

Ya' gotta read
this!



Book Talks for Library Classes



The Book Scavenger, by Jennifer Chambliss Bertman (F Ber)

4th – 6th Grades

Don't you love it when you start reading the first few pages of a book and immediately become drawn into the story? The Book Scavenger was the first novel I've read in quite a while (I'm sorry to say) that I started reading and wanted to keep reading late into the night, though my eyes were drooping shut.

Twelve year-old Emily is an avid fan of the online & real-world mashup game *Book Scavenger*. When Garrison Griswold, the beloved publisher and designer of the game, is mugged and left in a coma in a San Francisco BART station, no one suspects the crime to be related to Griswold's imminent announcement of his fabulous new Book Scavenger treasure hunt. But then Emily and her new friend, James, find a gilt-edged copy of Edgar Allen Poe's story "The Gold Bug", Emily is convinced the unusual book must be the first clue in Griswold's new game.

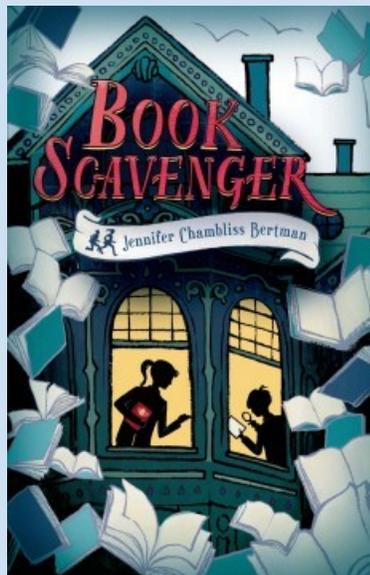
The Book Scavenger is full of puzzles, mysteries and suspense. It also happens to be a real game, developed by the author. Players can hide books in the real world and post clues online for others to find. You can register to be a book scavenger just like Emily and hide and hunt for book treasure all over the country.

The best thing about The Book Scavenger is that it is now a trilogy! The Unbreakable Code and The Alcatraz Escape are the next two books in the trilogy.

For puzzle fans and treasure hunters, I highly recommend The Book Scavenger.

Mrs. McGoldrick, SRS Librarian

September 2018



When My Sister Started Kissing, by Helen Frost (F Fro)
6th – 8th Grades

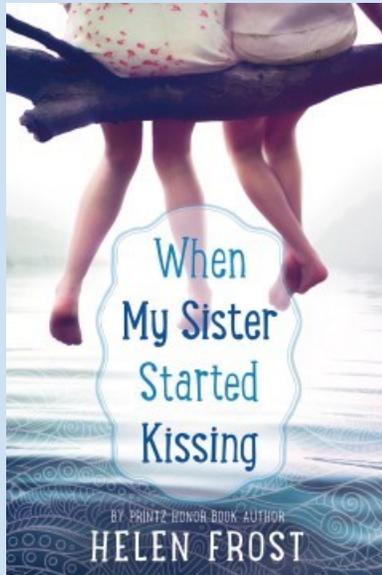
Helen Frost has become one of my favorites. Her novels, including Diamond Willow and Hidden, are ing has particular poetic forms which Frost author uses bold type face to hide messages for each character.

The title of the book creates interest and sweet story of two sisters who have a very close relationship, but who are on the brink of big changes in their lives and in their relationship. This is the summer their widowed father brings his new wife with them to the family cabin by the lake. This is the summer their young stepmother is expecting a baby, their new half-brother. This is the summer they notice that Dad has packed away all of their mother's beloved possessions that adorned the lake cabin and Pam's things are now on the shelves and in the kitchen. And this is the summer that Abigail, who now wants to change her name to Abbi, starts caring about clothes and lip-gloss and...boys. Claire's world feels like it's falling apart around her. Why does everything have to change? Why can't they go back to just being Dad and Abigail and Claire?

Sometimes we ask why our own lives have to change. Why we can't just be like we were before? Claire and Abigail navigate the changes in their lives and remind us that, with love and loyalty, changes can be bright new beginnings.

Mrs. McGoldrick, SRS Librarian

September 2018



Frost (F Fro)

ite writers in the las several years. Her novels, in-written in verse and When My Sister Started Kissing uses for each narrator of the story. I love how the sages within her text, giving us a deeper view into

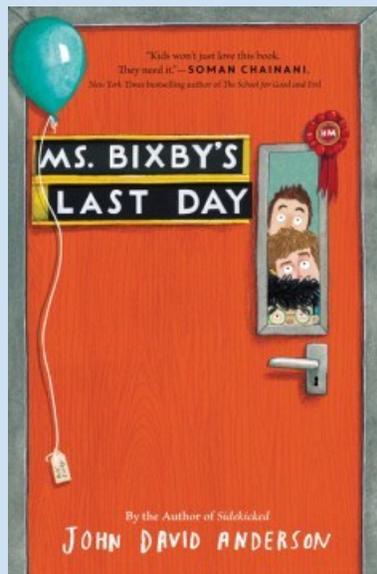
sort of raises eyebrows, I know, but it is the bitter-close relationship, but who are on the brink of big ships. This is a summer story. And this is the summer with them to the family cabin by the lake.

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Ms. Bixby's Last Day, by John Anderson (F And)
4th – 8th Grades

Topher, Steve and Brand are on a mission.

Ms. Bixby was their absolutely most favorite teacher...ever. They knew they missed her after she left school to start her cancer treatments. But now they might miss her FOREVER. When the three friends find out that Ms. Bixby will be moved from the local hospital to a distant center for experimental treatments earlier than expected, their plans to give her the best anything and everything to make her day perfect last day ever shift into high gear. They will risk perfect. From cutting class to making a possibly illegal purchase, to an urban bus ride fraught with danger and a mugging, the boys show perfect picnic turn into a harrowing adventure, relationships.



