



TOP 10 PICKS TOP 10 PICKS TOP 10 PICKS TOP 10 PICKS TOP 10

Beverly, Right Here

By Kate DiCamillo

"Kate DiCamillo trusts children, and it makes her writing remarkable. She trusts them to feel a range of complicated emotions, to experience hardship just like any adult, and to be capable, kind, cruel, self-directed, and a little lost. Beverly's journey into a place away from her everyday world is a perfect respite from our own, though it never shies away from the fact that life is difficult. Runaway she may be, but Beverly is so clear-eyed and decisive that you might be inclined to follow her anywhere."

—Alex Schaffner, Brookline Booksmith, Brookline, MA



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Frankly in Love

By David Yoon

"*Frankly in Love* is a breathtaking, sit-on-the-floor-sobbing, smile-till-your-face-hurts whirlwind of a novel. David Yoon's writing is extraordinary: carefree and playful, yet deep and resonating. Embedded throughout are gems that encapsulate the humanity of being young, being in love, and discovering who you are and who you aren't. Not only is this a compelling and engrossing story of love and growing up, it powerfully hits many notes regarding race, family, and biases. I know this will be a book that will continue to resonate with me for a long time, and I can't wait to share it so that it will stick in other readers' hearts, too."

—Tildy Banker-Johnson, Belmont Books, Belmont, MA



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The Grace Year

By Kim Liggett

"Liggett combines a dystopian society with a horrific survivor story and a dark fairy tale in *The Grace Year*. Young girls are believed to be magic, so they are forced into exile for their 16th year in order to release their powers. After their year away, they are expected to come back ready for a docile home life. But not all of them come home alive, and many come home changed. Liggett's story is haunting and lyrical, an intriguing page-turner filled with love, brutality, violence, and hope."

—Scott Lange, The Bookman, Grand Haven, MI



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The Fountains of Silence

By Ruta Sepetys

"Ruta Sepetys again shines a light on a little-known area of history. Most readers will not be familiar with Franco's regime and the missing children of Spain, but Sepetys has crafted an unforgettable novel filled with rich details and characters that bring this haunting tale to life. *The Fountains of Silence* should be in every school, library, and book club and in the hands of every reader from 12 to 112. Do not forget the past."

—Pamela Klinger-Horn, Excelsior Bay Books, Excelsior, MN



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SLAY

By Brittney Morris

“SLAY is so much more than just another book about video games: it’s about a girl who carves a space in the world for herself and completely owns it, and it’s about the microaggressions and the can-I-touch-your-hairs and all the things that come with being one of a handful of black kids in a school. It isn’t afraid to pull punches where it counts; sometimes you see them coming, sometimes you don’t.”

—Avery Peregrine, Third Place Books, Lake Forest Park, WA



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Serpent & Dove

By Shelby Mahurin

“Can love really mend centuries-old wounds or does it truly make fools of us all? Full of magic, danger, and secrets, *Serpent and Dove* shines a light on the imperfections humanity possesses—that no one person or group is always right, that we all have the ability to do good or evil, and that it is our choices and actions that reveal our hearts. A pleasure from start to finish, I couldn’t put it down! If you’re a fan of Sarah J. Maas, you will love this book!”

—Ashley Conti, The Family Book Shop, DeLand, FL



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My Jasper June

By Laurel Snyder

“This is the kind of middle-grade book we need more of! The story is a realistic portrayal of the lives of two teenage girls, one grieving the death of her brother and the other homeless due to alcohol and physical abuse in her family, who meet by chance and become friends. It is impossible to determine which girl benefits more from the relationship. It is heartrending but also hopeful.”

—Diane Howell Robinson, Eagle Eye Book Shop, Decatur, GA



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Dear Sweet Pea

By Julie Murphy

“Sweet Pea is that spunky, likeable girl next door who’s going through a rough patch. Her parents are getting divorced, she’s caught between friends, and her cat seems like the only one who loves her for who she is. And now she’s scored her first job—forwarding mail for her unusual neighbor, Miss Flora Mae, who writes the paper’s advice column. Sweet Pea gets tempted to open a letter, and then the fun begins! Can trying to help cause more trouble than it solves? A funny and heartwarming story of a tween finding her way.”

