

The Mysterious Messenger, Young Readers Edition

Volume 1, April 2020

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Welcome to the first issue of the Mysterious Messenger Young Readers Edition.

Welcome friends to the first edition (attempt) at a young readers newsletter. Times are strange as we are all learning to operate in this new normal. As parents & caregivers, many of us are taking on the responsibility of daycare; homeschool; entertainer; short order chef and snack preparer; all while working from home or caring for younger siblings or loved ones. It's definitely proving to be a new challenge to overcome.

We aren't the only ones impacted, our kids are experiencing all of the same uncertainty as the adults. Their schedules are turned upside down, they can't see their friends, their parents/caregivers are suddenly their impatient teachers (or at least the teachers at our house are impatient). Our kids primary form of social interaction is via online games & messenger apps. It's all topsy turvy!

We have always had the utmost respect for educators, whether in a traditional school setting or homeschool, and it has grown ten-fold since we have had to start taking this on at home. Thank you to all of the educators out there who are trying to help us through these challenging times!

Despite the changes we are all working through, we are all being giving respite from the constant running from activity to activity and having the opportunity to slow down. This, we need to appreciate because normal will return, and it will feel fast and overwhelming.

We are hoping this newsletter provides resources for you and your young readers! Books are what we do and love, so we are here to help share the knowledge and love.

From the bottom of our hearts, we appreciate all of the support. We miss seeing and talking with everyone and look forward the days when the doors are open again. Stay safe and healthy!

Your friends at Mystery Lovers Bookshop!

Author Spotlight: Margaret Peterson Haddix

Among the many events we had to postpone, we were very disappointed to have to postpone the school tour we had planned with [Margaret Peterson Haddix](#). Haddix was visiting us to celebrate the April 7th release date for the second book in her Greystone Secrets series, [The Deceivers](#). Haddix to visit three schools with us for assemblies, classroom visits and lunch with students. We are looking forward to rescheduling her visit in the fall.

Haddix grew up on a farm in neighboring Ohio. Would you like to know a crazy fact about her? As a kid she knew two girls who had the exact same first, middle, and last names and shared the same birthday—only one year apart—and she always thought that was bizarre! We do too!

'The second book in the Greystone Secrets series from the master of plot twists, Margaret Peterson Haddix—perfect for fans of A Wrinkle in Time and The City of Ember! This middle grade novel is an excellent choice for tween readers in grades 5 to 6, especially during homeschooling.'



Special Guest Review!

This month we are featuring a special guest review from one of Haddix's local fans. **Lukas Duncan**, of Riverview School Districts 5th grade class at Verona Elementary School, has kindly written a review of [The Strangers](#), book 1 in the Greystone Secrets series.

"I like this book because it kept you on the edge of your seat. They were always solving riddles and deciphering codes that their mom wrote to them. They were always exploring new rooms and finding out different stuff about different people. If you like kind of scary books and if you like mystery books this is the book for you. But of course I would never give away all of the secrets. You'll have to read for yourself. " ~ Lukas Duncan

Thank you for sharing your review, Lukas! This sounds like it's just the book for some kids I know and we can't wait to get started reading it.

[You can find all of Haddix's books here!](#)

Keeping The Kids Entertained!

Here's how some local businesses are providing online services to help keep our kids minds & bodies active and engaged while we are staying at home.

Homegrown Yoga Oakmont



Local Yoga studio, Homegrown Yoga in Oakmont, is [sharing online Kids Yoga classes](#) on their [YouTube channel](#) to help keep our young readers mind & bodies engaged.

We asked co-owner and Oakmont resident, Katie Lascola, to tell us about their kids Yoga program. We also asked her what are her family's favorite books to read. Here is what she had to say:

"I am certified in Kids Yoga through Yoga Playground and have been teaching in studios, K-12 schools and preschools for 10 years, through yoga songs, stories and games.

I believe strongly that yoga teaches kids to understand how they can control their bodies and to learn balance and strength. Yoga also teaches them how to understand their emotions and how to deal with them appropriately. And finally, yoga teaches kids to focus and control their breath.

At Homegrown Yoga, we offer Kids Yoga once a month on Friday evenings from 6:00-7:00pm, the cost is \$8 per child. You can find the Kids Yoga dates on our website www.homegrownyogaoakmont.com.

Adults are welcome to stay with the child and either watch or participate too. If the child is over 5, the adult may drop them off for an hour.

As for now with the studio closed, my children and I are recording Kids Yoga classes which you can find on the [Homegrown Yoga YouTube station](#).

