

Wish List for Grades 4-5

All reviews from Junior Library Guild and School Library Journal.



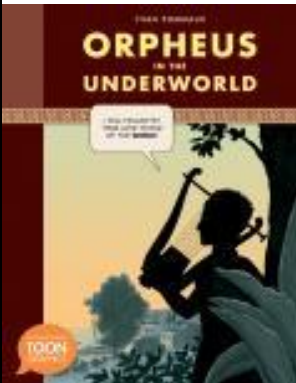
Jessie Elliot Is a Big Chicken

by Elise Gravel

About to start Hochelaga High, nerd extraordinaire Jessie plans to spend her “last summer as a child” with Julie, her hilarious best friend. But that’s not how things turn out. Full-color illustrations.

Orpheus in the Underworld

by Yvan Pommaux



School Library Journal Review:

When his wife dies, Orpheus, a musician who can enthrall anyone and anything, enters the Underworld to ask for her return. He succeeds, only to be defeated by his own doubt. This is a simplified graphic novel with at most a few scenes per page, short dialogue bubbles, and some sound effects to supplement the narrated text. Those new to the format will have no problems navigating it. Soft lines and misty colors create an atmosphere of lore. Back matter includes playing card—style boxes features additional information about some of the main characters; an illustrated index organizes all characters by name and includes brief biographies of each.



The Sign of the Cat

by Lynne Jonell

Why does Duncan’s mom forbid him to earn good grades or win a fencing match? A secret talent—the ability to speak cat—leads him on an epic journey to discover his true identity. Black-and-white illustrations.

Google Glass and Robotics Innovator Sebastian Thrun

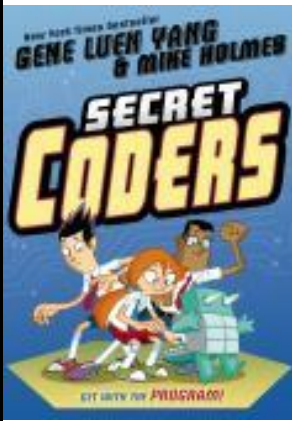
by Marne Ventura



According to innovator Sebastian Thrun, “Robots are beginning to make an impact on more than industry and science. They’re beginning to make an impact on our everyday lives.” Thrun has been at the forefront of some exciting technological developments, including Google’s self-driving car and Google Glass. Thrun’s early years and education in Germany and the U.S. are described, from creating his own video game at twelve years old to studying artificial intelligence and computer science as a university and graduate student. His research projects are discussed in accessible language, and occasional “Tech Talk” boxes include quotes from Thrun about his inspirations. Readers will be fascinated by details such as the Nursebot that can open a refrigerator door and use a microwave, and the self-driving car’s ability to negotiate even the curviest San Francisco street.

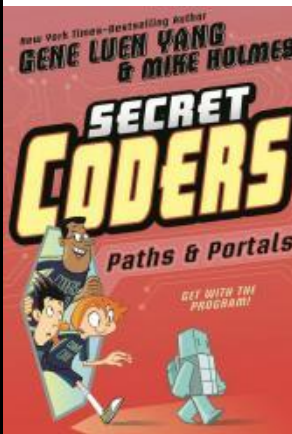
Secret Coders

by Gene Luen Yang



School Library Journal Review:

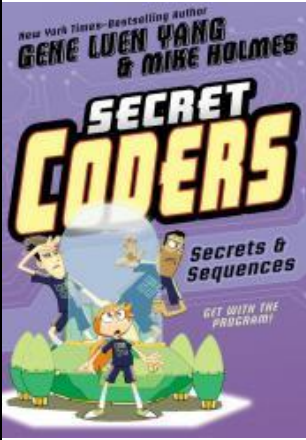
A mysterious school, transition to mastery, and an exciting new language run through this excellent new graphic novel. But it’s not magic wands that dictate the new characters’ skills—it’s coding. Hopper, an enthusiastic 12-year-old girl (named after programmer Grace Hopper), has just started school at the creepy Stately Academy. After getting in a fight that involves “lung pudding” (a loogie!) with Eni (based on NBA star Chris Bosh), Hopper and Eni become friends while unraveling the secrets of the school. Robotic birds, family troubles, and sinister, child-hating school administrators lead to a story both emotionally rich and rife with learning opportunities.



Paths & Portals: Secret Coders

by Gene Luen Yang

In the first book, Hopper and Eni discovered a robot and programmed him to do mischief. Now they’re trapped. Will their new programming skills help them escape?



