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2018-2019

- **Absolutely Truly by Heather Vogel Frederick**

An unsent letter in a first edition copy of *Charlotte's Web* leads to a hunt for treasure in this heartwarming middle grade mystery from the author of *The Mother-Daughter Book Club*.

Now that Truly Lovejoy's father has been injured by an IED in Afghanistan and is having trouble finding work back home, the family moves from Texas to tiny Pumpkin Falls, New Hampshire, to take over Lovejoy's Books, a struggling bookstore that's been in the family for one hundred years.

With two older brothers and two younger sisters clamoring for attention, her mother back in school, and everyone up to their eyebrows trying to keep Lovejoy's Books afloat, Truly feels more overlooked than usual. So she pours herself into uncovering the mystery of an undelivered letter she finds stuck in a valuable autographed first edition of *Charlotte's Web*, which subsequently goes missing from the bookshop. What's inside the envelope leads Truly and her new Pumpkin Falls friends on a madcap treasure hunt around town, chasing clues that could spell danger.

- **Avenging the Owl by Melissa Hart**

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, Han Solo avenged the destruction of an innocent planet by helping Luke Skywalker blow up the Death Star. Han walked away with a gold medal and the love of his life. But when Solo Hahn—named in honor of the beloved action hero—tries to avenge the death of his gray-and-white kitten, he gets eight months of community service. Eight months of working at the local raptor center helping owls—his now sworn enemies.

For the first time in his life, Solo is labeled a troubled kid, an at-risk youth. He'd always gotten good grades, had good friends, and gotten along with his parents. He used to volunteer to read *Reader's Digest* to old people at the retirement home next door, and his favorite thing in the whole wide world was to surf. He wrote screenplays for fun. But when his parents uproot him and move the family from California to backwoods Oregon, Solo starts to lose track of the person he was. Everything is upside down, and he finds himself dealing with things way beyond his understanding. He's the new kid in town, and he's got a bad reputation. The question is: What will he do next?

This is a story about staying true to yourself when things get tough. Solo has every reason to lash out, but he ultimately needs to find a way to cope. *Avenging the Owl* deals with the difficult issues of suicide and depression, but more than anything it captures the powerlessness of being a kid. It won't be easy, but the wild beauty of Oregon, its cold, empty beaches and captivating wildlife, may be just what Solo and his family need to help them start over.

- **The Body in the Woods by April Henry**

In this new series told from multiple perspectives, teen members of a search and rescue team discover a dead body in the woods.

Alexis, Nick, and Ruby have very different backgrounds: Alexis has spent her life covering for her mom's mental illness, Nick's bravado hides his fear of not being good enough, and Ruby just wants to pursue her

eccentric interests in a world that doesn't understand her. When the three teens join Portland County Sheriff's Search and Rescue, they are teamed up to search for a autistic man lost in the woods. What they find instead is a dead body. In a friendship that will be forged in danger, fear, and courage, the three team up to find the girl's killer—before he can strike one of their own.

This first book in April Henry's Point Last Seen YA mystery series is full of riveting suspense, putting readers in the middle of harrowing rescues and crime scene investigations.

- **Cryptid Hunters by Roland Smith**

Readers expecting *Jurassic Park*-style adventures may be frustrated by the small role exotic creatures play in Smith's (*Zach's Lie*) farfetched story. As the novel opens, 13-year-old twins Grace and Marty meet the uncle they never knew when their parents go down in a plane crash. Travis Wolfe, their uncle, is a reclusive "cryptozoologist" who lives on the private island Cryptos and researches animals "whose existence has not yet been proven scientifically." Wolfe's archenemy, Noah Blackwood, a conservationist well-known for his animal theme parks (called "Noah's Ark") and television appearances, is secretly a ruthless collector of rare species, which he then "harvests." Wolfe and Blackwood clash when an "alleged dinosaur egg" enters the picture; matters worsen when Grace and Marty are accidentally airdropped into the Congo, and Blackwood turns out to be hunting not just the egg but Grace herself. Logic takes a back seat when a convoluted family tree begins to emerge (though the author plants a clue at the start, when he says of the twins, "but you wouldn't know it if you saw them together")—it turns out Grace is not only Wolfe's daughter but Blackwood's granddaughter (Wolfe married Blackwood's daughter), while Marty is indeed Wolfe's nephew. An abrupt action sequence on the last few pages leaves many questions unanswered and plot lines dangling. This unsatisfying journey is less about cryptids than it is about soap opera-esque family intrigue.