Our favorite books to read are any and all of the [Mr. Lemmoncello books](#) (by [Chris Grabenstein](#)). They are fun, entertaining and great for boys and girls of all ages!"

Rosa Lascola, 6th Grade Student at Riverview School Districts Tenth Street Elementary School, shared a review of a book she recently read and enjoyed. Here is what she had to say about [Love Like Sky by Leslie C. Youngblood](#):

"This was a great book about loving your family. Georgie and her sister Peaches have to move from the town that they grew up in because of their parents divorce, and their mom's remarriage. Georgie is caught up in making

her new step sister like her and she neglects Peaches. Then things get bad.

I loved that thought the book you learn about their past, before what's happening currently in the book. There are many surprises at the end, but I don't want to spoil it! This is a book that you won't want to put down!!"

Thank you, Katie, Rosa and the Homegrown Family!
Namaste!

Mad Science Pittsburgh



You may already know Mad Science from their school programs or from their visit to our STEM Fair last year. With their doors closed and school programming paused, they have found new ways to keep little scientists learning and engaged.

Mad Science Pittsburgh has modified their programming so you can join in the fun from home! They have added new experiments, adapted hands on activities to use items you have at home and have put your favorite instructors like Miss Meg, Mr. Eric, Mr. Will, and Miss Amanda on the big (or small) screen! Special appearances from our lovely children (furry and human ones), who are yup, are at home with us just like yours!

Your Questions Answered:

What ages are appropriate for Mad Science TV?

Just like our typical programming, it's still best for ages 5-12. Kids as young as 3 may enjoy the material, especially hanging out with 4 year old Eleanor, but may need assistance performing our experiments.

How much does it cost?

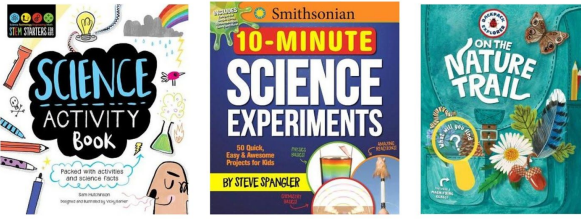
Just \$10/week! Yes, that's 5 videos of exciting demonstrations and thrilling hands-on science- most of which, yes, your kids can complete with little parental guidance!

You can find out more and Register for Mad Science TV Programming Here!

You can also find at home experiments and coloring pages courtesy of Mad Science here:

<https://www.madsciencepromo.com/athomeexperiments>

Science & Activity Books On Mystery Lovers Bookshop's Online Store



You can find more than mystery at our online store to help keep your young readers busy. Use the links below to help find activity books, science experiments, art books and games & puzzles online.

[All Activity Books](#)

[Science Activity Books](#)

[Art Activity Books](#)

[Puzzle Books](#)

[Nature Activity Books](#)

[Games & Science Kits](#)

New Books You Want to Read!

Read about these notable new releases from March!



What Stars Are Made Of

by Sarah Allen

From debut author Sarah Allen comes a pitch-perfect, heartwarming middle grade novel about growing up, finding yourself, and loving people with everything you're made of.

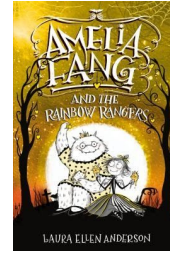
Twelve-year-old Libby Monroe is great at science, being optimistic, and talking to her famous, accomplished friends (okay, maybe that last one is only in her head). She's not great at playing piano, sitting still, or figuring out how to say the right thing at the right time in real life. Libby was born with Turner Syndrome, and that makes some things hard. But she has lots of people who love her, and that makes her pretty lucky.

When her big sister Nonny tells her she's pregnant, Libby is thrilled—but worried. Nonny and her husband are in a financial black hole, and Libby knows that babies aren't always born healthy. So she strikes a deal with the universe: She'll enter a contest with a project about Cecilia Payne, the first person to discover what

stars are made of. If she wins the grand prize and gives all that money to Nonny's family, then the baby will be perfect. Does she have what it takes to care for the sister that has always cared for her? And what will it take for the universe to notice?

Amelia Fang and The Rainbow Rangers

By Laura Ellen Anderson



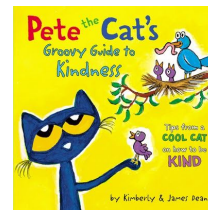
Readers graduating from the Princess in Black and Isadora Moon series will love the illustrated adventures of Amelia Fang, a sparkly little vampire girl in a dark and gloomy world!

Amelia is going on a trip with her Rainbow Rangers troop (led by unicorns Ricky and Graham) to Sugarplum Island!

