



**Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award
2022-2023 Booktalk Scripts
Grades 3-6**



***Real* by Carol Cujec and Peyton Goddard**

This book is about a girl named Charity who has autism. Charity is unable to speak and does not have good control of her body. This school year, Charity will be attending public school and is looking for a chance to learn and be taken seriously. Will she find kindness and understanding? Maybe even a friend? Find out by reading this amazing story inspired by Peyton Goddard, the co-author. Fantastic!!!

Author Website: <https://www.carolcujec.com>

Author Book Talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7165ORgqbzk>

***The Great Pet Heist* by Emily Ecton, illustrated by David Mottram**

Do you like animals and laughing? Then you will love *The Great Pet Heist*! A group of silly pets are left to fend for themselves when their owner, Mrs. Food, is rushed to the hospital. Walt (the cat), Butterbean (the dog), and Oscar (the bird), along with Marco and Polo (the rodents), devise a plan to rob a nearby apartment to pay the bills. Little do they know the apartment is rented by a thief and they are in for an adventure along with the neighbor girl, who seems sad and lonely. Find out if the pets get sent to the shelter or remain in their apartment. This book will keep you laughing until the end!

Author Website: <https://emilyecton.com>

Book Talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S92mAWRo2Po>

***Unsettled* by Reem Faruqi**

Nurah is a young girl from Pakistan who has immigrated with her family to the United States because of her father's job and for a better life. Nurah is trying to fit in at school, but everything is so different here and she is having a hard time making friends. She is not as popular as her brother Owais who is one of the top swimmers for school. The pool is the one place that Nurah feels comfortable. As Nurah starts to gain confidence and becomes a good swimmer, she is confronted with a situation in which she must stand up to bullies. Can Nurah find the courage to do the right thing?

Author Website: <https://reemfaruqi.com/>

Blog Interview: <https://diversebooks.org/qa-with-reem-faruqi-unsettled/>

***Take Back the Block* by Chrystal D. Giles**

Wes' neighborhood is being threatened when a builder wants to buy up all the houses to redevelop the area. The only problem is that Wes and his neighbors won't be able to afford to live there anymore. This is when Wes learns about something called gentrification and how wrong it is, but he might be able to help change this. The only problem is can he get the old neighborhood together long enough without arguing to agree to fight for what is right? Read to find out if Wes can save his community before the developers split them all up for good.

Author Website: <https://www.chrystaldgiles.com/>

Book Talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX8uPjOD8RU>

Author Interview: <http://mrschureads.blogspot.com/2021/03/take-back-block-by-chrystal-d-giles.html>

Author Reads the First Chapter: <https://btb.titlewave.com/detail/video/6214970141001/chrystal-d.-giles-first-chapter-friday>

***Houdini and Me* by Dan Gutman**

Harry Mancini is fascinated by the life of the famous escape artist Harry Houdini and has even learned a few magic tricks himself. Maybe he's interested in Houdini because he and his mom are living in Houdini's former house in New York City. Imagine eleven-year-old Harry's surprise when the long-deceased Houdini reaches out in a text from beyond the grave? Is this another one of Houdini's hoaxes? Should young Harry take up the offer of learning all of Houdini's tricks and the danger of reaching out to the beyond?

Author Website: <https://dangutman.com/>

Dan Gutman Talks About *Houdini and Me*: <https://www.ericrohmann.com/>

The Real Harry Houdini: https://www.ducksters.com/biography/entertainers/harry_houdini.php

Beginner Magic Tricks: <https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/magic-tricks-for-beginners-and-kids-2267083>

***The Lion of Mars* by The Lion of Mars**

Bell doesn't know any other life except the Mars colony. The adults are in charge and have forbidden the kids to go outside or have contact with any other colonies from Earth. The kids decide to go on an adventure and a small disaster occurs. Later when all the adults fall sick, the kids must brave the unknown and try to find the other colonies for help. Enjoy this great sci-fi novel by award winning author Jennifer Holm!

Author Website: <https://www.jenniferholm.com/>

Book Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3YLBzvvhOI

***Stella* by McCall Hoyle**

Told from a dog's perspective, this is a story about overcoming trauma and loss. Stella is a beagle who has been trained to sniff out dangerous chemicals. However, one day Stella misses the scent of an explosive with life-changing results. Stella must retire after her anxiety cripples her ability to do her job. When a young girl, Cloe, wants to help Stella learn how to cope with her anxiety, Stella knows this may be her last chance to be loved again. As Stella learns how to trust again, she also discovers that she is the only one who can smell the strange chemical scent that emits from Cloe's body prior to her having a seizure. Can Stella overcome her anxiety and put her training to good use again? You will have to read the book to find out.

Author Website: <https://mccallhoyle.com/index.html>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3SakzLiRw0>

***The Eternal Soldier: The True Story of How a Dog Became a Civil War Hero* by Allison Crotzer Kimmel, illustrated by Rotem Teplow**

This is little known story of Sallie, a brindle-furred dog whose life as a soldier began in a basket and ended as a Civil War hero. When she was given to the Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry from a towns person, she took her job very seriously and marched alongside the soldiers from battle to battle. She would guard the unit's colors and even got to meet President Lincoln. When the Battle of Gettysburg – right here in our state of Pennsylvania – raged on for three days in the hot summer, Sallie guarded the bodies of her fallen soldiers. This true story about a dedicated and loyal companion is one that shouldn't be missed!

