

**Bodega Cats: Picture Purrfect-** by Hilda Eunice Burgos with illustrations by Siara Faison

Miguel Rosado lives in New York City with his Mami and Papi. They own a convenience store called a bodega, and live in an apartment above the store. Miguel spends most of his free time helping out at the bodega, but he really wants to join an after-school art club because he loves art and drawing comics more than anything else in the world! His parents, who immigrated to the US from the Dominican Republic, want more for their son. They are hoping Miguel will become an engineer. They say that art is a “waste of time” and they want Miguel to focus more on academics. To follow his dream, Miguel secretly joins an art club, leading to a web of lies that eventually catch up with him.

Lolo is a stray cat who lives on the streets. He is always cold, hungry, and running from a gang of mean cats who are looking to fight him. One day, Lolo and Miguel cross paths in the alley behind the bodega. Miguel feels badly for the little stray and brings him home. Miguel has always wanted a pet, but Mami always says that pets are too much trouble. With the help of his Tio Diego, Miguel convinces Mami that Lolo would make a great *bodega cat* who will keep the store rodent-free. So, Miguel gets the pet he always wanted and Lolo gets the warm cozy home and full belly that he has always dreamed of. And together, Miguel and Lolo discover what matters most in life.

**Diary of a Nature Nerd-** by Tiffany Everett

"Most people go into the woods to find peace and quiet. But Brooke? She goes into the woods to find... well, everything. She's documented every beetle, every bird, and every leaf in her nature diary. But there is one thing she's been hunting for years. One giant, antlered, elusive goal: a moose."

In *Diary of a Nature Nerd*, Brooke's life is one big outdoor adventure, lived mostly out of her family's RV. She's got her hiking boots, her best friend Jayla, and a plan to finally spot that moose. But then, Brooke's world gets a major shift." Her BFF Jayla isn't just her hiking partner anymore—she's her new stepsister.

Suddenly, the RV feels a lot smaller. And when Jayla and her dad manage to spot the legendary moose while Brooke is stuck back at camp? Let's just say Brooke's heart feels a little less than peaceful.

This graphic novel is a funny, and honest look at what happens when your "safe space" in nature gets crowded by the messiness of a blended family. It's about the jealousy that creeps in when your best friend gets the "big win" you've been chasing, and the growth that happens when you realize your family tree is just as complex as the ones in the forest.

If you love stories about friendship, outdoor survival, and the chaos of having your best friend move into your bedroom—I mean, RV—you have to read *Diary of a Nature Nerd*.

**The Dragon's Apprentice-** by James Riley

Whatever you do, do not read the magic spells in this book. That's the warning twelve-year-old Ciara ignores, and let's just say it leads to a very fiery, very cranky problem sitting in her living room.

In a world where magic is strictly forbidden by the Emperor, Ciara finds a thousand-year-old journal belonging to a legendary Dragon Mage. When she accidentally uses it to summon Scorch—an ancient dragon who's been asleep for a millennium—she realizes she's in over her head. Scorch is grumpy, he's hungry, and he definitely didn't expect his new apprentice to be a girl from a tiny mining village. But with Ciara's mother arrested and a deadly illness sweeping her town, she has no choice: she has to strike a deal with the dragon to learn the forbidden magic she needs to save her family and Ciara will help Scorch figure out what happened to the world he once knew.

This book is hilarious, fast-paced, and filled with adventure. The dynamic between Ciara and Scorch is like a bickering comedy duo, but the stakes are real. They're being hunted by the Emperor's Warden, and every spell Ciara casts might be bringing back something much more dangerous than a dragon.

### **How to Save an Owl-** by Kate Messner

Have you ever felt like you were the "weak link" on a team? That's exactly how Ezra feels. He's starting a new baseball season, but he's stuck in a massive batting slump, and he's terrified he's just not as good as the other players. His sister, Ivy, is his total opposite, but they share one incredible bond: their family are "critter couriers." They spend their free time rescuing injured and orphaned wildlife and rushing them to the local animal hospital.