But while exploring to earn their badges, Amelia and the gang stumble upon an ancient curse - and are shrunk to the size of bugs! How will they make the bloodcurdlingly BIG journey to break the curse when they are all so very TINY?

This is book number 4 in the **Amelia Fang** series.

- **#1: Amelia Fang and the Barbaric Ball** (Hardcover): \$12.99
- **#2: Amelia Fang and the Unicorns of Glitteropolis** (Hardcover): \$12.99
- **#3: Amelia Fang and the Memory Thief** (Hardcover): \$12.99



Pete The Cat's Groovy Guide to Kindness

by James Dean

Kindness is cool!

Pete the Cat shares some groovy words on kindness in this fun collection of his favorite famous quotes about sharing, lending a helping hand, and having compassion for others.

Cool cat Pete adds his own spin on well-known classic quotes from luminaries ranging from Booker T. Washington to Henry James. Everyone's favorite blue cat reminds us that "it's cool to be kind."



Octicorn Party

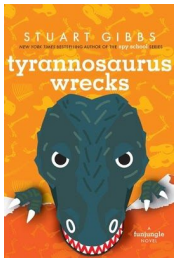
by Kevin Dillar

In this utterly charming sequel to the popular *Hello, My Name Is Octicorn*, Octi learns that he can't please everyone....but he

can encourage everyone to just be themselves.

Octicorn dreams of having a pool party. But what if no one comes? That would be the most embarrassing thing ever! So Octi sets out to have a party that will make *everyone* happy—until he realizes that may just be a disaster waiting to happen.

Octicorn Party! is for anyone who's ever felt just a little bit different...which, as it turns out, is pretty much all of us.

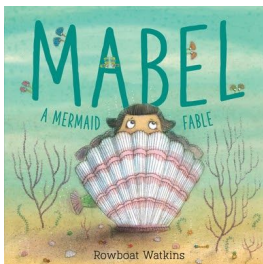


Tyrannosaurus Wrecks by Stuart Gibbs

In the latest novel in Stuart Gibbs's FunJungle series, Teddy Fitzroy returns as FunJungle's resident sleuth to solve his most improbable mystery yet—with a victim that's 65 million years old.

Teddy was all set for a campout at his friend Sage's family ranch—but then Sage gets terrible news: The skull of a rare dinosaur that was being excavated on his property has mysteriously vanished overnight in the middle of a rainstorm, even though it weighed 500 pounds. Not a single footprint has been left behind. Since the dinosaur was top secret, the police don't believe anyone outside the dig could have stolen it.

A T-rex skull can sell for millions of dollars, and everyone is a suspect—including J.J. McCracken, the owner of FunJungle. Meanwhile, Teddy's old foes, the Barksdale twins, have gotten into trouble with an illegally purchased anaconda, and Teddy's girlfriend Summer wants to find out who's behind the local trade in black market reptiles. The two cases will drag Teddy into more danger and chaos than ever before, in this mystery that's stranger than fiction.



Mabel: A Mermaid Fable by Rowboat Watkins

A lovely and laugh-out-loud picture book from the award-winning author of Rude Cakes and Most Marshmallows.

A silly read-aloud tale for kids about being yourself!

Mabel isn't like the other mermaids. Lucky isn't like the other octopuses. But when they find each other, they discover that true friendship isn't about how you look, and that sometimes what we are searching for is right under our noses.



In The Red by Christopher Swiedler

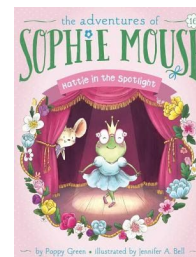
A harrowing, pulse-pounding race for survival that *New York Times* bestselling author D. J. MacHale says "will leave you breathless."

Michael Prasad knows he shouldn't go out on the Mars surface alone. It's dangerous. His parents have forbidden it. And the anxiety he feels almost every time he puts on a spacesuit makes it nearly impossible for him to leave the safety of the colony.

But when his best friend, Lilith, suggests they sneak out one night, he can't resist the chance to prove everyone—including himself—wrong.

As the two ride along the Mars surface in a stolen rover, miles from the colony, a massive solar flare hits the planet, knocking out power, communication, and navigation systems, and the magnetic field that protects the planet from the sun's deadly radiation.

Stranded hours from home with an already limited supply of food, water, and air, Michael and Lilith must risk everything if they're to get back to the colony alive.



The Adventures of Sophie Mouse: Hattie In the Spotlight by Poppy Green

Sophie's friend Hattie tries out for a play at Oak Hollow Theater in this sixteenth charming book of The Adventures of Sophie Mouse series!

