

Book Review: Fairies, Rescues and Adventruers

Fairies, Rescues and Adventures

Book Review

by Alexis Hardy of Centralia Timberland Library

Kids will be out for summer next month and now is the time to find the perfect books to occupy those lazy summer days!



When I was a child, my mom's favorite stories were about fairies, and so obviously they were my favorites too. I hold a special place in my nostalgic kid-heart for fairy books, and *A Fairy Friend* by Sue Fliess is a perfect example of the story that makes me feel

like a kid again. This story is written in rhyming poetry. It follows a girl through the seasons as she searches for fairies to be her friend and discusses the magical qualities the fairies will possess. Fliess uses beautiful descriptive nature language that can help to build your child's vocabulary.

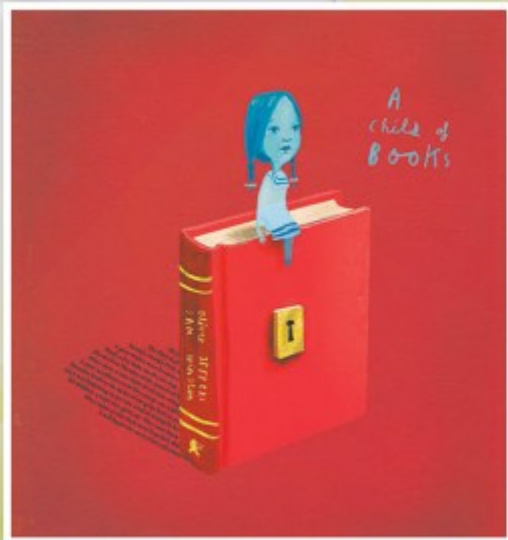
The illustrations by Claire Keane make this story truly magical. The muted sepia tones lend a vintage feel, but modern humor is conveyed through the main character's bulldog. Watercolors give the illustrations a soft dreamy quality, which works seamlessly with the poetic language of the story.

A Fairy Friend is best for preschool through 2nd grade.

I am a librarian, so of course I am predisposed to love any book that celebrates books and reading, and *A Child of Books* by Oliver Jeffers and Sam Winston definitely qualifies! Two children, a girl and a boy sail toward adventure on a raft of words.

The words are minimal but powerful. They appear to be handwritten as though the main character is talking directly to her readers. Some of the illustrations are simple pencil drawings, barring bright spots of color. The remaining artwork uses paragraphs from iconic children's books (Swiss Family Robinson, Robinson Crusoe, Wizard of Oz, etc.) to form dreamy images: waves to ride, tree branches to hide under, mountains to climb, and clouds to sleep on. This story provides a visual representation of how influential stories are while remaining on a child's reading level.

A Child of Books is best for preschool through 3rd grade.





If you are looking for a story about a plucky young girl who will do anything to save the book lender in her city, even get involved in the local election, then *Book Uncle and Me* by Uma Krishnaswami is for you! This story takes place in India. Nine-year-old, book-loving Yasmin has set a goal of reading one book each day. Book Uncle, who lends out books for free, always finds the perfect book for her to read. When the mayor tries to shut down Book Uncle's library, Yasmin is determined to fight for him. Even though Yasmin is too young to vote in the local election, she starts a campaign to help save the little library.

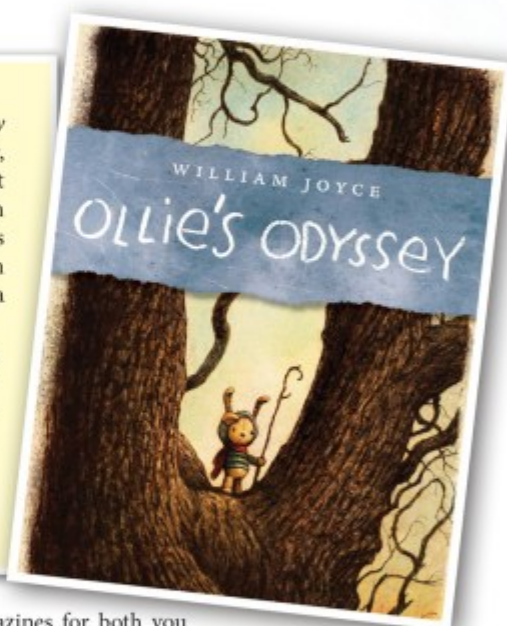
This is a fantastic story of how kids can make a difference in the world. It incorporates so many things to learn. Besides an empowering message, it presents new English words and gives definitions while also introducing words from India. It is a perfect way to introduce new cultures and customs to kids.

Book Uncle and Me is best for 1st-4th grade.

One of my absolute favorite books of the year has to be *Ollie's Odyssey* by William Joyce. It has elements of *The Velveteen Rabbit* and *Toy Story*, yet is completely original. Ollie is Billy's favorite toy, which is the highest honor in Toy World. He is Billy's best friend and goes everywhere with him. However, there are villains in Toy World. They hate favorite toys and vow to steal them away. These villains "toynap" Ollie and take him to Zozo, the clown king, but Ollie is no ordinary toy and he will find a way to return to Billy.

This adventure story has everything, including: enduring love between a boy and his toy, between families and new friends. It demonstrates resilience and redemption, and is filled with charm. Joyce includes stunning, full page, color illustrations that bring the story to life. If your child is sensitive, be aware that there are some creepy parts to the story and illustrations, but overall the story is accessible and fun.

Ollie's Odyssey is best for 3rd-5th grade.



Come down to the library to find these books and get suggestions for other great reads. Library books are available in multiple formats: traditional books, audio books (both downloadable and on CD) and e-books. You'll also find DVDs, downloadable music and music CDs,

and magazines for both you and your children. Don't forget to check the library events calendar at www.TRL.org for fun activities for all ages. As always, library programs are free. See you soon at the library!

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Alexis Hardy is a youth services librarian at Centralia Timberland Library and lives in Olympia. She is often found trekking through the forest with big boots and a camera. She, of course, reads more than is necessary and can be seen in her natural habitat (the library) reading books to children and singing songs with her puppet, Pierre.