Secrets & Sequences: Secret Coders

by Gene Luen Yang

The coders are back in the third volume of this exciting computer-programming series with Principal Dean demanding they turn over their most powerful robot. Two-color illustrations.

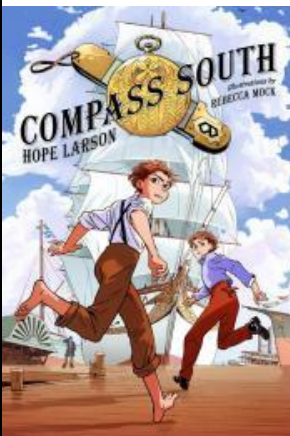
The Only Game

by Mike Lupica

School Library Journal Review:



On the official opening day of baseball in his small town, Jack Callahan, superlative seventh grade shortstop and arguably the best pitcher in town, surprisingly quits at the end of an outstanding first practice. Jack and his best friend Gus had expected to be strong contenders in the Atlantic League with aspirations of playing in the Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA. Believing that an earlier tragedy involving his older brother Brad was all his fault, Jack takes a break from the only game he ever loved. This hiatus is short-lived, and he soon finds himself back at the diamond coaching girls softball. Slowly, he makes it back to his own team. Loyalty, friendship, courage, and teamwork are key components in the novel. Jack and his teammates have a falling out after Jack's decision to quit the team before the season even starts. This leads to new friendships with Cassie, a strong female character, and Teddy, an overweight, friendly guy whom Jack protects from bullying. Various acts of courage are displayed by Cassie, Teddy, and Jack. Lupica lays the foundation for a great sports series where friendship carries the characters through tribulations. Middle-grade readers will easily identify with the four friends. Although the story is sports related, this is more than a baseball book and will appeal to a wide variety of readers. A must-buy.



Compass South: Four Points #1

by Hope Larson

School Library Journal Review:

In this fast-paced, high-energy tale, 12-year-old twins Alex and Cleo Dodge find adventure—and trouble—as they search for their father and, at times, each other. The siblings join the Black Hook Gang, but Alex is soon arrested for stealing. The twins leave town, yet there's still more excitement to come. Has the key to finding a lost pirate treasure been in their possession all along?

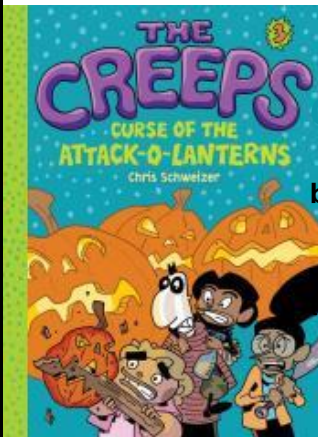


Mighty Jack

by Ben Hatke

School Library Journal Review:

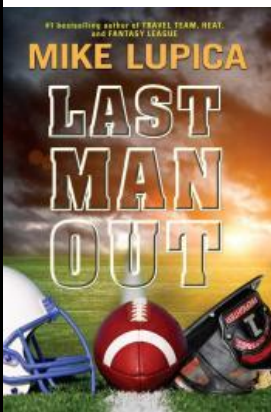
Jack is the oldest child of a divorced single mom doing her best to keep the family fed. On a trip to the flea market, Jack's sister, Maddy, who is autistic and never speaks, convinces Jack to swap the family car for a packet of seeds. Adventure soon follows, and Jack finds himself planting a garden that produces a variety of strange and bizarre creatures, meeting the neighbor girl, dealing with his sister, and even encountering a dragon.



Curse of the Attack-o-Lanterns: The Creeps: Book 3

by Chris Schweizer

Jack-o-lanterns come to life and attack everyone within reach. In order to save their town, the Creeps must team up with Old Lady Bitterwood, a witch. Full-color illustrations.



Last Man Out

by Mike Lupica

When the Brighton Bears suit up on game day, 12-year-old Tommy Gallagher is the toughest kid on the football field. And the bravest. After all, his father Patrick is a Boston firefighter--one of Boston's bravest. Tommy's dad taught him everything he knows about football--and life. Yet even Tommy isn't strong enough for what happens when the sirens ring and, for the first time, they're racing *away* from the fire. "First man in; last man out" had always been his dad's motto . . . yet he never said anything about leaving in an ambulance. Now Tommy's biggest battle has nothing to do with a football field.