—Jenny Stroyeck, The Homer Bookstore, Homer, AK



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The Scarecrow

By Beth Ferry, The Fan Brothers (Illus.)

"A beautifully written and gloriously illustrated tale of love and devotion, *The Scarecrow* pulls you in and opens your heart. Beth Ferry's gentle, rhythmic language and the enchanting, uplifting illustrations of the Fan brothers (*The Night Gardener*) create a story in which caring and kindness are everything at a time when this world needs it most. A moving and touching reading experience for the whole family."

—Kathy Neff, Square Books, Oxford, MS



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Stormy: A Story About Finding a Forever Home

By Guojing

"My new favorite picture book, *Stormy* by Guojing, contains not a single word. Nonetheless, it's one of the most heartfelt and moving stories I've ever experienced. An orphan dog and a young woman come to know of each other at a park. The pup is shy of the woman's attempts to play, but slowly comes around. When the woman heads home for the day, she leaves the dog behind (or so she thinks), but when a sudden thunderstorm erupts, both dog and woman are desperate to be reconnected. The artwork is amazing—the use of color and expression tells the reader everything, with no text necessary. I can't wait to share this with a child too young to read, but fully able to tell me the story by looking at the pictures."

—Jen Wills Geraedts, Beagle and Wolf Books & Bindery, Park Rapids, MN



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The Evil Princess vs. the Brave Knight (Book 1)

By Jennifer Holm, Matthew Holm (Illus.)

"Brave knights, evil princesses, and deeply irritated magic mirrors take center stage in this wonderful story about siblings and playing together. The jokes and pictures are perfect, which makes it another great addition to the story time lineup."

—Angela Whited, Red Balloon Bookshop, St. Paul, MN



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Home in the Woods

By Eliza Wheeler

"This heartwarming story of a family that works together to make a new home is enhanced by gentle illustrations that reflect the bettering of their situation as the seasons go by. This is a book that every child, hustled along by the fast pace of life today, needs to hear, a quiet affirmation of the simple joys of hearth and home."

—Cindy Brewer, Quail Ridge Books, Raleigh, NC



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I Wonder

By Kari Anne Holt, Kenard Pak (Illus.)

"Kari Anne Holt's *I Wonder* is the kind of picture book that will prompt different conversations each time a child reads it. Until the last spread, the text is comprised of riddle-like questions that range from the philosophical ('I wonder why I wonder so much?') to the silly ('I wonder if sandwiches get mad when you bite them?'). Kenard Pak's delightful, spare illustrations add to the fun as they move the story from day to night. Perfect for bedtime and snuggle-time reading, *I Wonder* is bound to be a household favorite. I know it's one of mine!"

—Joy Preble, Brazos Bookstore, Houston, TX



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It Began With a Page: How Gyo Fujikawa Drew the Way

By Kyo Maclear, Julie Morstad (Illus.)

"*It Began With a Page* shines a brilliant light on one of America's most forward-thinking artists and children's book makers, a woman who used her art to create a more inclusive and bright world. Morstad, whose illustrations often evoke the soft vibrancy of Gyo Fujikawa's, is a perfect fit in visualizing her story. Maclear's engaging paean conjures an image of Fujikawa that fits solidly in the present, making her work all the more relevant to readers today. This is an exquisite, immersive biography that will delight anyone who loves books."

—Hannah DeCamp, Avid Bookshop, Athens, GA



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Just Because

By Mac Barnett, Isabelle Arsenault (Illus.)

"Young philosophers, budding scientists, and curious youngsters everywhere—rejoice! Mac Barnett's perfect bedtime story is full of questions and answers worth contemplating. With endpapers that suggest a world of possibilities and the magical pairing of Isabelle Arsenault's illustrations with Barnett's text, *Just Because* is destined to be requested each evening as often as the obligatory glass of water. It is a joyful celebration of imagination and the world of dreams—just be sure to close your eyes."

—Mary Alice Garber, Politics and Prose Bookstore, Washington, DC



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The Love Letter

By Anika Aldamuy Denise, Lucy Ruth Cummins (Illus.)

