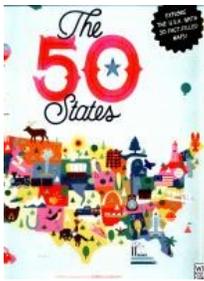


# READ

## February 2016

Recent books for kids that the Children's Library staff have read & loved & that we think you will too!



**The 50 States: Explore the U.S.A. with 50 Fact-filled Maps! by Gabrielle Balkan.** J 973 Balka

This oversized illustrated book will be a hit with readers old and young! Each double paged spread in this colorful title covers one state with subjects such as "Moments to Remember", key facts, interesting tidbits and recommendations for places to visit. It's fun to see what famous people come from each state - Colorado's list includes scientist Florence Sabin, Temple Grandin and Ruth Handler (creator of the Barbie doll). There's a great list of places to visit including Glenwood Hot Springs, Dinosaur Monument, Cadet Chapel at the Air Force Academy and Royal George Bridge. And did you know that our largest cities are Denver, Colorado Springs and Aurora? This would make a great family gift, or something to check out while making summer vacation plans.



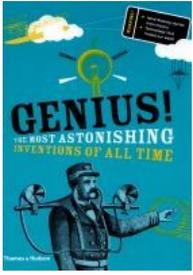
**The Door by the Staircase by Katherine Marsh.** J Fiction

Mary Hayes is twelve years old and has lived in an orphanage ever since her family died in a fire. Mary desperately wants to escape her orphanage, and especially wants to get away from the cruel headmistress. She plans an escape through the stovepipe and successfully reaches the top of the building, but an unusual whirlwind comes along and causes the headmistress to spot her. She is brought back inside and locked in a closet until the next day when a rather unusual woman named Madame Z comes to the orphanage and chooses to adopt Mary, who is delighted to go. Madame Z lives outside a small town called Iris. Mary soon learns that the town is filled with magicians who perform magical acts for tourists. Madame Z claims she is not involved in any of the magic, even though her home is unusual with meals that appear with no effort, an unexplainable orange light outside at night, and a mysterious door that seems to bite anyone that attempts to unlock it, except for Madame Z. When Mary ventures into Iris, she becomes friends with Jacob who does magic acts with his father for the tourists. Soon she and Jacob realize that mixed in among the magic acts in Iris, there is also real magic. As she and Jacob explore the area, she learns a frightening secret about Madame Z. As Mary starts plotting her escape from Madame Z with Jacob, they come to realize that Madame Z may not be the real enemy. As this fantasy story unfolds, complete with adventure, danger, and magic, the author draws on elements from Russian folk tales, including Baba Yaga and the firebird, and also brings in elements from Grimm's Fairy Tales, especially Hansel and Gretel. It offers an inside look into the ways some magicians perform their acts, and also leads to the idea that love can make some evil people change their ways. The story is rich in detail, sometimes complicated with its fast-paced action, and powerful with its messages about courage, loyalty, love, and family. This would be an enjoyable read for strong readers in 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> graders who like fantasy and fairy tales.



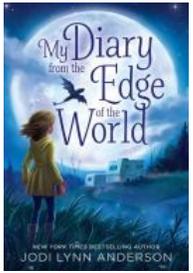
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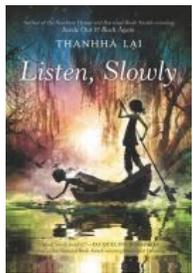
**Genius! The Most Astonishing Inventions of All Time by Deborah Kespert.** J 600 Kespe

This new book describes inventions that were astounding in their time – from the earliest time of man up to present day. Some of the ancient inventions are still being used, sometimes as they were invented and other times with updates and improvements. One of the inventors spotlighted in the beginning of the book is Zhang Heng who lived in China. Around 132 CE he came up with a way to detect earthquakes which were a big problem in China. His design was simple but effective and was not improved upon for 1,500 years! The Chinese invented many things that are still in use today. Did you know that kites, which we use for fun, actually had important uses for the Chinese – in carrying messages, measuring distances and testing wind strength? There is so much more to discover in this book including inventions related to flight, code-breaking, cinema and television, computers and even to a tiny camera in a pill that can explore inside a person’s body. This is an excellent book with great information and really good pictures related to the inventions. It would be good for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up.



**My Diary from the Edge of the World by Jodi Lynn Anderson.** J Fiction

How far would you go to save your little brother? To the ends of the earth? Gracie Lockwood is an ordinary girl living in a world much like ours, but in her world sasquatches roam the forests, dragons can sometimes burn down department stores, and dark clouds come to take away people who are about to die. Gracie’s little brother, Sam, always seems to be sick and when a dark cloud appears above their house they know it has come for him. Gracie’s father believes there is another world where there is no such thing as sasquatches, mermaids or dark clouds. So Gracie and her family set off in a used Winnebago to try to find this “Extraordinary World” and save Sam. The Lockwoods share adventures and hardships that ultimately help them better understand each other, their world and themselves. A touching adventure story of family, hope, loss and acceptance that would be good for mature 4th graders and older.



**Listen, Slowly by Thanhha Lai.** J Fiction, JCD

12-year-old Mai is very upset with her parents when they make her accompany her grandmother back to Thailand for the summer. She had great plans for the beach with her best friend and does NOT want to be in hot, sticky Thailand being eaten alive by mosquitoes. Mai's grandmother has not been back to Thailand in 35 years - since her husband disappeared and she fled with their children to a better life in the U.S. But now a detective has come forward saying he has found evidence that Mai's grandfather may still be alive. Mai's journey to her grandparent's small town and her experiences with the food, people and culture of Vietnam are fascinating. By the end of the book she has grown from a whiny spoiled child into a more mature and caring young woman. And learned to appreciate her heritage too! Highly recommended - and listen to it if you can as there are a lot of Vietnamese words and it's fun to hear how they should be pronounced.



**Totally Wacky Facts about Exploring Space by Emma Carlson Berne.** J 629.13 Berne

This book is part of a new series. Every title in the series begins with *Totally Wacky Facts About...* These are really fun books with colorful, cartoon-type pages. Most of the facts are amazing and probably not something you’d learn in school. For example, some astronauts have said that space smells like meat and metals, but others have said that it smells like raspberries. Also, it turns out that when the spacecraft orbits the earth, the astronauts see a sunset or sunrise every 45 minutes. There are also “wacky facts” about space telescopes like the Hubble and a new telescope being developed that is called JWST – James Webb Space Telescope. Check out this book and find out more about the amazing things it will be able to do and other interesting information about space! There is also a separate book in this series about planets and stars. These would be great for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and up.

