

The Bookworm presents the Kids' Next List for Summer 2020 vol. i

The Bookworm <bookwormomaha@shelf-awareness.com>

Thu 6/18/2020 10:05 AM

To: Lori Schwartz



Inspired recommendations for kids from independent booksellers across the country.

From Our Store

During times like these we're grateful for the solace and escape of a great book. We're grateful also for your support. We hope you and yours are all safe and sound, and we hope you love these books as much as we do.

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#1 KIDS' NEXT LIST PICK...

Stepping Stones

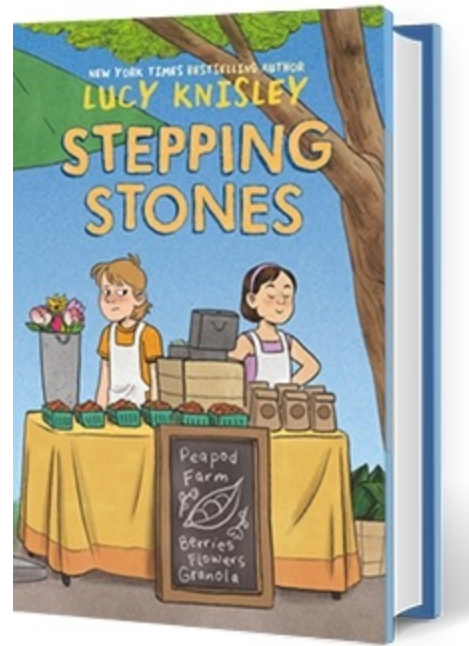
By Lucy Knisley

(Random House Graphic, 9780593125243, \$20.99 hardcover; 9781984896841, \$12.99 paperback)

"Following her parents' separation, Jen moves with her mom from the city to a small country farm. But Jen would rather be reading or drawing than caring for chickens, let alone answering to her mom's annoying boyfriend, Walter, and she really doesn't want to work the farm stand with Walter's two daughters. Andy and Reese are so perfect,

Jen can't seem to do anything right. But one step at a time, the farm--and their blended family--finally starts to feel like home. I adore Lucy Knisley, and I'm so excited that she's sharing her pitch-perfect voice with middle readers in this story inspired by her childhood! Fans of Raina Telgemeier, rejoice!"

--Mary Wahlmeier, Raven Book Store,
Lawrence, KS



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#1 KIDS' NEXT LIST PICK AUTHOR INTERVIEW...

Indie booksellers across the country have chosen Lucy Knisley's *Stepping Stones* (Random House Graphic) as one of their top picks for the Summer 2020 Kids' Indie Next List.

How did you craft Jen's character?

Jen is based on me. I wanted to write a story about a kid who was grappling with this change in her circumstances, and I wanted to make her someone that I would've identified with as a kid--not necessarily sporty or girly or any of those things, just a regular kid. I wanted her to come up against these different personalities, whether they're her stepfather or her stepsisters, and make them all very human and nuanced, not clichés. So, Jen is based on me, but I'm trying to make her an "every kid."



In the past, all of my work has been autobiographical, and this is my shift to fiction--fiction with training wheels, since it's still based on my life.

Throughout the story, we see Jen sketching scenes from her past, particularly when she's feeling homesick for her life before her parents' divorce. When she's sketching the present, we see standalone portraits, maps, or even lists. Was this intentional?

Yes! I'm a big proponent of keeping a sketchbook, or even just a notebook if you're not interested in drawing. I think processing things on paper is a really wonderful way to take in the world and

what's happening with you, and I really wanted to encourage kids to keep their own sketchbooks. To process the world, you're not writing out your present thoughts in a coherent manner. I'm a sketchbook keeper, and most of my sketchbooks just look chaotic. They're ideas and thoughts trying to come out on the page. But when you're thinking about the past, that's more set in stone. You have that history and that story set in your mind. When Jen is sketching out things that she remembers, it's much more concrete, a story being told. Whereas when she's trying to process the world, it's all just very nebulous. I wanted kids to know that they can keep a sketchbook and it doesn't have to be one thing or the other.

This book balances learning about who you are with learning about new surroundings and environments. Is this a theme you're drawn to often? If so, why?

Most of my work is about transitional states. As I said, I use drawing and writing as a way to process my experiences. I have a book about becoming independent from my parents, and I have a book about becoming a mother, and I really enjoy the idea that you can have these interesting liminal spaces between one thing and another and understand the significance as it goes. This is another way that this is kind of a transition from my autobiographical work into fiction, where Jen is experiencing a transitional state. I wanted to show that period because it's so significant for an adolescent...

