

## Books

## A YEAR OF BOOKS

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SIBLING SLEUTHS. SUPERPOWER WOES. PORTA-POTTY DISASTERS. YOU'LL FIND ALL THAT, PLUS LOTS MORE, IN THIS MONTH-BY-MONTH READING LIST FOR 2024. IT'S KIND OF LIKE AN ASSIGNED BOOK LIST, EXCEPT THESE ARE 12 BOOKS YOU'LL ACTUALLY WANT TO READ. JUST A WORD OF WARNING: JANUARY'S ALMOST OVER. SO START NOW!

## JANUARY

START THE YEAR OFF WITH HOPE

**A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING**  
By Dan Santat

You have four days left in January to squeeze a book in — and you'll want to read this one in one sitting. This graphic memoir tells the story of a three-week school trip that the author-illustrator took with his class-mates to Europe the summer before ninth grade. Dan starts off insecure and awkward, just hoping to survive the ordeal. But it becomes a trip of epic firsts — like his first trip to a dance club and his first kiss. Best of all, he begins to find his superpower as an artist. It's mind-blowing to see how much freedom kids got in 1989! And this book will give you hope about new beginnings.

## FEBRUARY

GET GUSHY

**COURTESY OF CUPID**  
By Nashae Jones

"All my classmates have been infected with the love parasite," Erin Johnson grumbles at the start of this irresistible rom-com. Erin is the overachieving eighth-grade narrator (she has already decided she's going to go to Howard University, study biology, cure colon cancer and win a Nobel Prize). And as she sees it, gushy romantic stuff is a big waste of time. Then, on her 13th birthday, she learns that she's (get ready for it) . . . the daughter of Cupid, the god of love. What's more, she now possesses magical powers to make people fall in love. Sounds ridiculous, but this book is a real heart-melter.

## MARCH

FIND YOUR INNER ODDBALL

**LOOKING UP**  
By Stephan Pastis

The only people who won't like this book are those who've never, ever felt like a secret weirdo. This little illustrated novel is about a lonely, poofy-haired kid named Saint, who has a weakness for medieval-knight figurines, piñatas and Rutherford B. Hayes (that's her pet turtle). Most of all, she loves her quirky, run-down town, which is being ruined by real estate developers and obnoxious newcomers. As Saint launches loony schemes to save her community, she learns some surprising secrets along the way. And it's all packaged with the same funny black-and-white illustration style as the "Timmy Failure" books, which the author also wrote.

## APRIL

LAUGH. CRINGE. LAUGH.

**THE YEAR MY LIFE WENT DOWN THE TOILET**  
by Jake Maia Arlow

Ever since an epically embarrassing incident involving a porta-potty during gym class, seventh grade has become a total nightmare for Al. The reason: She has been diagnosed with Crohn's disease. Sure, everybody poops — but there's something gurgling inside Al's digestive tract that forces her to run (like, really run) to the girl's bathroom multiple times a day. Complicating matters, she is also realizing she has crushes on girls. Hold on to your underwear and get ready for the most eye-opening book you've read in a long time.

## MAY

TRAVEL BACK IN TIME

**AMIL AND THE AFTER**  
By Veera Hiranandani

This historical novel is the sequel to the Newbery Award winner "The Night Diary." But you don't have to have read that book to love this one, which transports you to Bombay in 1948, just after India was split into two different countries. Twelve-year-old Amil and his family are trying to get used to their new life after fleeing their home during the fighting. Now so much is uncertain. You'll want to be friends with Amil, who struggles with words and numbers but loves to draw. Plus, the descriptions of crispy onion pakoras and savory lamb kebabs will make your mouth water.

