

# R E A D

## July 2016

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



**Counting Thyme by Melanie Conklin.** J Fiction, JCD

Her little brother's cancer has returned, and his best bet seems to be a new drug trial being administered at a hospital in New York City. Unfortunately this means that Thyme's entire family must relocate across country. Forced to leave her grandmother and best friend behind in San Diego, Thyme struggles to make friends at her new school and keep in touch with those at home. New York is intimidating to Thyme, and her parents are so busy with Val's treatments that she and her older sister feel a bit neglected. Hoping to be back in California by her birthday in March, Thyme counts the hours she helps around the house and saves them on slips of paper in a big jar by her bed. But as the weeks stretch into months and Thyme starts to make new friends and feel a bit more at home in the city, San Diego seems even further away. A sweet and moving story of the bonds of family and the pains of pre-adolescence.



**The Detective's Assistant by Kate Hannigan** J Fiction, JCD

Cornie Warne is an eleven-year-old girl who has been left as an orphan and completely alone after her mother, father, brothers and all other relatives in Chemung County, New York have died. For a while she lives at the Chemung County Home for Orphans. Then, the preacher who runs the orphanage, discovers that there is a relative of hers living in Chicago. They take a train there to arrange for her to live with her aunt, Kate Warne. When her aunt opens her door though, and finds out what they want, she is not very happy. Cornie describes their first encounter as being on the "Doorstep of a Pickled Onion" because her aunt's face looks "sour with a pinch of bitterness." Her aunt knows that Cornie's real name is Cornelia, but she decides to call her Nell instead (which Nell secretly likes). Their relationship starts and continues to be rocky and Nell even wonders at times if she will end up in another orphanage in Chicago. Then she finds out that her aunt is the first female detective ever to be hired for the Pinkerton's National Detective Agency. It turns out that Nell is a great help in solving cases and they end up having amazing adventures. This book is fictional, but is based on real people and fascinating crimes and events in American history. The author has included some ciphers to solve as you go through the book. At the end of the book there is also some information about Kate Warne, who was a real person, and Allan Pinkerton's detective agency.



**The Iron Trial by Holly Black.** J Fiction, YA Fiction, JCD

Callum Hunt, Call, is not sure why his father, Alistair, is so adamant he not attend the Magisterium, but he is miserable and obnoxious in his current school. He does his best to fail the trial, but ends up being chosen to spend his Iron year in the school charged with training mages to harness the power of fire, water, earth, and air. There he is teamed with Aaron and Tamara, who through a series of adventures



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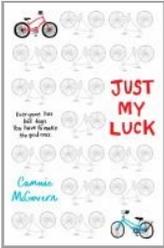
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become his first true friends. This is the first in a five book collaboration of Holly Black (Spiderwick and *Doll Bones*) and Cassandra Clare. The second is *The Copper Gauntlet*, and the third, *The Bronze Key*, is due to be released August 30, 2016. Sure to be enjoyed by kids who like Harry Potter, Star Wars, and *The Mysterious Benedict Society*.

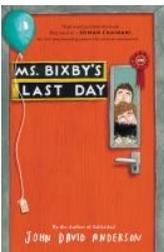
**Just My Luck by Cammie McGovern.** J Fiction, JCD

Benny's 4th grade year isn't going well at all. His best friend moved away and he hasn't found anyone to take his place yet. He's in the slow groups at school for math and reading and he still isn't good at riding a bike, which is made even worse by the fact that his brother George, who is autistic - can ride way better than Benny - and even do tricks. His school has started a contest whereby whenever teachers notice a student doing something that shows empathy or caring they will write down their name and their good deed on a footprint. The goal is to cover the whole school with footprints. Benny feels like he has a lot of empathy and caring - particularly with his brother - but after the first few weeks he still doesn't have any footprints... And worst of all is something that he doesn't like to talk about at school; his dad recently had a brain aneurysm. He's home from the hospital now, but he definitely isn't the same person. Benny's mom is under a lot of stress, and the whole family is on edge. It seems like bad luck is the only kind of luck his family has these days. Can Benny find a way to change this? One reviewer compared this to *Wonder* and *Rain Reign*. A great read! and a good book for discussion for upper elementary aged readers.



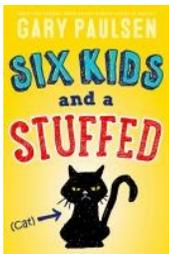
**Ms. Bixby's Last Day by John David Anderson.** J Fiction, JCD

Three sixth grade boys tell the story of their relationships with their teacher, Ms. Bixby. The story takes place the day after Ms. Bixby has announced that she is very sick and will not be able to finish out the school year. As we follow the boys on their adventure to visit Ms. Bixby they each tell their story. Kids will love the humor of Brand's made up words and other funny events. "He made up the word tunk, which means to bomb a test so bad it's funny, like tanking and flunking all at once." Parents and teachers will love Ms. Bixby's sayings and the nods to so much literature and so many classroom stories. Touching and fun for readers who love school stories by Andrew Clement, R.J. Palacio, and Louis Sachar.



**Six Kids and a Stuffed Cat by Gary Paulsen.** J Fiction

Gary Paulsen has done it again with this great novella that had me laughing out loud before I was even 10 pages in! Six kids at RJ Glavine Middle School end up having to wait out a "storm" in the boys bathroom. Paulsen hilariously puts together Jordan (class clown with social anxiety), Devon (air-guitar rock star), Mason (the brain), Taylor (the maybe not-so-brainy), Regan (the over-achiever), and Avery (the new kid who brings a stuffed cat to school that no-one is supposed to be able to see, "Oooooookaaaaaay. An *invisible* stuffed cat. Gotcha.") They find ways to pass the time (think toilet paper mummies) and also get to know one another. At only 73 pages (with a one-act playscript of the story at the end), this is an easy draw for those reluctant readers who may snub other longer books geared toward their age.



**Wolf Hollow by Lauren Wolk.** J Fiction, JCD

Annabelle's life is pretty uneventful up until Betty Glengarry moves to town. Betty looks nice enough, but she's a terrible bully, and shortly after starting school she stops Annabelle on her walk home and threatens to hurt her younger brothers if Annabelle doesn't bring her something the next day. When Annabelle refuses, Betty hits her with a tree branch, and then really does go after her brothers. And it's not just Annabelle who becomes Betty's target. Toby is somewhat of a recluse in their small town. He came back from the war with both mental and physical scars, and has set up home in an abandoned mill and spends his days roaming the woods. He doesn't invite or encourage contact with anyone in town, but Annabelle's family regularly leaves him clothes and food. When Betty accuses him of a terrible crime, everyone in town believes her. Only Annabelle has seen the real Betty and knows what she is capable of. But how can Annabelle convince everyone else of Toby's innocence? One reviewer compared this to *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Recommended for mature readers in grades 5 and up.