"*The Love Letter* is a cozy story full of love and friendship and illustrated in soft hues. When Hedgehog finds a love letter, it brightens his mood and fills him with eagerness to be helpful and kind. When he drops it, Bunny finds it and the cycle repeats. This book shows that a little kindness and a little love can make a big, big change."

—Miranda Atkins, A Little Bookish, Ooltewah, TN



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Mr. Pumpkin's Tea Party

By Erin Barker

"This delightful Halloween-themed counting book introduces Mr. Pumpkin's monstrous guests one by one as they arrive with their delectable contributions to his tea party. Soft and humorous illustrations with just the right amount of spookiness will surely make this a seasonal favorite."

—Betsy Covert, The Toadstool Bookshop, Keene, NH



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Once Upon a Goat

By Dan Richards, Eric Barclay (Illus.)

"This is an adorable, funny, and heartwarming story of a king and queen who are wishing for a baby. Their fairy godmother wants specifics, so they tell her, 'Any kid will do!' But when they look on their doorstep on the next full moon, they are surprised to see a different type of 'kid'...a fuzzy baby goat! A clever story with the most charming illustrations, this is a must for any reader's bookshelf!"

—Amanda Zirn Hudson, Bethany Beach Books, Bethany Beach, DE



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Ruby Finds a Worry

By Tom Percival

"Carefree Ruby loves playing and exploring the world around her. But one day, she notices a Worry hanging around. At first, she decides to ignore it, but it just grows bigger and bigger, and before long, it's so huge that it's all she can think about. Then she comes across a boy who looks as sad as Ruby feels and who also has a Worry. As the boy tells Ruby about his Worry, though, it begins to get smaller, and Ruby learns that talking about her Worry is a good way to make it go away. An excellent teaching book about managing worry, which everyone has and which may come back sometimes but can get better if you share it with someone who can help you through it."

—Melissa Oates, Fiction Addiction, Greenville, SC



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Saturday

By Oge Mora

"Saturday is the only day of the week that Ava and her mother are able to spend together, and this Saturday does not go as planned. Fortunately, Ava understands that the day was still 'special,' 'splendid,' and 'wonderful' because they spent it together. Oge Mora is a rare talent whose beautiful illustrations—each using hand-picked, textured, found, and created papers—reflect the exuberance of her very special stories."

—Cathy Fiebach, Main Point Books, Wayne, PA



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Spencer's New Pet

By Jessie Sima

"I love all of Jessie Sima's work, and this book is unlike anything she has ever done. In the style of a silent film, this picture book tells the story of Spencer and his pet balloon dog. This book is absolutely beautifully drawn and the twist made me gasp. I am still reeling from the trip this book took me on."

—Portia Turner, The Book Cellar, Chicago, IL



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A Stone Sat Still

By Brendan Wenzel

"As he did in *They All Saw a Cat* and *Hello, Hello*, Brendan Wenzel plays with perspective and place in the world around us in *A Stone Sat Still*. He looks at a stone, which serves as everything from a home to a maze to a throne, and as we read the book, the stone weathers and its environment shifts. It's a brilliant book, gorgeously illustrated, and perfect for the home or the classroom."

—Cathy Berner, Blue Willow Bookshop, Houston, TX



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Stretchy McHandsome

By Judy Schachner

"I think *Stretchy McHandsome* just stole my heart and won the honor of being my favorite picture book of the year. Stretchy the butterscotch boy is one of nine cats in the McHandsome clan—the youngest, in fact! He sets off on a vacation from his loving but crowded home, and that's only the beginning. My favorite thing of all is how the illustrations truly capture the physics-defying reality of how cats seem to occupy their bodies. He stretches, melts, curls, and makes all the shapes a cat can make. Stretchy McHandsome (and his whole family) will charm your socks off!"

—Andrew King, University Book Store, Seattle, WA



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SumoKitty

By David Biedrzycki

"*SumoKitty* is a humorous, enjoyable tale of a stray kitty who is taken in at a sumo wrestling training center. SumoKitty lives an easy life and becomes quite plump and a bit lazy, and because of this he is put back out as a stray. When he is given a second chance, he must train and learn the values and traditions of a sumo wrestler in order to be in good enough shape to catch mice and earn his keep at the sumo heya. This story is filled with elements of Japanese culture and vocabulary while teaching the importance of dedication and perseverance. A delightful read-aloud with an inspiring message and a humorous tone."