- **Doll Bones by Holly Black**

Zach, Poppy and Alice have been friends for ever. They love playing with their action figure toys, imagining a magical world of adventure and heroism. But disaster strikes when, without warning, Zach's father throws out all his toys, declaring he's too old for them. Zach is furious, confused and embarrassed, deciding that the only way to cope is to stop playing . . . and stop being friends with Poppy and Alice.

But one night the girls pay Zach a visit, and tell him about a series of mysterious occurrences. Poppy swears that she is now being haunted by a china doll – who claims that it is made from the ground-up bones of a murdered girl. They must return the doll to where the girl lived, and bury it. Otherwise the three children will be cursed for eternity . . .

- **The Gauntlet by Karuna Riazi**

A trio of friends from New York City find themselves trapped inside a mechanical board game that they must dismantle in order to save themselves and generations of other children in this action-packed debut that's a steampunk *Jumanji* with a Middle Eastern flair.

When twelve-year-old Farah and her two best friends get sucked into a mechanical board game called *The Gauntlet of Blood and Sand*—a puzzle game akin to a large Rubik's cube—they know it's up to them to defeat the game's diabolical architect in order to save themselves and those who are trapped inside, including her baby brother Ahmed. But first they have to figure out how.

Under the tutelage of a lizard guide named Henrietta Peel and an aeronaut Vijay, the Farah and her friends battle camel spiders, red scorpions, grease monkeys, and sand cats as they prepare to face off with the maniacal Lord Amari, the man behind the machine. Can they defeat Amari at his own game...or will they, like the children who came before them, become cogs in the machine?

- **Ghost by Jason Reynolds**

Ghost wants to be the fastest sprinter on his elite middle school track team, but his past is slowing him down in this first electrifying novel of a brand-new series from Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award-winning author Jason Reynolds.

Ghost. Lu. Patina. Sunny. Four kids from wildly different backgrounds with personalities that are explosive when they clash. But they are also four kids chosen for an elite middle school track team—a team that could qualify them for the Junior Olympics if they can get their acts together. They all have a lot to lose, but they also have a lot to prove, not only to each other, but to themselves.

Ghost has a crazy natural talent, but no formal training. If he can stay on track, literally and figuratively, he could be the best sprinter in the city. But Ghost has been running for the wrong reasons—it all starting with running away from his father, who, when Ghost was a very little boy, chased him and his mother through their apartment, then down the street, with a loaded gun, aiming to kill. Since then, Ghost has been the one causing problems—and running away from them—until he meets Coach, an ex-Olympic Medalist who blew his own shot at success by using drugs, and who is determined to keep other kids from blowing *their* shots at life.

- **I Will Always Write Back by Caitlin Alifirenka & Martin Ganda**

*The true story of an all-American girl and a boy from an impoverished city in Zimbabwe and the letter that changed both of their lives forever.*

It started as an assignment. Everyone in Caitlin's class wrote to an unknown student somewhere in a distant place. All the other kids picked countries like France or Germany, but when Caitlin saw *Zimbabwe* written on the board, it sounded like the most exotic place she had ever heard of--so she chose it. Martin was lucky to even receive a pen pal letter. There were only ten letters, and forty kids in his class. But he was the top student, so he got the first one.

That letter was the beginning of a correspondence that spanned six years and changed two lives.

In this compelling dual memoir, Caitlin and Martin recount how they became best friends --and better people--through letters. Their story will inspire readers to look beyond their own lives and wonder about the world at large and their place in it.

- **The Luck Uglies by Paul Durham**

The Luck Uglies is the first in a tween fantasy-adventure trilogy brimming with legends come to life, a charming wit, and a fantastic cast of characters-and is imbued throughout with the magic of storytelling.

Strange things are happening in Village Drowning, and a terrifying encounter has Rye O'Chanter convinced that the monstrous, supposedly extinct Bog Noblins have returned.

Now Rye's only hope is an exiled secret society so notorious its name can't be spoken aloud: the Luck Uglies. As Rye dives into Village Drowning's maze of secrets, rules, and lies, she'll discover the truth

behind the village's legends of outlaws and beasts...and that it may take a villain to save them from the monsters.

The first in a series, *The Luck Uglies* is an altogether irresistible cross of Lloyd Alexander's *Chronicles of Prydain*, Stefan Bachmann's *The Peculiar*, and Chris Healy's *The Hero's Guide to Saving Your Kingdom*, overflowing with adventure, secrets, friendship, and magic.

