

Alertness

Character... It starts with me!

ROBIN'S READING LIST

Vs. Carelessness

I WILL:

- Keep my eyes and ears open
- Recognize and heed warning signals
- Choose to do right before I'm tempted
- Tell others of danger
- Stay away from unsafe places

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Being aware of what is taking place around me so I can have the right responses.

Pre – Grade 3:

Cory Stories: A Kid's Book about Living with ADHD by Jeanne Kraus

In short statements and vignettes Cory describes what it's like to have ADHD: how it affects his relationships with friends and family, his school performance, and his overall functioning. He also describes many ways of coping with ADHD: medication, therapy/counseling, and practical tips for school, home, and friendships.

Pirate Girl by Cornelia Funke

Ferocious Captain Firebeard may think that he and the cruel crew of the Horrible Haddock rule the high seas - but he hasn't reckoned on a small, daring girl called Molly. And he certainly should never have kidnapped her! Molly soon proves to be sharper and quicker than any of the pirate gang's cutlasses. And before long, Firebeard must face his comeuppance - the fury of her fearsome mum!

Morning on the Lake by Jan Bourdeau Waboose

When an Ojibway boy spends a day in the company of Mishomis (grandfather), the two of them both claim morning, noon, and night as their favorite time of day. In the morning on the lake in a birch bark canoe, they see a family of loons; hiking up a cliff at noon, they see an eagle; and walking through the forest at night, they see a pack of wolves. The boy is initially frightened by each sight but he follows the example of his grandfather and stays perfectly quiet and still. After each animal has passed, Mishomis interprets cultural messages for the boy, thereby teaching him about his heritage. The subtle story of strong intergenerational relationship is illustrated with realistic watercolors that depict the beauty of the natural world.

Johnny on the Spot by Edward Sorel

When the old, fading, static-ridden radio on which Johnny always listens to his favorite serial about heroic "Don Winslow of the Navy" gives up its last sound, Johnny turns to his mysterious neighbor Mr. Zaga for help. Johnny's parents can't afford another radio, but Johnny hopes Mr. Zaga can fix the broken one. Instead Mr. Zaga, an inventor who is working on a time travel machine, sends Johnny's



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radio one day into the future. The sound comes out perfectly now, but everything it plays is taking place tomorrow. When Mr. Zaga cautions Johnny that they can't do anything to change the future, even if it means preventing a bank robbery or fire, Johnny comes up with his own inventive ways to catch crooks and save lives from harm, earning him the nickname Johnny on the Spot from the hero-loving newspapers. At the same time, Mr. Zaga comes up with an inventive idea of his own. The full-color pen-and-ink and watercolor illustrations of this fantasy have a comic overtone and are rich with the look and feel of an earlier time.

Grades 4-8:

Return to Sender by Julia Alvarez

Eleven-year-old Tyler feels like he has nothing but bad luck. First his beloved grandfather dies of a heart attack. Then his father is badly injured in an accident, and it looks like his family may have to sell the farm he adores. After his parents hire Mexican workers to help out, it seems that the farm is saved after all. But Taylor is confused by the presence of these workers and their three daughters, Mari, Ofie, and Luby. Are his parents doing something illegal by hiring them? And what will become of the new friendship that is unfolding between Tyler and Mari Cruz? As the two families learn more about one another, each is indelibly and positively changed by the other.

Something Upstairs by Avi

When Kenny moves from Los Angeles to Rhode Island, he discovers that his house is haunted by the ghost of a slave boy named Caleb. Caleb asks Kenny to travel with him back to the nineteenth century and prevent his murder from happening so he can finally pass on.

Because I Am Furniture by Thalia Chaites

This novel in verse is narrated in a series of poems by Anke, a fourteen-year-old girl who feels invisible in her terribly abusive home. When she makes the volleyball team, Anke gains the confidence she has always been lacking and finds her voice. When she catches her father about to harm one of her friends, she uses her newly found strength and takes action. (There is some mild language and strong content, so this book would be best for middle school kids.)

The Red Kayak by Priscilla Cummings

When eighth grader Brady pulls a drowning boy out of the water, he is hailed as a hero by his town. But things take a calamitous turn and Brady finds himself in the middle of a terrible tragedy. When he discovers a dark secret, things go from bad to worse. Brady must choose between protecting his best friends and doing the right thing--a decision that proves to be harder than ever imagined.

Swindle by Gordon Korman

When sixth grader Griffin finds a rare Babe Ruth baseball card in a basement, he and his friend take it to a card shop and are swindled by the owner. They are given \$120 for the card, which they later find out is worth a million dollars. With money tight at home, Griffin decides to get the card back from the heavily guarded store by pulling off a heist with his misfit friends. Funny and fast-paced, boys are sure

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to like this adventure which celebrates the unique qualities of each of Griffin's misfit friends. The kids take the law into their own hands and lie to their parents, but suffer large consequences as a result. Parents may want discuss with their child whether it's ever right to steal, and who was the real swindler in the story. Doing the right thing and telling the truth are messages heard loud and clear by the end of the book.