—Colleen Shipman, Phoenix Books, Essex Junction, VT



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This Book of Mine: A Picture Book

By Sarah Stewart, David Small (Illus.)

"Dreamy and enchanting for bookworms of any age, *This Book of Mine* is one to be read aloud, to read together, or to read after carefully inhaling the scent of magic that clings to its pages (for those of you who don't know, magic smells like books). This book had me hooked with its lovely images and kept me there with its bookish sentiment. I can't wait to gift this book to my youngest family members or any child in my immediate vicinity, but there will also be a copy just for me on my shelves."

—Kate Towery, Fountain Bookstore, Richmond, VA



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All the Impossible Things

By Lindsay Lackey

"It's impossible not to love this story full of heart and a touch of magical realism. Foster kid Ruby wants nothing more than for her mom to overcome her addiction and act like a real mother. After some time, she learns to trust the Grooves, her foster parents, and grows attached to the giant tortoise in their petting zoo. As Ruby struggles to cross off all the impossible things from a list she and her late grandmother made, she learns the true meaning of family. A beautiful, forceful book. Ruby will bowl you over."

—Jennifer Kraar, City of Asylum Bookstore, Pittsburgh, PA



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Cog

By Greg van Eekhout, Beatrice Blue (Illus.)

"Since its creation date some months before, android Cog, designed for realistic human cognition, has lived happily with Gina in a house in the suburbs. When a misunderstanding sends Cog to a new 'home' at the headquarters of the tech firm that funded its creation, Cog makes friends with a talking car, a trash-bot, a robo-dog, and a sibling. *Cog* quickly gets to the heart of artificial intelligence, morality, and a road-trip adventure. This will engage young readers at once and inspire them to question assumptions about appearances, the law, and family."

—Myles Mickle, Village Square Booksellers, Bellows Falls, VT



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Crumbled! (The Misadventures of Nobbins Swill)

By Lisa Harkrader

"Poor Nobbins Swill feels trapped in the dung pit he farms for the king until the fateful day he happens upon the royal signet ring gleaming through the waste. Thus begins the series of misadventures that lead to his involvement in a missing persons case. Well-crafted and enchantingly illustrated, this new take on oft-encountered characters like the witch, troll, stepmother, and prince will defy expectations and upend any fairy tale tropes. *Crumbled!* is sure to be a hit with young readers seeking a fresh new series."

—Alexa McGuinness, The Bookman, Grand Haven, MI



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Emmy in the Key of Code

By Aimee Lucido

“Resonant verse melds together the world of music and the world of code—two worlds that Emmy is unsure can coexist as she navigates through the ups and downs of starting a new school, finding her passions, and making true friends. This book brought me right back to the emotions of my middle-school years and I’m sure that in the right hands, it will mean the world to someone.”

—Casey Leidig, Green Apple Books on the Park, San Francisco, CA



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Guts

By Raina Telgemeier

“When Raina was in fourth grade, she had a lot on her mind—school, trying not to vomit, and a million other things. Over time, Raina learned how to confront her fears and find ways to stay calm during overwhelming moments. Raina shares her anxieties and fears in this funny and poignant graphic memoir, which is sure to comfort any reader who may be going through the same thing.”

—Jen Steele, Boswell Book Company, Milwaukee, WI



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Lalani of the Distant Sea

By Erin Entrada Kelly

“*Lalani of the Distant Sea* is exquisitely written from many different perspectives, focusing mainly on that of Lalani, a young girl who will do anything to protect her people—her mother and friends most of all. Erin Entrada Kelly speaks through this lovely story, telling us that within sorrow, strength can be found, and in ruin, paradise can be discovered by those willing to search for it.”

—Cassie Molitor, The Book Shoppe, Boone, IA



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Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in Ten Blocks

By Jason Reynolds, Alexander Nabaum (Illus.)