Everything changes when Ezra and his sister discover two tiny, helpless baby screech owls that have fallen from their nest. The "critter courier" van springs into action, and the owlets are rushed to safety. But there's a problem: their original nesting tree was destroyed in a recent storm. The owls have no home to go back to. As Ezra watches these tiny birds struggle to find their place, he sees his own anxiety reflected in them. They're lost, they're out of their element, and they're scared—just like he feels on the baseball diamond.

Ezra and Ivy refuse to let the owls stay in cages forever. They decide to take matters into their own hands and build a custom-made nest to help the birds return to the wild. But building a home for a wild animal is a lot harder than it looks, and the clock is ticking. While Ezra fights to find his "batting groove" and prove he belongs on the team, he's also fighting to give these owls a second chance at a life in the trees.

Can Ezra save the owls and his baseball season at the same time? If you're looking for a story about grit, family, and the wild world in your own backyard, you need to read *How to Save an Owl* by Kate Messner.

Because sometimes, helping someone else find their home is the best way to find your own.

### **J vs K-** by Jerry Craft and Kwame Alexander

"What's better: a story told with awesome drawings or one told with epic words? Well, J and K are about to go to war to find out!"

Meet J Ennis. He's a total doodle-master who can draw anything, but he thinks reading is a snooze-fest. Then there's K Wright. He's a poetry pro who can make words dance, but he can't even draw a stick figure.

These two fifth-grade rivals are facing off in the big school storytelling contest, and they are NOT playing nice. It's a hilarious battle of creative pranks and "shady" double-crosses as they both try to prove their art is the best. But when things go wrong, they have to decide: keep fighting, or team up to create the most unstoppable book ever?

The coolest part? The real-life authors, Jerry Craft and Kwame Alexander, actually pop into the pages! They argue, joke around, and even teach YOU how to draw and write your own stories while you read.

It's fast, it's funny, and it's packed with **cool art**. If you like books that feel like a comic book and a novel had a baby, you've got to check out J vs. K.

### **The Lemonade War (Graphic Novel)**- by Jacqueline Davies

What would you do if your younger sister skipped a grade and ended up in the *same class* as you—just days before school starts?

For Evan, it's a total nightmare. But in *The Lemonade War* graphic novel, he turns his frustration into action. The rules are simple: Five days. Two competing lemonade stands. The first one to make \$100 takes ALL the money.

It's the ultimate showdown of "people-smart" versus "math-smart." Evan knows how to charm customers, but Jessie is a genius at strategy and franchising. As the August heat rises, so does the competition.

What starts as a fun summer job quickly turns into a dirty war of sabotage, fake ads, and stolen money. Will this rivalry ruin their sibling bond, or can they find a way to work together?

With bright, action-packed illustrations, *The Lemonade War* graphic novel shows that sometimes, to make the sweetest profit, you have to survive a bitter battle. Grab your copy and see who wins the war!

### **Millie of the Manor**- by Karina Evans

Amy loves mysteries, but there is one thing she hates: being the center of attention. She has social anxiety, so when she gets an invitation to her classmate Reagan's birthday party, she isn't excited—she's terrified. But this

isn't a normal party. It's a murder-mystery-themed event held at a real manor. To make things easier, every guest is assigned a character to play. For one night, Amy doesn't have to be the girl who's too shy to speak. She gets to be Millie Morgan, a brilliant scientist determined to solve a crime and clear her name.

Stepping into Millie's shoes gives Amy a "superpower." With her character's confidence, she's actually talking to people, hunting for clues, and navigating the manor like a pro. She's finally having fun! But as the "murder" investigation heats up, the script takes a dark turn. The clues aren't just pointing to a random guest—they are all starting to incriminate *Millie*. Suddenly, everyone is looking at Amy, and the "safety" of her character starts to crumble.

As the evidence piles up against her alter ego, Amy's real-world anxiety comes rushing back. She's trapped in a manor with people she barely knows, playing a game where she's the prime suspect. To solve the mystery and prove Millie's innocence, Amy has to do the one thing she's most afraid of: step out from behind the mask and trust the new friends she's made. She has to figure out where the game ends and where she begins—before the "killer" gets away with it.

If you've ever felt like life is just one big performance you're not prepared for, you'll love *Millie of the Manor* by Karina Evans. It's a story about finding your voice, even when the script says you're the villain.

The party is starting, and the first clue is waiting for you. Will you help Millie solve the case?