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TOP PICKS



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Clap When You Land

By Elizabeth Acevedo

(Quill Tree Books, 9780062882769, \$18.99)

"What happens when you find out you have a sister you never knew about over a thousand miles away? Camino and Yahaira Rios are both about to find out. When their father perishes in a plane crash carrying him from New York City to the Dominican Republic, both girls discover each other's existence, kept a secret from them by their shared father. What follows is a story of love, loss, grief, and everything in between. Elizabeth Acevedo continues to wow with her words, never once letting up on the emotional gas pedal. *Clap When You Land* is sure to stick with you well beyond the last page."

--Heather Hill, Changing Hands, Tempe, AZ



Date Me, Bryson Keller

By Kevin van Whye

(Random House Books for Young Readers, 9780593126035, \$17.99)

"*Date Me, Bryson Keller* is a gloriously satisfying gay teen coming-of-age love story with characters you'll think about long after you put the book down (and you won't want to put it down until you've read every word--I didn't). The narrator, the closeted, gay, mixed-race Kai Sheridan, impulsively takes advantage of a dare to ask out ultra-popular Bryson Keller, who has been dared to spend each week dating the first person who asks him out on Monday morning. Could this possibly lead to the real thing? Highly recommended."

--Carol Schneck Varner, Schuler Books, Okemos, MI



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Private Lessons

By Cynthia Salaysay

(Candlewick, 9781536209600, \$17.99)

"Beautifully written, musical, and lyrical, *Private Lessons* is a coming-of-age novel that pulled at my heartstrings. Claire's relationship with her mother and father had me weeping early on in the book, and I admired and understood her drive to escape her suburban life. Her Filipino heritage is a part of the story but doesn't define her, and the microaggressions that she faces are just like real life--cutting but ultimately unnoticed by anyone but the target. The lens of Claire's journey is beautiful and brilliant and I enjoyed reading about her growing up."

--Jackie Jou, Mysterious Galaxy Books, San Diego, CA

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Indies Introduce -- outstanding debuts as selected by independent booksellers



Llama Unleashes the Alpacalypse

By Jonathan Stutzman

Heather Fox (Illus.)

(Henry Holt and Co. (BYR), 9781250222855, \$18.99)

"Funny and relatable. Who doesn't like a well-balanced breakfast but could do without the well-balanced mess it creates? In this hilarious sequel to *Llama Destroys the World*, Jonathan Stutzman once again regales readers with Llama's misadventures... this time involving his good friend Alpaca. Heather Fox's illustrations perfectly bring to life that lovable polymath, Llama."

--Amanda Kothe, Joseph-Beth Booksellers, Cincinnati, OH



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FOR AGES 4 – 8



Chicken Little: The Real and Totally True Tale By Sam Wedelich

(Scholastic Press, 9781338359015, \$17.99)

"My son is OBSESSED with Chicken! He asks to read *Chicken Little* over and over again, and he also loves the sky. A fun story, great illustrations, and a great way to spark conversations about fact-checking and the dangers of spreading misinformation."

--Sarah Krammen, Dragonfly Books, Decorah, IA

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Lift By Minh Lê Dan Santat (Illus.)

(Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 9781368036924, \$17.99)

"Iris has a cure for when she's feeling a bit down: pushing elevator buttons! One day, Iris discovers a magic button that will take her to wondrous places. She can't wait to go exploring, but something holds her back, and Iris soon realizes that sharing this magical discovery makes it all the better. *Lift* is an uplifting picture book full of heart and imagination. When you hear that elevator ding, where do you want to go?"

--Jen Steele, Boswell Book Company, Milwaukee, WI



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Lone Wolf By Sarah Kurpiel

(Greenwillow Books, 9780062943828, \$17.99)

"A super fun book about a husky who decides to try to be a wolf after everyone keeps saying she looks like a one. With some real facts about wolves and dogs and fun illustrations, this is the perfect book for your young dog lover. Heartwarming and funny--I highly recommend this cute picture book!"

--Danica Ramgoolam, Townie Books, Crested Butte, CO

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The Night Is for Darkness

By Jonathan Stutzman
Joseph Kuefler (Illus.)

(Balzer + Bray, 9780062912534, \$17.99)

"Readers join a father driving home with his son and daughter at night as they notice wildlife, the night sky, and sights and sounds that are part of the world of darkness. They arrive home to meet their mother and begin bedtime rituals, complete with brushing teeth, saying prayers, and listening to stories. *The Night Is for Darkness* is a story told in lyrical rhythm and rhyme accompanied by appealing illustrations. This bedtime story has a peaceful and reassuring feel that makes it a great addition to any young child's library."