“In *Look Both Ways*, Jason Reynolds shines a light on ordinary walks home and turns them into the extraordinary without the need of magic or faraway lands. Instead, Reynolds shows how worthwhile the people and neighborhoods around us are, especially when you take the time to know what’s happening in people’s lives. The stories in *Look Both Ways* are heartfelt, engaging, funny, thoughtful, and, though sad at times, full of hope.”

—Alison Perine, Hooray for Books!, Alexandria, VA



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The Okay Witch

By Emma Steinkellner

"This is such a fun graphic novel about Moth Hush, who discovers she's a witch when something funny happens to her at school. Her mom is set on her not practicing her witchcraft because of something that happened in the past, so Moth and her friend start researching the history of the town. Complete with a sassy grandmother and a talking cat, this is a graphic novel I will highly recommend to middle grade readers."

—Nichole Cousins, Still North Books & Bar, Hanover, NH



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Pages & Co.: The Bookwanderers

By Anna James, Paola Escobar (Illus.)

"Wow! What a fun book. I grew up in a bookstore, just like Tilly. However, I never found characters appearing outside of the books, nor did I get to jump into the books and be part of the story. Tilly has so much to explore and discover once she learns just what she is capable of, and she has so many questions she wants answered. Who was her father? What happened to her mother? A great adventure for book lovers."

—Debbie Buck, Vintage Books, Vancouver, WA



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Rat Rule 79

By Rivka Galchen, Elena Megalos (Illus.)

"I would be hard-pressed to name a writer more delightful than Rivka Galchen. Her first novel for young readers (young in spirit as well as young in age) is pure joy. Inventive, warm-hearted, and ingenious, *Rat Rule 79* is a classic in the making and a book I will be recommending to readers of all ages."

—Stephen Sparks, Point Reyes Books, Point Reyes Station, CA



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Some Places More Than Others

By Renée Watson

"This book is a tribute to the power of place and memory. How do we keep alive the voices of beloved family members, poets, freedom fighters, and heroes? Amara grapples with the pull of the past as she seeks to discover her family's stories, reconcile the mysterious rift between her father and grandfather, and bear witness to the landmarks of memory and celebration spread throughout Harlem. I loved seeing the neighborhood through Amara's eyes as her understanding of history, culture, family, and herself evolved."

—Rebekah Shoaf, Boogie Down Books, Bronx, NY



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Stargazing

By Jen Wang

“Christine does not really like Moon the first time they meet, but circumstances (parents!) bring them together. With Moon being raised by her mom and Christine in a more traditional setting, the pair are different in so many ways but both are looking for a true friend and the chance to be themselves. But Moon’s quirky behavior might ruin the whole thing, and Christine will have a tough choice to make. Wang’s *The Prince and the Dressmaker* is a story that resonated with everyone who read it, and I think *Stargazing* will do the same!”

—Margaret Brennan Neville, The King’s English Bookshop, Salt Lake City, UT

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Survivors of the Holocaust: True Stories of Six Extraordinary Children

By Kath Shackleton (Ed.), Zane Whittingham (Illus.)

“*Survivors of the Holocaust* is an amazing written and graphic presentation of six children who survived and went on to tell their stories. Each storyteller has a different tale and a different way of explaining their experiences, but the beauty of survival is present throughout every narrative. This book will make you think and make you cry while explaining harrowing events through both a child’s eyes and an adult’s reflection.”

—Kira Wizner, Merritt Bookstore & Toystore, Millbrook, NY

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White Bird: A Wonder Story

By R.J. Palacio

“R.J. Palacio’s *White Bird* is a gripping tale about the incredible power of kindness. This memorable graphic novel introduces readers to one of history’s darkest eras. Fans of the Wonder stories will appreciate the tale of Julien’s grandmother, and all readers will be inspired by *White Bird*’s message of goodness in the face of evil.”

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

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American Royals

By Katharine McGee

“*American Royals* has all the drama, love triangles, and expensive vacations one would expect from a book about royalty. But it is also so much more. In an America where George Washington was crowned king instead of elected president, his descendants still sit on the American throne. Beatrice, first female heir to the throne, has always been the perfect princess. Samantha, her younger, wilder sister, has not. As Beatrice gets closer to the role she has been training for her entire life, she begins to feel stifled by her duties and is then forced to consider an arranged marriage when her father gets ill. As the two princesses’ once-secure lives spin out of control, secrets are revealed and relationships are broken and repaired. It’s a spectacularly engrossing first in a series.”