### **The Picasso Curse-** by Dan Gutman

Have you ever made a \$10 purchase that changed your life forever? Edwin Hodge thought he was just getting a cool Kobe Bryant poster at a local flea market. He liked the art, he liked the athlete, and the price was right. But Edwin didn't know that hidden behind that poster, tucked into the frame for decades, was a secret. An original drawing by the most famous artist in history: Pablo Picasso.

At first, it's like winning the lottery. The drawing might be worth millions of dollars. Suddenly, Edwin is a global social media superstar. Kids at school who never looked at him are treating him like royalty. But the "Picasso Curse" is real. Fame and fortune come with a terrifying price tag. Total strangers are tapping his phone. Mysterious figures are following him home from school. And when someone breaks into his house and threatens to burn it all down, Edwin realizes his "lucky find" is actually ruining his life.

Now, Edwin is trapped in a high-stakes game of "fact vs. fiction." He has to make decisions that most adults couldn't handle. Do you sell the art, putting your family in even more danger? Do you hide it? Or do you find a way to get rid of the "curse" before it destroys everything you love? Dan Gutman writes this story like a fast-paced action movie, where you truly never know what will happen on the next page.

If you found a masterpiece worth millions, would you keep it... even if it cost you your safety? Pick up *The Picasso Curse* by Dan Gutman to find out what Edwin chooses.

Just be careful what you find at the flea market—it might just be cursed.

### **Pocket Bear-** by Katherine Applegate

"Imagine being three and a half inches tall, thimble-born with eyes sewn just a little too high so you're always looking up. You were made for a soldier's pocket in World War I—a tiny charm meant to carry all the love and luck of home into the middle of a battlefield. This is Pocket. He's lived through the unthinkable, and now, over a century later, he has a new mission: making sure no one else gets left behind.

In Katherine Applegate's *Pocket Bear*, we enter the Second Chances Home for the Tossed and Treasured. It's a shop run by a mother and daughter who are refugees from the war in Ukraine. By day, they restore broken toys; by night, those toys come to life. Pocket is their unofficial mayor, leading them with a quiet bravery that belies his size.

The peace is shattered when Pocket's best friend, a sassy Maine Coon cat named Zephyrina, drags home a new recruit from a dumpster. He's a brown bear covered in spaghetti sauce, but Pocket recognizes him instantly. This is Berwin, and he might be one of the rarest, most valuable teddy bears ever made. Suddenly, the family at Second Chances faces a choice: sell Berwin to save their struggling home, or protect a new friend from a greedy collector who wants to lock him in a glass cage forever.

Narrated by the sharp-witted Zephyrina, this is a story about how love never truly fades, even when it's been through the wash a few times. If you've ever had a favorite stuffed animal or believed in the power of a second chance, you need to meet Pocket."

### **The Terrible Trio: The (Not So) Superheroes-** by Swapna Haddow

Imagine waiting in a line for hours—starving, tired, and stuck behind a buffalo's backside—all for a chance to get a life-changing superpower. You're dreaming of flight or super-strength, but when you finally reach the front, the manager has run out of ideas and gives you... the ability to write in really neat cursive.

That is the hilarious reality for the main characters in *The (Not So) Superheroes*, the first book in **The Terrible Trio** series by Swapna Haddow.

Meet the trio:

- Margarine the Penguin, who can stir anything and turn it into macaroni and cheese.
- Barry the Lemur, whose "superpower" is simply having stupendous handwriting.
- Zeb the Zebra, who is stuck with the most "useful" power of all: blending into a crosswalk.

While Marge and Barry try to make the best of it by working at the local Superheroes Café, Zeb is miserable watching "real" heroes save the day. He's determined to prove they are more than just "terrible," so he drags his friends on a dangerous mission to stop an evil crocodile from escaping prison.

This book is perfect for fans of *The Bad Guys* or *Madagascar*. It's packed with quirky black-and-white illustrations by Minky Stapleton and a lot of heart. If you've ever felt like you got the short end of the stick, you'll love watching these three find out that sometimes the weirdest powers are exactly what you need to save the day.

Pick up **The Terrible Trio** to see if mac-and-cheese and a zebra crossing are enough to stop a supervillain!