--Ann Niedzielski, Beagle and Wolf Books & Bindery, Park Rapids, MN



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The Ocean in Your Bathtub

By Seth Fishman
Isabel Greenberg (Illus.)

(Greenwillow Books, 9780062953360, \$17.99)

"This brightly illustrated story reminds everyone of their place in the water cycle. Tons of information fills the pages without feeling overwhelming. I loved the tone and design on this one--there's something for everyone to learn, whether they live near the ocean or far away."

--Dwan Dawson-Tape, Sundog Books, Santa Rosa Beach, FL

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Our Friend Hedgehog: The Story of Us

By Lauren Castillo

(Knopf Books for Young Readers, 9781524766719, \$16.99)

"In the gentle tradition of *Winnie the Pooh*, this book weaves together the adventures of several woodland creatures (and one human). Hedgehog leaves her cozy, comfy island to look for her beloved friend, who was blown away in a storm. Tense moments quickly pass due to Hedgehog's perseverance and strength. A sweet beginning to a new series!"

--Robin Stern, Books Inc., San Francisco, CA



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What About Worms!? (Elephant & Piggie Like Reading!)

By Ryan T. Higgins and Mo Willems



(Hyperion Books for Children, 9781368045735, \$9.99)

"Hilarious! I love how this book tackles worry in a way that is funny and hopeful. Although there are big things in life to worry about, especially when kids are small, maybe they don't need to seem SO scary. The pacing, humor, and rhythm of the story all come together into one great picture book. Well done!"

--Izzy Stringham, Bookbinders Basalt, Basalt, CO

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FOR AGES 9 – 12



Doodleville

By Chad Sell

(Knopf Books for Young Readers, 9781984894700, \$20.99 hardcover; 9781984894717, \$12.99 paperback)

"A fascinating premise combines with Chad Sell's signature empathy in a sweet story about self-expression and friendship. Sell clearly admires both kids and the communal nature of art. A diverse cast of characters and a nuanced, compassionate view of childhood anxiety make this graphic novel stand out from its peers."

--Olivia Morris, Harvard Book Store, Cambridge, MA

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Five Things About Ava Andrews

By Margaret Dilloway

(Balzer + Bray, 9780062803498, \$16.99)

"Ava Andrews is starting her sixth-grade year alone. Struggling with both a crippling anxiety and heart condition, she is lost without her best friend beside her. Somehow, she finds herself in an improvisation group and, perhaps more surprisingly, part of a grassroots activist movement to save a historic community. This book shows just how strong you can be when you believe in yourself, your passion, and your potential!"

--Lindsey Howard, Lark and Owl Booksellers, Georgetown, TX



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I Hate Reading: How to Read When You'd Rather Not

By Beth Bacon

(HarperCollins, 9780062962522, \$12.99)

"I Hate Reading is pure genius! Its bold, intriguing title and cover grab readers immediately. It is full of kid-endorsed advice for those who prefer not to read but are forced



to. This wildly appealing gem is great fun--and a reminder that kids become eager readers one terrific book at a time. *I Hate Reading* is the perfect start."

--Christopher Rose, The Spirit of '76 Bookstore, Marblehead, MA

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The One and Only Bob

By Katherine Applegate
Patricia Castelao (Illus.)

(HarperCollins, 9780062991317, \$18.99)

"Revisit the world of Ivan, Ruby, and Bob, but this time with Bob as the central character of a story that is just as heartwarming as *The One and Only Ivan*. Bob's wry sense of humor, compassion for all animals, and love for his friends makes this another hit by Applegate."

--Pam Page, pages: a bookstore, Manhattan Beach, CA



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Pages & Co.: The Lost Fairy Tales

By Anna James
Paola Escobar (Illus.)

(Philomel Books, 9781984837295, \$16.99)

"During a trip to Paris to visit Oskar's father, Tilly and Oskar ignore the warnings from Tilly's grandparents and wander into a collection of fairy tales... but nothing is normal inside these stories.

Back at the London Underlibrary, new head librarian Melville Underwood is trying to bind books and restrict access to Bookwandering. Both Tilly and Oskar, along with Tilly's grandparents and former librarian Amelia, are determined to find a way to stop him. Can they do it before it's too late?

The Lost Fairy Tales is the perfect follow-up to *The Bookwanderers*. Full of magic and utterly enchanting, this is fast becoming my new favorite middle-grade series!"

--Rebecca Minnock, Murder by the Book, Houston, TX



Tornado Brain

By Cat Patrick

(G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, 9781984815316, \$17.99)

"A mutual friend goes missing and twin sisters Frankie, a young teen on the spectrum, and popular Tess try to solve the mystery. The loyalty of sisters, friendship, and acceptance all come into play in this well-written and engaging book."