- **My Seventh-Grade Life in Tights by Brooks Benjamin**

All Dillon wants is to be a real dancer. And if he wins a summer scholarship at Dance-Splasion, he's on his way. The problem? His dad wants him to play football. And Dillon's freestyle crew, the Dizzee Freekz, says that dance studios are for sellouts. His friends want Dillon to kill it at the audition—so he can turn around and tell the studio just how wrong their rules and creativity-strangling ways are.

WORK IT.

At first, Dillon's willing to go along with his crew's plan, even convincing one of the snobbiest girls at school to work with him on his technique. But as Dillon's dancing improves, he wonders: what if studios aren't the enemy? And what if he actually has a shot at winning the scholarship?

BRING IT.

Dillon's life is about to get crazy . . . on and off the dance floor.

- **Restart by Gordon Korman**

Chase's memory just went out the window.

Chase doesn't remember falling off the roof. He doesn't remember hitting his head. He doesn't, in fact, remember anything. He wakes up in a hospital room and suddenly has to learn his whole life all over again . . . starting with his own name.

He knows he's Chase. But who is Chase? When he gets back to school, he sees that different kids have very different reactions to his return.

Some kids treat him like a hero. Some kids are clearly afraid of him.

One girl in particular is so angry with him that she pours her frozen yogurt on his head the first chance she gets.

Pretty soon, it's not only a question of who Chase is--it's a question of who he was . . . and who he's going to be.

*From the #1 bestselling author of Swindle and Slacker, Restart is the spectacular story of a kid with a messy past who has to figure out what it means to get a clean start.*

- **Revenge of the Witch by Joseph Delaney**

For years, Old Gregory has been the Spook for the county, ridding the local villages of evil. Now his time is coming to an end. But who will take over for him? Twenty-nine apprentices have tried—some floundered, some fled, some failed to stay alive.

Only Thomas Ward is left. He's the last hope, the last apprentice.

- **Small as an Elephant by Jennifer Richard Jacobson**

Jack's mom is gone, leaving him all alone on a campsite in Maine. Can he find his way back to Boston before the authorities realize what happened?

Ever since Jack can remember, his mom has been unpredictable, sometimes loving and fun, other times caught in a whirlwind of energy and "spinning" wildly until it's over. But Jack never thought his mom would take off during the night and leave him at a campground in Acadia National Park, with no way to reach her and barely enough money for food. Any other kid would report his mom gone, but Jack knows by now that he needs to figure things out for himself - starting with how to get from the backwoods of Maine to his home in Boston before DSS catches on. With nothing but a small toy elephant to keep him company, Jack begins the long journey south, a journey that will test his wits and his loyalties - and his trust that he may be part of a larger herd after all.

- **The Sword of Summer by Rick Riordan**

Magnus Chase has seen his share of trouble. Ever since that terrible night two years ago when his mother told him to run, he has lived alone on the streets of Boston, surviving by his wits, staying one step ahead of the police and the truant officers.

One day, Magnus learns that someone else is trying to track him down—his uncle Randolph, a man his mother had always warned him about. When Magnus tries to outmaneuver his uncle, he falls right into his clutches. Randolph starts rambling about Norse history and Magnus's birthright: a weapon that has been lost for thousands of years.

The more Randolph talks, the more puzzle pieces fall into place. Stories about the gods of Asgard, wolves, and Doomsday bubble up from Magnus's memory. But he doesn't have time to consider it all before a fire giant attacks the city, forcing him to choose between his own safety and the lives of hundreds of innocents. . . .

Sometimes, the only way to start a new life is to die.

- **The Wishing Spell by Chris Colfer**

Alex and Conner Bailey's world is about to change, in this fast-paced adventure that uniquely combines our modern day world with the enchanting realm of classic fairy tales.

*The Land of Stories* tells the tale of twins Alex and Conner. Through the mysterious powers of a cherished book of stories, they leave their world behind and find themselves in a foreign land full of wonder and magic where they come face-to-face with the fairy tale characters they grew up reading about.

But after a series of encounters with witches, wolves, goblins, and trolls alike, getting back home is going to be harder than they thought.

- **Wolf Hollow by Lauren Wolk**

Growing up in the shadows cast by two world wars, Annabelle has lived a mostly quiet, steady life in her small Pennsylvania town. Until the day new student Betty Glengarry walks into her class. Betty quickly reveals herself to be cruel and manipulative, and while her bullying seems isolated at first, things quickly escalate, and reclusive World War I veteran Toby becomes a target of her attacks. While others have always seen Toby's strangeness, Annabelle knows only kindness. She will soon need to find the courage to stand as a lone voice of justice as tensions mount.