## JUNE

EMBRACE YOUR STAYCATION

**MAGNOLIA WU UNFOLDS IT ALL**  
By Chanel Miller

For a lot of kids, summer means camp, a week at the beach or a road trip. But what if you're stuck at your parents' boring laundromat? Magnolia Wu, a New York City 10-year-old, turns a potentially dreary situation into the most exciting summer yet when she gets the idea to be an "NYC sock detective." What does that mean, exactly? Zipping all around the city with a new best friend, exploring parks, delis, plant stores and subways to find the rightful owner of each lost sock left behind at the laundromat. This one will make you excited for summer — no matter where you're spending it. (In bookstores Apr. 23.)

## JULY

APPRECIATE YOUR LITTLE BRO

**WHEN SEA BECOMES SKY**  
By Gillian McDunn

Eleven-year-old Bex and her 9-year-old brother Davey live on a tiny island off the Carolinas, where they love roaming the wild salt marshes in Bex's rowboat. But lately things are feeling off: There has been a bad drought, there's talk of a new town bridge (which will threaten their dad's job as a ferry captain) and for some reason, quiet Davey has almost entirely stopped speaking. When the two discover a statue hidden under the water, they decide to solve its mystery, which might in turn save their marsh. You'll be sucked into this tender and moving story about siblings — and it might even make you want to be nicer to your sister or brother.

## AUGUST

VISIT THE SCARIEST SCHOOL EVER

**THE SCHOOL FOR INVISIBLE BOYS**  
By Shaun David Hutchinson

How awesome would it be if you could make yourself invisible whenever you wanted? Especially if your former best friend and his goonish pals were trying to beat you up every chance they get? That's the situation Hector, a sixth grader, finds himself in at his strict new school. But before too long, he realizes this superpower is more like a curse — one involving a hideous tentacled monster called a gelim that preys on fear. Even if you're dreading going back to school, you'll be glad you don't go to this one. (In bookstores Feb. 6.)

## SEPTEMBER

HAVE A LOOPY ADVENTURE

**THE SWIFTS: A GALLERY OF ROGUES**  
By Beth Lincoln

If you loved "The Swifts: A Dictionary of Scoundrels" — the twisty-mystery-adventure book featuring a word-loving family and their booby-trapped mansion — get ready for the sequel, which will be published this summer. This time around, Shenanigan (the mischief-making main character of the first book), her big sister (budding scientist Phenomena) and their uncle Maelstrom are off to France to investigate a strange series of art-museum heists. Expect more mysteries, murders and kooky characters. (In bookstores Aug. 20.)

## OCTOBER

COUNT DOWN TO HALLOWEEN

**FINCH HOUSE**  
By Ciera Burch

Ready for a creepy-but-not-too-scary horror story with a "Stranger Things" twist? An 11-year-old girl named Micah has always wondered about the falling-apart old Victorian house in her neighborhood that her grandfather has warned her is definitely off limits. It's no spoiler to tell you that (duh) she doesn't listen! First, her grandfather mysteriously vanishes. Then, after the friendly kid who just moved in invites her inside, she realizes that she . . . can't leave. Read it, then try not to feel too paranoid when you go trick-or-treating.

## NOVEMBER

GET INSPIRED TO TAKE A STAND

**RAISE YOUR VOICE**  
By Jeffrey Kluger

Elections are exciting, but they can also make you feel a little powerless when you're too young to vote. This book will remind you that there are other ways to make political change. It recounts 12 stories of resistance movements in American history, including the battles for women's and L.G.B.T. rights, racial equality and the environment. Not all of them were successful. But it's cool to see what can happen when regular folks (and even kids) get organized to fight.

## DECEMBER

COZY UP WITH A PAGE-TURNER

**SNOWGLOBE**  
By Soyoung Park

This wintry thriller from South Korea was a hit when it was published there a few years ago. Now, English-language readers can get in on the apocalyptic action. The book is set in a future of brutally freezing temperatures, where only the elite citizens of Snowglobe, a climate-controlled city, enjoy any warmth. These lucky ones also star in reality-TV-style shows that are the sole entertainment offered to the masses. When a teenager on the outside, Chobahm, is tapped to take the place of a top star (who happens to look just like her), she begins to uncover sinister secrets. (In bookstores Feb. 27.)