Grades 9 – 12:

Vigilance by Paul Ruditis

It bothers Agent Sydney Bristow's conscience that too often her job asks her to work with criminals she would much rather put away. She understands the logic - the lesser of two evils approach is all too familiar to her - but that doesn't make it any easier to accept. Someone else disagrees. APO's more dubious contacts are being assassinated, with only a calling card depicting a black star with the number thirteen in its centre for a lead. When it becomes clear that a lethal, highly trained vigilante organization is interfering with APO's missions, Sydney must put aside her empathy and help shut down these mysterious "13 Stars". But when Sydney herself is mistaken for a freelance terror agent, she worries that the mistake is not so far from the truth. And now that she's marked, both her cover and welfare are in immediate jeopardy...



On the Road to Awareness by Bilal Zubedi

In this book, the author attempts to highlight the importance of education in making us human enough to establish its link with art, politics and much more. To develop an understanding of the varieties of life such as economics, crime, science, history and sociology to name a few, so that we are able to move towards a voyage of self-discovery, such is the intention of this piece of work.

Incarceron by Catherine Fisher

Part futuristic dystopia, part-cyberpunk, and part Elizabethan court intrigue, this rich, atmospheric novel follows two main narrative lines with completely distinct settings. In one, a teenage boy named Finn is trapped in a vast techno-prison called Incarceron, where prisoners inhabit bleak landscapes, form alliances, and fight for their own survival. They can never escape, but Finn is determined to try, driven by fleeting memories of an earlier time when he was free. Meanwhile, seventeen-year-old Claudia, daughter of the prison Warden, lives a privileged life Outside, in a technologically advanced society that masks itself as a late sixteenth-century kingdom in order to maintain the comforts of the ruling class. She is about to marry the spoiled, immature Prince Caspar, although his older stepbrother Giles, who died years before, was originally her betrothed. Knowing she is no more than a pawn in the power struggle between her father and the queen, and desperate to escape her fate, Claudia discovers a crystal key that gives her a window into Finn's life in Incarceron—because he possesses its mate. Two equally gripping parallel plots go back and forth and eventually intertwine as Claudia and Finn turn to one another as they try to escape their respective prisons. Well developed secondary characters and tantalizing subplots add depth to the underlying intrigue that will continue in Book 2.

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

Both intimate and sweeping, Markus Zusak's unforgettable novel is set just before and during World War II, among everyday German people living in a Munich suburb. The focal point of his story is Liesel,

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a young girl being placed in foster care as the story opens. Liesel's younger brother died on the train ride to their new home, while her mother, unknown to Liesel, faces imprisonment—and probable death—for being a communist. Liesel's foster mother, Rosa, has a brisk manner and foul mouth but it eventually becomes clear that it's all just a mask, protection for her soft and tender heart. By contrast, Liesel's foster father, Hans, has a goodness that is immediate and shining. He patiently teaches Liesel to read, and words—those written, those read, those spoken, and those left unsaid—become one of the defining forces in Liesel's life. As the war escalates, Liesel becomes a collaborator in a family secret: they are harboring a Jewish man named Max in their basement. Liesel can tell no one about Max, not even her best friend, Rudy, the free-spirited boy next door who dreams of being Jesse Owens and has loved Liesel from the moment they met. But she does tell Max about Rudy and other things happening in her life, brightening his dark basement days and nights with stories; a gift that he ultimately returns. Liesel also becomes a thief, stealing books from the library of the mayor's wife, a woman immersed in grief over the loss of her son in the last war. Liesel's thievery is a bold, decisive act in a world where much is spinning out of control. Some people in Liesel's neighborhood are Nazi sympathizers. Others, like Rudy's parents, follow all the rules in the futile hope they won't draw attention to themselves or their family. Yet many in their town willingly participate in book burning, and many come out to watch the ruthless forced march of Jewish prisoners on the road to Dachau, all but a handful seemingly unmoved by a scene that is, or should be, unbearable. How can human nature be explained? That question, and humanity itself, haunts the novel's narrator, Death. His job is to gather the souls of the dead, and while he does not pass judgment he is far from unmoved by all he sees. In Liesel's story, which embraces so many other lives, he—and we—find everything that human beings are capable of enduring, inflicting, bestowing, and achieving: from sorrow, sadness, and cruelty beyond comprehension to incredible compassion, kindness and joy. It offers both despair and hope for humanity. A literary masterpiece that will engage older teens and adults, *The Book Thief's* exquisite prose reveals extraordinary characters caught up in inexplicable times, and illuminates the worst and best of who we are.