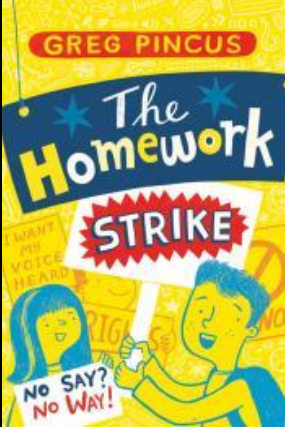
Fish Girl

by Donna Jo Napoli

In this graphic novel, Fish Girl, a young mermaid in a boardwalk aquarium encounters an ordinary girl. Their growing friendship inspires Fish Girl's longing for freedom and independence. Full-color illustrations.

The Homework Strike

by Greg Pincus

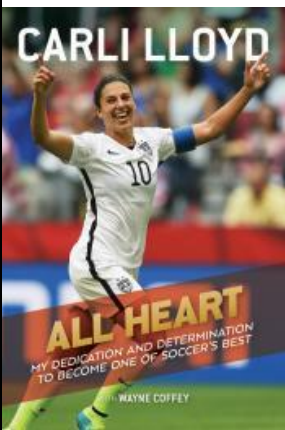


Gregory K. has too much homework.

Middle school is hard work, and Gregory tries to be a good student. He participates in class, he studies for his tests -- he and his friends even help each other with their assignments. But no matter what he does, there's never enough time to finish all his homework. It just isn't fair.

So Gregory goes on a total, complete homework strike. No worksheets, no essays, no projects. His friends think he's crazy. His parents are worried about his grades. And his principal just wants him to stop making trouble. Can Gregory rally his fellow students, make his voice heard, and still pass seventh grade?

Find out in this book for anyone who thinks school is stressful, gets headaches from homework, or just wants to be heard.



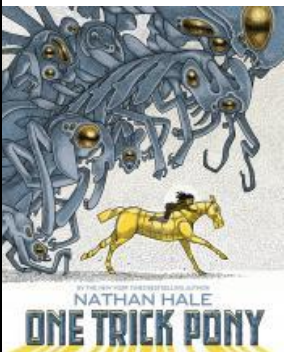
All Heart: My Dedication and Determination to Become One of Soccer's Best

by Carli Lloyd, Wayne Coffey

This is the inspiring story of Carli Lloyd's journey to the top of the soccer world—an honest, action-packed account that takes readers inside the mind of a hardworking athlete.

One Trick Pony

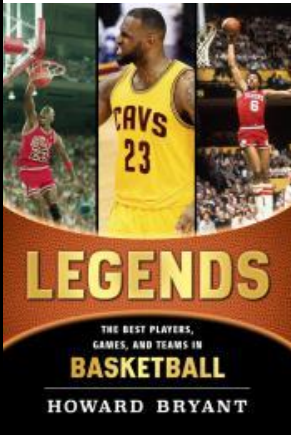
by Nathan Hale



In this future-set graphic novel, Earth has been invaded by a hostile alien species. Drones known as “pipers” ruthlessly harvest technology, metals, and other resources, decimating civilization and forcing most humans to band together in marauding clans for survival. Strata and her family are part of the Caravan, “a moving town” whose inhabitants (including sentient robots) are committed to preserving “computers and data—possibly all that’s left of thousands of years of human culture.” The story centers on Strata and her fierce, unwavering devotion to a robot horse she excavates on a salvage expedition with her brother and a friend. Her discovery sets off a terrifying chain of events that ultimately threatens not only Strata and horse Kleidi but also Strata’s family, the Caravan’s electronic cultural relics, and humanity’s very existence.

Legends: The Best Players, Games, and Teams in Basketball

by Howard Bryant



This latest from ESPN and former Washington Post journalist Bryant alternates among overviews of each decade since the 1960s, profiles of particular players or accounts of high-profile matchups, and themed “Top 10” lists. Along the way, readers learn about the founding of the American Basketball Association and its merging with the National Basketball Association in 1976, as well as the changes to the game in the face of public image problems in the early 1980s, and many long-running rivalries, especially those between the Boston Celtics and the L.A. Lakers. A huge number of great names are highlighted, including Bill Russell of the Celtics, the Detroit Pistons’ Isiah Thomas, and Philadelphia’s Allen Iverson. An entire chapter is dedicated to the storied career of Michael Jordan, including his six national championships, an Olympic gold medal with the 1992 “Dream Team,” and two years playing Minor League Baseball after the shooting death of his father. Bryant’s history continues through LeBron James’s triumphant championship with the Cleveland Cavaliers.