—Stacey Pyle, Curious Iguana, Frederick, MD

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The Beautiful

By Renée Ahdieh

"A lustrous and seductive answer to a call for more vampire lore, *The Beautiful* excels at creating a moody and romantic atmosphere without sacrificing storytelling or character development. Celine is a heroine for the ages: sharp, calculating, and full of hidden depth. Bastien is similarly fleshed out and certainly swoon-worthy enough to elicit a reader crush. I love Ahdieh's dedication to historical detail and mythological research, and I can't wait for more stories of her New Orleans."

—Sami Thomason, Square Books, Oxford, MS



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The Bone Houses

By Emily Lloyd-Jones

"For fans of *The Bone Witch* or *Uprooted*, *The Bone Houses* is a novel of hard times; dark, encroaching woods; and the girl who is struggling to keep the darkness at bay, all while taking care of her family. When Ryn meets Ellis, a soft-hearted mapmaker and orphan, the two forge an unlikely alliance to seek out uncharted territory. This lush, dark novel has a fae-like whisper of magic throughout its pages, which suck you in from the start. I adored this book."

—Shauna Sinyard, Park Road Books, Charlotte, NC



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Dear Haiti, Love Alaine

By Maika Moulite, Maritza Moulite

"With its charming mixed media epistolary style and compelling story, *Dear Haiti, Love Alaine* is a novel that demands to be read. Once you've met Alaine, you'll need to see how her tale ends up. At once endearing and poignant, this illuminative book is important and I am so happy it exists. I can't wait to see what the Moulite sisters write next!"

—Cristina Russell, Books & Books, Coral Gables, FL



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The Girl the Sea Gave Back

By Adrienne Young

"Feeding off the marvelous and vicious world established in *Sky in the Deep*, Adrienne Young has delivered another powerful and phenomenal book featuring amazing illustrations and personable characters. Inspired by the Vikings and Norse mythology, this is a story of coming together to fight for what you love, even against the odds. The characters are flawed and well-developed; the battles and fights are realistic and emotional. This book proves that old wounds can heal and enemies can put aside their differences. Young has a way with words—they are powerful, raw, and filled with emotion. You will not regret getting sucked back into the wonderful world from *Sky in the Deep!*"

—Anna Rose Carleton, The Well-Read Moose, Coeur d'Alene, ID



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Orpheus Girl

By Brynne Rebele-Henry

“Queer poet Brynne Rebele-Henry’s debut novel is based upon the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice. Raya and Sarah, childhood friends in small-town Texas, discover that their feelings for each other go deeper. Queerness is ultra-taboo in their community, so much so that when the girls are found in a sexual act together, they are sent by their families to a gay conversion camp. Raya’s obsession with myths leads her to view the challenge as if she is Orpheus—she must do whatever it takes to save her love and escape with her from Hell. A whirlwind of courage, love, and sacrifice, *Orpheus Girl* is a triumph.”

—Mary Wahlmeier, Raven Book Store, Lawrence, KS



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Pet

By Akwaeke Emezi

“Akwaeke Emezi’s debut YA novel is nothing short of breathtaking. Emezi’s prose is poetic and perfect, their world-building is seamlessly engaging, and the images and ideas they evoke in this delicious bit of a book are searing. It’s a critical examination of the society we live in today, of the future we hope to create, and of the constant, enduring need to keep our eyes and hearts open so that we can take care of the most vulnerable among us. I can’t wait to see what Emezi writes next.”

—Abby Rauscher, Books Are Magic, Brooklyn, NY



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A Treason of Thorns

By Laura E. Weymouth

“Imagine being the caretaker of a powerful and magical house and its grounds, a house with the power to control the wind and rain and bring prosperity to the surrounding countryside. Imagine it all goes wrong and everything and everyone suffers because of it. Would you risk your life to save your house and restore the lands? Moody and atmospheric, with beautifully descriptive images, this is fantasy and magic at its best.”

—Jane Simons, The Dog Eared Book, Palmyra, NY



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