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Warning: Ms. Bixby's Last Day will cause a sudden hankering for cheesecake AND require keeping a box of tissues handy.

Mrs. McGoldrick, SRS Librarian

September 2018

Ghost Boys, by Jewell Parker Rhodes (F Rho)

6th – 8th Grades

Only.

It was only a toy.

He was only playing.

Jerome was only 12 years-old.

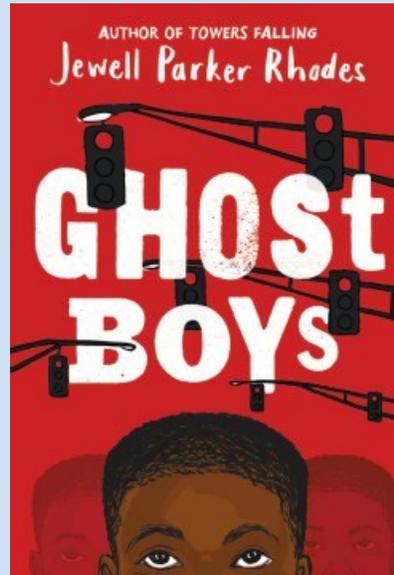
If only.

If only he'd stayed inside like usual to do his homework.

If only he hadn't borrowed Carlos' toy.

If only Jerome had lived in a safe neighborhood.

If only he'd been...white?



In Ghost Boys, Jerome is the primary ghost. He tells the story of how he was shot in the back by a white police officer who was patrolling the neighborhood, how the officer saw his toy gun and immediately assumed that the person holding it was much bigger and older than a 12 year-old kid, somehow saw him as a threat, a criminal, armed and on the run. Jerome recounts the events leading up to the shooting and the events afterwards, as a ghost, watching his grieving family and befriendng the daughter of the white officer because, inexplicably, SHE can SEE him and talk to him!

The author, Jewell Parker Rhodes, wrote this novel as a witness to all who've died violently because of racism or racial bias. One of the ghost boys Jerome meets after his own death is Emmett Till. Emmett Till's death is a famous lynching case from the 1950's. Emmett, a 14 year-old from Chicago, was visiting his cousins in rural Mississippi when he was accused of whistling at a white woman and subsequently violently murdered by white vigilantes. The case was recently re-opened and the white woman in the case, now 82 years-old, admits that the boy never did anything to merit his violent end.

Ghost Boys is highly relevant to our conversations about race today. It is also a riveting story. And you will want to keep the tissues handy. I read it on the plane and had to keep sniffing into those thin little napkins you get with your pretzels and soft drink.

Two other books you may want to pair with Ghost Boys, Towers Falling (F Rho), about 9/11, also by Rhodes, and Mississippi Trial, 1955, by Chris Crow (F Cro) and Getting Away With Murder, also by Crow, about the lynching of 14 year-old Emmett Till.

Ghost Boys – a timely novel, a great read and a clarion call for justice and peace.

Book Talk – Long Way Down, by Jason Reynolds

7th & 8th Grades only

Gritty.

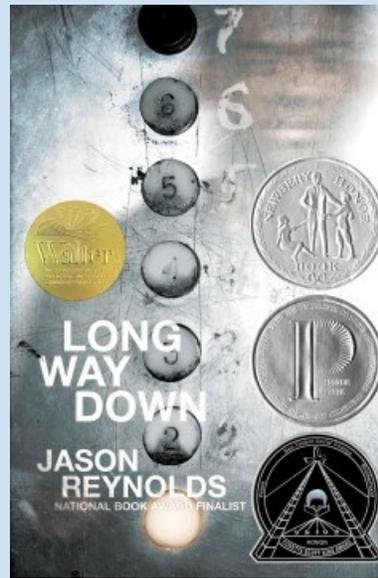
Graphic.

Tough.

Terse.

Jason Reynold’s novel in

Verse.



I was impressed to read that Jason Reynolds first wrote Long Way Down as a narrative, but his editor suggested that he re-write it in verse. The verses are tightly written and evoke so much story and description despite their spare format.

Long Way Down is the story of Will, who has just lost his older brother to gun violence. We don’t really know in which city the story takes place, but the reader knows the setting is urban and that Will lives in a tall apartment building. I keep picturing Southside Chicago—maybe because there always seem to be stories about shootings in Southside Chicago.

Will has found his brother’s gun and, in the middle of the night, has crept out of the apartment, away from the sounds of his mother’s sobs, to avenge his brother’s murder. He’s been taught THE RULES, by his brother, his brother from his father, his father from his brother, his brother from his father...THE RULES as passed down through generations of men: Don’t cry, Don’t tell, Take revenge. An eye for an eye, a life for a life. But his journey to the ground floor of his apartment building becomes a weird reunion of ghosts, a cable-car ride accompanied by specters from Will’s past.

Admittedly, this book will be in the library for 7th and 8th graders only. There is “language” embedded in the verses and the subject is rough. But it’s a subject of which I’m sure you are aware, in this day and age of school shootings and gun violence. Every time we read a story of a young person dying from gun violence, we ask ourselves, how we can stop this? Violence begets violence. Is that what Will’s ghosts are trying to tell him? See what you think.

It’s not a long read, but it will take more than an elevator ride. Long Way Down, by Jason Reynolds.

Mrs. McGoldrick, August 2018