When Hattie Frog learns that Oak Hollow Theater is putting on a play and *anyone* can audition, she knows it's her time to shine. Sophie is surprised because Hattie is usually so shy! But she supports her friend and helps Hattie practice for her audition. And Hattie gets a role! There's just one problem. Now Hattie isn't so sure she's ready to be on stage in front of all of Pine Needle Grove!

With easy-to-read language and illustrations on almost every page, the Adventures of Sophie Mouse chapter books are perfect for beginning readers.



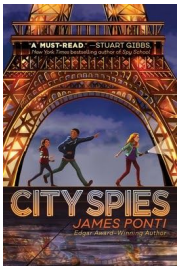
Godie Vancy: The Hotel Whodunit by Lilliam Rivera

Move over, Nancy Drew--there's a new sleuth in town! Inspired by the beloved comic series, Godie Vancy is ready to sleuth her way through never-before-seen mysteries in this

original novel series by Lilliam Rivera featuring 16 full-color comic pages!

Marigold "Goldie" Vance lives and works at the Crossed Palms Resort Hotel in Florida with a whole slew of characters: her dad, Art, the manager of the joint; Cheryl Lebeaux, the concierge and Goldie's best friend; and Walter Tooey, the hired hotel detective. Her mom, Sylvie, works nearby at the Mermaid Club.

While life at the Crossed Palms is always busy, the resort is currently overrun with Hollywood-types filming the hottest new creature feature, and tensions are at an all-time high. Even Goldie's mom is in on the movie act, doing what she does best: playing a mermaid. Just when Goldie thinks the movie biz couldn't get any more exciting, a diamond-encrusted swimming cap goes missing, and all fingers point to Goldie's mom as the culprit. Can Goldie uncover the true thief before it's too late?



[City Of Spies](#) by James Ponti

In this thrilling new series that Stuart Gibbs called "a must-read," Edgar Award winner James Ponti brings together five kids from all over the world and transforms them into real-life spies—perfect for fans of [Spy School](#) and [Mrs. Smith's Spy](#)

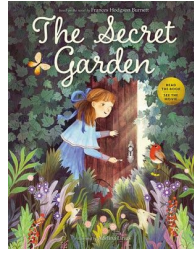
[School for Girls](#).

Sara Martinez is a hacker. She recently broke into the New York City foster care system to expose her foster parents as cheats and lawbreakers. However, instead of being hailed as a hero, Sara finds herself facing years in a juvenile detention facility and banned from using computers for the same stretch of time. Enter Mother, a British spy who not only gets Sara released from jail but also offers her a chance to make a home for herself within a secret MI6 agency.

Operating out of a base in Scotland, the City Spies are five kids from various parts of the world. When they're not attending the local boarding school, they're honing their unique skills, such as sleight of hand, breaking and entering, observation, and explosives. All of these allow them to go places in the world of espionage where adults can't.

Before she knows what she's doing, Sarah is heading to Paris for an international youth summit, hacking into a rival school's computer to prevent them from winning a million euros, dangling thirty feet off the side of a building, and trying to stop a villain...all while navigating the complex dynamics of her new team.

No one said saving the world was easy...



[The Secret Garden](#) by Frances Hodgson Burnett
Based on the beloved classic children's novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett, this edition of *The Secret Garden* is a beautifully illustrated hardcover picture book adaptation that all children will treasure.

Once upon a time...a walled garden bloomed under the summer skies in the north of England. But it was locked up and left all alone. And it stayed all alone, for many years. Until...

When young Mary Lennox moves into Misselthwaite Manor, she hates it. She hates the cold hallways and ugly moor. And she hates how lonely she is. The only comfort Mary has is exploring the manor's grounds.

After uncovering a hidden key, Mary discovers an old, abandoned garden that has a few secrets. With two unexpected friends, Mary gets to work bringing the garden back to life. In Mary's determination to see the garden bloom, she undergoes a powerful transformation of her own.



[If We Were Giants](#) by Dave Matthews & Clete Barrett Smith

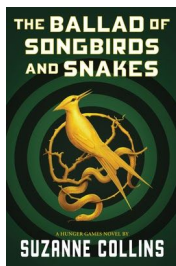
Kirra, a curious, agile, and outgoing girl, lives in an idyllic community hidden inside a dormant volcano. She and her father are the only two people allowed to venture beyond its walls. Kirra is in training to become a Storyteller like him, and together they travel from village to village spreading fearsome tales designed to keep outsiders away from their secret nest.

