

Bedford Falls Middle School Flyer Book Summaries Spring 2018

House Arrest by K.A. Holt

Told in first person verse, this book is the story of twelve year-old Tim Davidson's year of house arrest, a consequence of stealing a credit card and using it to purchase medicine for his baby brother. Allowed to leave his house only to attend school and for mandated visits with a probation officer and a psychologist, Tim deals with the stress of his brother's life-threatening health issues, the financial struggles of his single parent mom, and the court required journal that he must keep while trying to stay out of trouble and avoid being sent to a juvenile facility. This realistic look at the dilemma of a boy trying to do what is right in the midst of a life where most everything seems to be going wrong will appeal to readers 11+.

I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives by Caitlin Alifirenka and Martin Ganda

This true story of the friendship between a seventh grade Pennsylvania girl and a boy living in distant Zimbabwe begins with a simple class pen pal project but changes both their lives forever. Long after other class members have stopped corresponding, Caitlin and Martin continue to write, learning more about each other and their very different lives. As Caitlin becomes aware of the extreme financial struggles of Martin's family and the very real possibility that this bright and hard-working young man will have to stop going to school, she becomes determined to help him continue his education and his family overcome their daily struggle to survive. Can one young woman and her supportive family really make a difference in the world? An inspiring story that readers 11+ will never forget!

Last Day on Mars by Kevin Emerson

The year is 2213. Earth has been destroyed by the Sun which is going super nova and the 100 million member human race is now living on Mars. Their time there is nearing an end, however, as the Sun threatens to destroy it as well. Scientists, including the parents of 13 year old friends Liam and Phoebe, are frantically working to complete research which will enable these humans to make the 150 year journey to a distant star they believe can sustain life. The two teens and their parents will be a part of the last group to leave Mars, completing vital experiments prior to their imminent departure. When a radioactive lab explosion occurs, Liam, Phoebe, and a high functioning robot must rescue their parents and find a way to reach the starliner

which left without them. This first book in a new science fiction series will captivate readers 11+ with humor, aliens, space, and time travel perfect for an out of this world adventure!

Strong Inside: The True Story of How Perry Wallace Broke College Basketball's Color Line (Young Readers Edition) by Andrew Maraniss

This nonfiction selection, part biography and part sports history, is the inspirational story of Perry Wallace, an outstanding African-American basketball player from Tennessee who, in 1966, signed to play college ball at Vanderbilt University - the first black player in the SEC. The racism that was prevalent in the South during the years of the rise of the civil rights movement was experienced by Wallace, even from his own teammates and coaches, yet his determination to succeed on and off the court remained strong. A testimony to self-discipline and hard work, this book will inform and inspire readers 11+.

Refugee by Alan Gratz

In this well-written and researched historical fiction title, the intertwined stories of Josef, an eleven year-old Jewish boy fleeing Nazi Germany, Isabel, a young girl leaving behind the Cuba of Fidel Castro in 1994, and twelve year-old Mahmoud, a Syrian boy escaping the violence in Aleppo in 2015, reveal historic adventures of survival and resilience. Driven out of their homelands by war, civil unrest, and persecution, these three and their families must endure loss, the threat of betrayal, and the ever present dangers of capture and death if they are to find refuge in new lands. A must-have for middle school classrooms that will help readers 11+ better understand the motives for and costs of immigration past and present.

The Girl in the Blue Coat by Monica Hesse

It is 1943 in Amsterdam and teen Hanneke Bakker is trying to survive the German Occupation that took the life of her boyfriend. She works at a funeral home and delivers black market goods to support her family. When an elderly neighbor, one of her black market customers, seeks Hanneke's help in finding a Jewish teen that she had been hiding but has mysteriously disappeared from her secret room, the Dutch girl is initially reluctant to help. Hanneke's growing awareness of the German treatment of Jews and the woman's persistence, however, result in her decision to use her underground connections to help solve the mystery of the missing girl. As she is drawn into the workings of the Dutch resistance organization, Hanneke must decide if she is willing to risk her own safety to find a girl she has never met. A perfect choice for fans of The Book Thief 12+.

Checked by Cynthia Kadohata

Eleven year-old Conor MacRae lives and breathes ice hockey. An extremely talented player, he hopes to play in the NHL and live up to the dreams both he and his dad have for him. The financial demands of the elite team he plays for - travel, private lessons, and equipment - are a challenge for his single father. When the boy's dog, Sinbad, is diagnosed with cancer, Conor decides to give up the expensive lessons and ice time to save money and start a lawn-mowing business to help pay for treatment costing several thousand dollars. As he takes a break from the rink, Conor becomes more aware of his father's loneliness, the difficulties at home faced by a friend, and how much he has relied on hockey to define who he is. A great choice for readers 11+ who appreciate a sports story with more than just the headlines.

When Friendship Followed Me Home by Paul Griffin

Ben Coffin is a quiet twelve year-old former foster child who loves his adoptive mother, science fiction, and spending time at the Coney Island Public Library. When a stray dog he names Flip becomes part of Ben's life and he and the librarian's daughter, Halley, become friends, he believes that his life is the best it has even been. Always upbeat even though she is taking chemo treatments for cancer, Halley shares Ben's vivid imagination and loves to write. She and Ben begin to work together on a creative online fantasy novella set at Coney Island. When Ben's mother dies unexpectedly, however, and he goes to live with an aunt who isn't prepared for parenthood, he struggles to believe that a life of love and security is possible. Perfect for fans of Counting By 7's and One for the Murphys, this book for readers 11+ is a testament to one boy's resilience and hope.