

## ***READ-ALOUDS FOR MIDDLE GRADES***

### SHELF LOCATION

JF BALLIETT

### AUTHOR & TITLE INFORMATION

Balliet, Blue. *Chasing Vermeer*. Two classmates solve the mystery of a missing painting. Puzzles, codes, letters, number and wordplay, a bit of danger, a vivid sense of place, and a wealth of quirky characters enrich this fast-paced story. (Age 9 & up)

JF BARRY

Barry, Dave and Pearson, Ridley. *Peter and the Starcatchers*. This Peter Pan prequel hooks readers on the first page. Those curious about how Captain Hook lost his hand, why Peter never ages and can fly, and how a band of boys came to live in Never Land, will be sated by the magic-dusted plot. (Ages 10 & up)

JF CARTER

Carter, Zizou. *Lion Boy*. A young boy who speaks the language of cats chases across Europe in the company of lions, searching for his kidnapped parents. An exciting fantasy adventure written by a mother-daughter team. (Ages 9 & up)

JF CHOLDENKO

Choldenko, Gennifer. *Al Capone Does My Shirts*. This is a funny and clever novel about a boy named Matthew (Moose) Flanagan who is living on Alcatraz Island with his family; also a coming-of-age tale about a boy dealing with his autistic sister. (Ages 10 & up)

JF COLLINS

Collins, Suzanne. *Gregor the Overlander*. When Gregor falls through a grate in the laundry room of his apartment building, he hurtles into the dark Underland, where spiders, rats, cockroaches coexist uneasily with humans. This is an engrossing adventure for fantasy fans. (Ages 8 & up)

JF CREECH

Creech, Sharon. *Ruby Holler*. Thirteen-year-old fraternal twins Dallas and Florida have grown up in a terrible orphanage but their lives change forever when an eccentric but sweet older couple invites them each on an adventure, beginning in an almost magical place called Ruby Holler. (Age 8 & up)

JF CUSHMAN

Cushman, Karen. *Rodzina*. Rodzina is a 12-year-old Polish orphan who travels across the U.S. in 1881 on an orphan train. Readers will enjoy this well-written

novel about a strong heroine in terrible circumstances, who finds a way to not just survive but to create a life with real possibilities. (Age 10 & up)

JF DICAMILLO

DiCamillo, Kate. *Tale of Desperaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread*. The adventures of Desperaux Tilling, a small mouse of unusual talents, the princess that he loves, the servant girl who longs to be a princess, and a devious rat determined to bring them all to ruin. (2004 Newbery Winner; age 8 & up)

JF FUNKE

Funke, Cornelia. *Inkheart*. Twelve-year-old Meggie learns that her father, who repairs and binds books for a living, can "read" fictional characters to life when one of those characters abducts them and tries to force him into service. (Ages 10 & up)

JF FUNKE

Funke, Cornelia. *Dragon Rider*. When their peaceful valley is threatened with danger, Firedrake, a silver-skinned dragon, and his sidekick, Sorrel, set off to find the mythical Rim of Heaven -- the only place in the world where dragons can be safe forever. (Ages 8 & up)

JF HANNINGAN

Hannigan, Katherine. *Ida B. : And Her Plans to Maximize Fun, Avoid Disaster, and (Possibly) Save the World*. Fourth-grader Ida B. spends happy hours being home-schooled and playing in her family's apple orchard, until her parents must sell part of the orchard and send her to school. "This book begs to be read aloud." (Ages 9 & up)

JF HARLOW

Harlow, Joan Hiatt. *Thunder From the Sea*. A great book for dog lovers set in Newfoundland in 1929. Tom rescues a dog he finds out at sea and names it Thunder, but he must contend with a neighboring boy who wants the dog for himself.

JF HORVATH

Horvath, Polly. *The Pepins and Their Problems*. Another fun read-aloud by Horvath, the reader is invited to help solve the Pepin family's unusual problems, which include having a cow that creates lemonade rather than milk and other comic predicaments. (Ages 8 & up)

- JF MORPURGO  
Morpurgo, Michael. *Kensuke's Kingdom*. This book about 12-year-old Michael and his dog Stella, who are shipwrecked on an island, reads very fast, will keep the reader glued to every page. (Ages 8 & up)
- JF PECK  
Peck, Richard. *A Long Way from Chicago*. A boy recounts his annual summer trips to rural Illinois with his sister during the Great Depression to visit their larger-than-life grandmother. (Age 10 & up)
- JF RODDA  
Rodda, Emily. *Rowan of Rin*. Because only he can read the magical map, timid Rowan joins six other villagers to climb a mountain and try to restore their water supply, as fears of a dragon and other horrors threaten to drive them back. First in a series. (Age 7 & up)
- JF WEEKS  
Weeks, Sarah. *So B It*. After spending her life with her mentally retarded mother and agoraphobic neighbor, twelve-year-old Heidi sets out from Reno, Nevada, to New York to find out who she is. (Ages 9 & up)
- J BIOGRAPHY  
PAULSEN  
Paulsen, Gary. *How Angel Peterson Got His Name*. This quick read features nostalgic true stories about Paulsen at the age of thirteen, as he and his friends undertake a series of ill-advised stunts, insisting that they are driven by a "thirst for scientific knowledge." A hilarious read-aloud. (Age 10 & up)
- YA DEFELICE  
DeFelice, Cynthia. *Under the Same Sky*. While trying to earn money for a motor bike, 14-year-old Joe Pederson becomes involved with the Mexicans who work on his family's farm and develops a better relationship with his father. (Age 12 & up)
- YA F DUPRAU  
Duprau, Jeanne. *City of Ember*. A fantastic underground world is fully realized in this cliffhanging, heart-pumping sci-fi fantasy that even people who don't like sci-fi fantasy will enjoy. In the year 241, twelve-year-old Lina trades jobs on Assignment Day to be a Messenger to run to new places in her decaying but beloved city, perhaps even to glimpse Unknown Regions. (Age 11 & up)

YA F TOLAN

Tolan, Stephanie. *Surviving the Applewhites*. A delinquent boy is sent to a home school academy of an eccentric family of artists. This book will pique the interest of even the most reluctant reader! (Ages 10 & up)

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LEKUTON

Lekuton, Joseph. *Facing the Lion: Growing Up Masai on the African Savanna*. This autobiography sketches the childhood of Lekuton, who grew up in northern Kenya and now teaches in the United States. It's an intriguing portrait of a remarkable life and a culture little known to most American readers. (Age 12 & up)

The above titles were recommended by members of PUBYAC – a group of public library youth and children's services librarians who meet and discuss through the internet.

Check out [www.planetesme.com](http://www.planetesme.com) for more book suggestions & read aloud tips.