Book Teaser Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAv-lLaObQU>

Statue of Sallie Ann Jarrett: <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/sallie-ann-jarrett>

11th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment: <https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/union-monuments/pennsylvania/pennsylvania-infantry/11th-pennsylvania/>

***Allergic: A Graphic Novel* by Megan Wagner Lloyd, illustrated by Michelle Mee Nutter**

Allergies are the worst, especially if it is to animals! Maggie's parents are too busy getting ready for the new baby that is coming. Her twin brothers Lim and Noah have always had each other to count on. All Maggie wants is a puppy for her 10th birthday and she finally gets to pick him out at the shelter! Not long afterwards Maggie develops a rash and her eyes swell shut. She finds out she is highly allergic to almost all animals. Can Maggie somehow find a way to have a pet and make it work with her allergies? Read to find out more!

Author Website: <https://meganwagnerlloyd.com/>

Author and Illustrator Book Talk: https://youtu.be/puqVftLa_BE

Book Trailer: <https://youtu.be/Pa06LbVEPyE>

***Flip! How the Frisbee Took Flight* by Margaret Muirhead, illustrated by Adam Gustavson**

Have you ever played with a Frisbee? This is the story of how for more than 20 years, Fred Morrison with his wife, Lu, by his side began their quest. They tried, tried and tried again to create the perfect flying-disc. Eventually they created what we know today as the Frisbee. Fred Morrison is credited with inventing the Frisbee but is he the true inventor? Years before the Frisbee was invented, other people were flipping discs, too. Ancient Greeks? Yale College students? Read this book and decide for yourself who really invented the Frisbee.

Author Website: <https://www.margaretmuirhead.com/>

Make Mini Lid Flyers: <https://homemadecity.com/tag/flip-how-the-frisbee-took-flight/>

***Rodent Rascals* by Roxie Munro**

Did you know the capybara is the largest rodent in the world and can be trained to be a seeing-eye guide animal for the blind just like a service dog? How about the African giant pouched rat that can sniff out and locate buried land mines? He is trained to smell explosives. Maybe you might be familiar with a famous rodent that predicts how long our winters will be since 1886. If you have an interest in rodents or even if you don't, you will after you read all these interesting facts about rodents from all over the world.

Author Website: <https://www.roxiemunro.com/>

Book Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2GR3edhulI>

Lesson Plan: http://www.holidayhouse.com/docs/Rodent_Rascals_Lesson_Plan.pdf

***Halfway to Harmony* by Barbara O'Connor**

Walter has been sad and lonely since his only brother, Tank, died while serving in the army. He then meets Posey, the new girl next door, and the adventures begin. Posey is confident and gives Walter tips on how to handle himself in the world and makes him practice. Another friend is made when a man named Banjo falls from the sky and asks the kids to help him search for his hot air balloon. It seems like friendship really is the best medicine for healing and believing in yourself.

Author Website: <https://www.barbaraoconnor.com>

***Simon B. Rhymin'* by Dwayne Reed**

Simon Barnes aspires to be a famous rapper known as Notorious D.O.G. Unfortunately, he has not seen many small, shy eleven-year-old boys on the rap scene. As a 5th grade student in a Chicago middle school, Simon prefers to be in the background at school. Simon creates raps in his mind to explain his everyday experiences but fears performing in front of family and friends. When Simon's new teacher assigns an oral report on something that is affecting their

community, will he finally have the confidence to stand up for something he feels passionate about?

Article About the Author: <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/87193-q-a-with-teacher-rapper-and-author-dwayne-reed.html>

Inspiration from Book: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3fVvkqyv5NM>

***The Boy Who Failed Show and Tell* by Jordan Sonnenblick**

Based on the childhood of bestselling author, Jordan Sonnenblick, this middle level true story takes the reader on a journey of one thing happening after the other. Young Jordan is facing lots of issues at school when all he really wants is to become a drummer. He's feeling pretty sure that his teacher doesn't like him – even hates him – because he gets failing grades on everything (even Show and Tell!) His pet snake gives birth to LOTS of baby snakes who all need homes. Bullies try to get a hold of him when he's only got a lunchbox for defense. This is just the short list – wait until you see if it all unravels for Jordan. But, maybe by the end, everything can fall back into place. Read to find out!

Author Website: <https://www.jordansonnenblick.com/>

Author Preview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9GmtQ9ztYs>

Reading from the Author: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmVb9KjW6zA>

***Ben Yokoyama and the Cookie of Doom* by Matthew Swanson, illustrated by Robbi Behr**

When Ben Yokoyama opens a fortune cookie and reads “Live every day like it's your last,” he takes the words literally. Ben decides to create a bucket list of all the things he would like to accomplish if this is his last day. As he tries to ‘seize the day’, he tries to recruit family and friends to join in. You will laugh out loud as Ben attempts to check off items on his list and inadvertently learns more about himself, his family, friends and neighbors.

Author Website: <https://robbiandmatthew.com/>

Audio Sample: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/618163/ben-yokoyama-and-the-cookie-of-doom-by-matthew-swanson-illustrated-by-robbi-behr/>