One day, after hearing rumors of strangers called the "Takers," Kirra leaves the volcano by herself, hoping to discover her own story. But she unknowingly leads the Takers back to her doorstep, and they rob her of everything she has ever held dear.

A devastated Kirra is found by a boy named Luwan and adopted into his family, which lives among others high in the trees of a dense forest. Now quiet and withdrawn, Kirra hides her dark past from everyone and never wants to leave the safety of her tree dwelling. Luwan, on the other hand, loves to explore. One day it leads to trouble: He is captured while spying on a group of strangers. The Takers have returned.

To save the Tree Folk, Kirra must face her inner demons and summon all her storytelling to weave the most important tale of her life.

Coming This Spring!



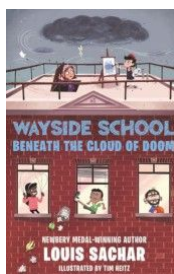
[The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes](#) by Suzanne Collins (Scholastic Press, May) – Collins returns to the world of Panem 64 years before the events of The Hunger Games in this highly anticipated prequel, focusing on the teenage years of future dictator Coriolanus Snow.



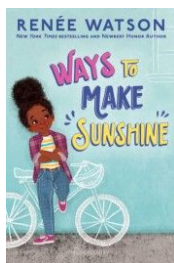
[Clap When You Land](#) by Elizabeth Acevedo (Quill Tree, May) – National Book Award recipient Acevedo crafts her latest novel-in-verse follows two sisters—one in the Dominican Republic and one in New York City—who are brought together for the first time after their father's unexpected death.



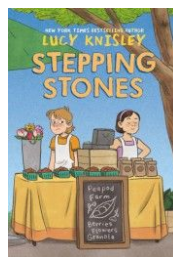
[Again Again](#) by E. Lockhart (Delacorte, June) – The author of *We Were Liars* spins an intricate tale of family chaos, starring a heroine who faces monumental questions about life, love, and humanity.



[Wayside School Beneath the Cloud of Doom](#) (*Wayside School* #4) by Louis Sachar, illus. by Tim Heitz (HarperCollins, Mar.) – Wayside gets even wonkier in this first series installment since 1995, wherein an ominous cloud settles over the building and the curiosities of Mrs. Jewls's 30th-floor classroom multiply.



[Ways to Make Sunshine](#) by Renée Watson (Bloomsbury, April) – In this series opener, a loose reimagining of Ramona Quimby's exploits, Watson adroitly captures the uncertainty of growing up amid change through the eyes of an irrepressible black girl named Ryan.

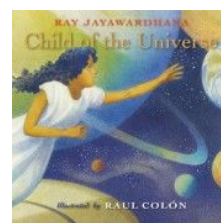


[Stepping Stones](#) (*Peapod Farm* #1) by Lucy Knisley (Random House Graphic, May) – Graphic novelist Knisley makes her middle grade debut with this contemporary trilogy opener about a city girl navigating her new country home and new place in her changing family.



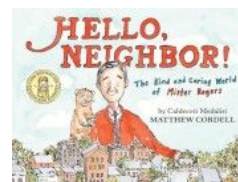
[The List of Things That Will Not Change](#), by Rebecca Stead (Random/Lamb, April) – Via a layered first-person narration and nuanced interpersonal dynamics, Stead tells the story of Bea, whose divorcing parents give her a green notebook containing “The List of Things That Will Not

Change” to help her navigate her shifting familial landscape.



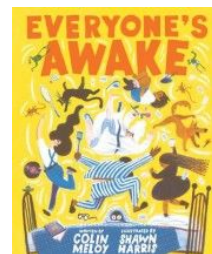
[Child of the Universe](#) by Ray Jayawardhana, illus. by Raul Colón (Make Me a World, Mar.) – In a luminous journey through the cosmos, astrophysicist Jayawardhana and illustrator Colón imagine a child as the actual

embodiment of elemental science: a figure who is at home in—and made up of—the farthest reaches of the universe.



[Hello, Neighbor! The Kind and Caring World of Mister Rogers](#) by Matthew Cordell (Holiday House/Porter, May) – Caldecott Medalist Cordell offers the first authorized picture book biography

of Mister Rogers and his beloved television neighborhood, exploring the complexity of life with Rogers's warmth and empathy.



[Everyone's Awake](#) by Colin Meloy, illus. by Shawn Harris (Chronicle, Mar.) – Things start quietly but soon escalate into chaos in Meloy and Harris's comic bedtime romp. Far from heading off to sleep, “The dog's into the egnog:/ Mom's tap dancing to Prince/ while Dad is on the laptop/

buying ten-yard bolts of chintz.”