar, to face down a fire on her own. But when a fire is what took her father away,

and Opal herself knows the sting of smoke and lick of flames, how can she be brave enough when it really counts?



Fern's School for Wayward Fae as told by Piper CJ

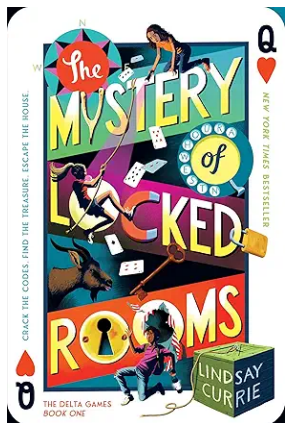
Rosemary Thorpe has always been a bit different. She has the uncanny and unfortunate ability to foresee people's deaths, which tends to land her in hot water. Well, not actual hot water—where it lands her is a place between worlds called Fern's School for Wayward Fae, where Rosemary learns that her powers come from being part fae.



Treasure of Ocean Parkway by Sarvenaz Tash (mystery)

Twelve-year-old globetrotter Thea Lim-Lambert is spending a rare summer at home in Brooklyn, when she discovers a secret room in the back of her closet. There, among her grandfather Errol's old diaries and peculiar carvings, is a clue Errol left to a massive hidden treasure. But to find it, she'll need the help of two experienced sleuths—lucky for her, two of the best live in her building!

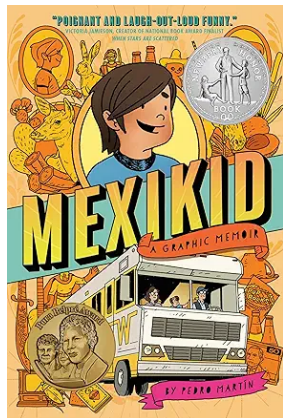
Roya and Amin's mystery podcast has earned them a stellar reputation, but they never could have guessed that their latest case would send them on a wild scavenger hunt in their own building. Clue by clue, they search the building from roof to cellar (thanks to Roya's mom's master key). But just when a solution seems near, they realize an essential piece is missing—locked away where none of them can reach it. And unless Thea finds the courage to stand up to her family the treasure of Ocean Parkway may be lost forever. . .



Mystery of Locked Rooms by Lindsay Currie (mystery)

Twelve-year-old Sarah Greene wants nothing more from her seventh-grade year than to beat the hardest escape room left in her town with her best friends, West, and Hannah. But when a foreclosure notice shows up on Sarah's front door, everything changes. Since her father became ill two years ago, things have been bad, but not lose your house bad...until now.

Sarah feels helpless until the day Hannah mentions a treasure rumored to be hidden in the walls of an abandoned funhouse. According to legend, Hans, Stefan, and Karl Stein were orphaned at eight years old and lived with different families until they were able to reunite as adults. Their dream was to build the most epic funhouse in existence. They wanted their experience to be more than mirror mazes and optical illusions, so they not only created elaborate riddles and secret passages, but they also claimed to have hidden a treasure inside the funhouse.



Mexikid by Pedro Martin (graphic novel- memoir)

Pedro Martín has grown up hearing stories about his abuelito—his legendary crime-fighting, grandfather who was once a part of the Mexican Revolution! But that doesn't mean Pedro is excited at the news that Abuelito is coming to live with their family. After all, Pedro has 8 brothers and sisters and the house is crowded enough! Still, Pedro piles into the Winnebago with his family for a road trip to Mexico to bring Abuelito home, and what follows is the trip of a lifetime, one filled with laughs and heartache. Along the way, Pedro finally connects with his abuelito and learns what it means to grow up and find his grito.



Addison Cooke by Johnathan W. Stokes (adventure)

If searching for hidden treasure is your thing look no further. Full of laugh-out-loud moments, danger, excitement, and nonstop action, this collection of the Addison Cooke series is sure to strike gold with young readers. Included are the following titles: Treasure of the Incas, Tomb of the Khan, and The Ring of Destiny.



Chronicles of Whetherwhy by Anna James (fantasy)

In Whetherwhy, everyone has magic inside them—grown from the changing seasons of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. But a rare few are Enchanters: people born with magic in their bones, who can wield all four seasons of magic.

When Juniper discovers she is an Enchanter, she must leave behind everything she knows to begin studying at the Thistledown Academy. And when her twin brother, Rafferty, begins an apprenticeship at a nearby bookbinder to be close to her, he, too has adventures of his own



Impossible Creatures by Katherine Rundell (fantasy- 2025 book of the year)

In *Impossible Creatures*, embark on an epic journey where mythical beasts are real and the boundaries between legend and reality blur. Follow a group of brave young heroes as they uncover secrets hidden in a land where griffins soar, manticores stalk, and ancient forces awaken.

The adventure intensifies in *The Poisoned King*, as loyalties are tested and darkness spreads. With the fate of the magical realm hanging in the balance, the heroes must confront a deadly enemy who will stop at nothing to seize control.