--Marlene Craig, The Well-Read Moose, Coeur d'Alene, ID



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We Dream of Space

By Erin Entrada Kelly

(Greenwillow Books, 9780062747303, \$16.99)

"*We Dream of Space* transports us back to the weeks leading up to the space shuttle *Challenger's* disastrous launch on January 28, 1986, and follows three siblings struggling to navigate the turbulence of middle school and family life. This heartbreaking yet hopeful novel about enduring tragedy will resonate with middle schoolers and with adults who remember this traumatic event. It's the perfect read for these challenging times."

--Alyssa Raymond, Copper Dog Books, Beverly, MA

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Yorick and Bones

By Jeremy Tankard and Hermione Tankard

(HarperAlley, 9780062854308, \$16.99 hardcover; 9780062854315, \$9.99 paperback)

"This is the first book in a rib-tickling and heartfelt graphic novel series about the unlikely friendship between an Elizabethan-era skeleton and the modern-day dog who digs him up. Yorick is a hilarious and thoughtful protagonist, and Tankard's newspaper-cartoon-style drawings are a delightful addition to such a fun and funny story!"

--Laura Graveline, Brazos Bookstore, Houston, TX



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FOR TEENS

Aurora Burning

By Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff

(Knopf Books for Young Readers, 9781524720926, \$18.99)

"I could not put this book down! I absolutely loved this sequel to *Aurora Rising*, and I am eagerly awaiting book three now. This sci-fi adventure is perfect for fans of *Firefly*, *Star*



Wars, and even *Harry Potter*. It's the ultimate found-families tale, especially given that most of the main characters' parents are dead. Squad 312 is trying to save the galaxy, and we hope they can do it!"

--Jaya Anderson, Red Balloon Bookshop, St. Paul, MN

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The Betrothed

By Kiera Cass

(HarperTeen, 9780062291639, \$19.99)

"Kiera Cass fans new and old will fall in love with her latest heroine: Hollis Brite, the (potentially) soon-to-be Queen of Coroa. Hollis' dreams are all coming true as her courtship with King Jameson becomes more serious--yet she (along with her loyal friends and stuffy parents) is simultaneously swept into a fast-paced plot of intrigue, scandal, and betrayal. Hollis is quick-thinking and passionate with a strong sense of self, but finds herself caught between a position of power and the promise of true love. Lest readers fear a traditional love story, Cass has incorporated innumerable twists and turns--some delightful, many heart-wrenching, and others a combination of the two. This is a powerful and enchanting beginning to a new series that is sure to be a success!"



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--Annika Pfister, Petunia's Place, Fresno, CA



Felix Ever After

By Kacen Callender

(Balzer + Bray, 9780062820259, \$18.99)

"I love the intersectionality in this book, the way it highlights a story of friendship and love--trans, queer, and black. In the author's foreword, they mention that if the story reaches only one young adult and makes them feel seen, then that will be enough. Kacen, this novel will reach so many more. This is an incredible work that I will gladly hand-sell over and over again."

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--Rachel Round, Booked, Evanston, IL



Forged in Fire and Stars

By Andrea Robertson

(Philomel Books, 9780525954125, \$18.99)

"In one word: exciting. From the beginning, this adventure/chosen-one story brings three teens together who must fight to save their country from a people who worship a dark and demanding god. Very *Lord of the Rings* meets *Game of Thrones* meets *Vikings*. I loved it!"



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Heartstopper: Volume 1

By Alice Oseman

(Graphix, 9781338617443, \$24.99 hardcover; 9781338617436, \$14.99 paperback)

"After being forced out of the closet last year, Charlie is 'the gay kid' at his boys' school. The bullying has pretty much stopped, but now he has other problems--like his crush on his cute (straight) classmate Nick. Nick is a rugby star, and though he's nice, he couldn't possibly be interested in someone like Charlie, especially since Nick already has a crush on a girl... right? A sweet story about teen friendship and love that will melt your heart the same way *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* did."

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--Melissa Oates, Fiction Addiction, Greenville, SC



House of Dragons

By Jessica Cluess

(Random House Books for Young Readers, 9780525648154, \$18.99)

"First: dragons. Need I say more? Fine; then let's throw five competitors from rival houses into a top-secret competition for the emperor's throne where only one will emerge victorious... and the others will die. But this time the calling seems to have gone terribly wrong, and the candidates range from a stablehand to a bastard to a girl with illegal magic. Yet none can escape their fate, and so the games begin. There will be betrayal, there will be blood, and there will be fire. Cluess has created a sweeping start to a series that is sure to enthrall fans everywhere."

--Cailey Neuschaefer, Bookmarks, Winston-Salem, NC



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