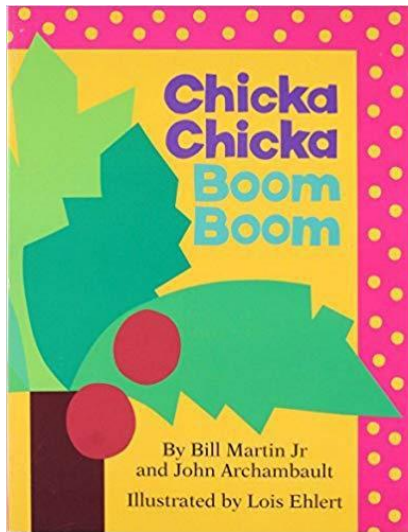




**Back by Popular Demand: This year we interviewed the real book critics. This edition of RMU Recommends was approved by kids of every age.**

## **Books for Kids Ages 5-18**

The book cover for "Llama Destroys the World" has a bright red background with white stars. The title "LLAMA DESTROYS THE WORLD" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below the title is a cartoon illustration of a yellow llama with a speech bubble that says "I am Llama". At the bottom, the author's name "JONATHAN STUTZMAN" and the illustrator's name "ILLUSTRATED BY HEATHER FOX" are printed in white.	<p><b>Book Title:</b> <u>Llama Destroys the World</u></p> <p><b>Author:</b> Jonathan Stutzman</p> <p><b>Summary:</b> Meet Llama, the next great picture-book megastar, who has most definitely driven a bus and who loves tacos way more than you. He also loves cake and that's where our story begins. On Monday, Llama discovers a pile of cake, which he promptly eats. On Tuesday, Llama squeezes into his dancing pants, which he promptly rips. The force of the rip creates a black hole (naturally). By Friday, Llama will (indirectly) destroy the world.</p> <p><b>Kid's Review:</b> "This book makes me laugh because the Llama is so silly when he dances. The pictures are funny, too!" – Babu, age 8</p>
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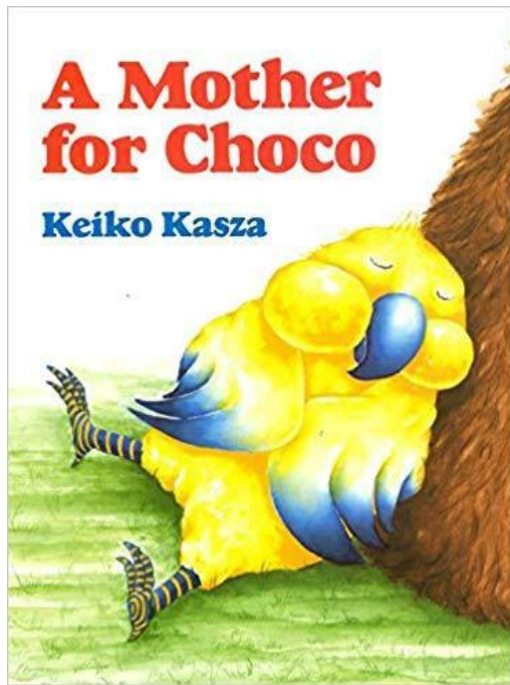


**Book Title:** Chicka Chicka Boom Boom

**Author:** Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault

**Summary:** Chicka Chicka Boom Boom is about letters from the alphabet. They fall out of a coconut tree. Then they climb back up the coconut tree. It is so funny! Readers learn about have fun with rhyming and letter recognition. You can even sing a song to go along with the book.

**Kid's Review:** "My favorite part of the book is when the letters all fall down. Some get hurt and some get twisted all up! It is so funny. I love this book because you learn stuff and laugh at the same time." - Sarah, age 5

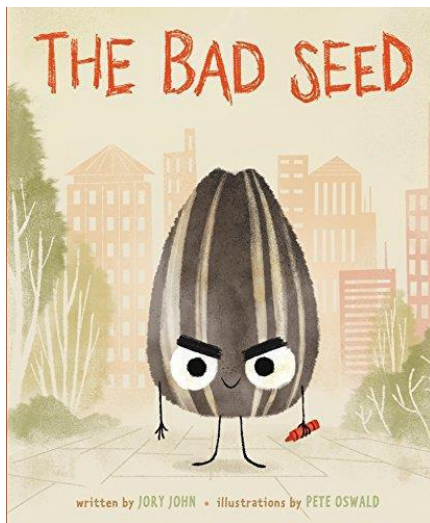


**Book Title:** A Mother for Choco

**Author:** Keiko Kasza

**Summary:** Choco wishes he had a mother, but who could she be? He sets off to find her, asking all kinds of animals, but he doesn't meet anyone who looks just like him. He doesn't even think of asking Mrs. Bear if she's his mother but then she starts to do just the things a mommy might do. When she brings him home, he meets her other children which include a piglet, a hippo, and an alligator. He learns that families can come in all shapes and sizes and still fit together.

**Kid's Review:** "All Choco wants is a mother, and when he finds her he is so happy- that makes me happy!" – Daniel, age 5

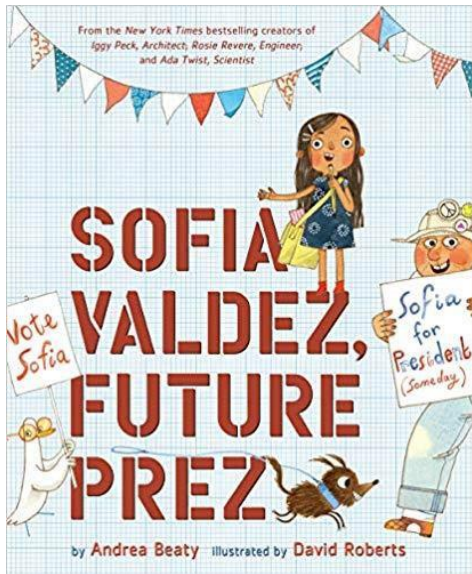


**Book Title:** The Bad Seed

**Author:** Jory John

**Summary:** This is a book about a bad seed. A baaaaaaaaaad seed. How bad? Do you really want to know? He has a bad temper, bad manners, and a bad attitude. He's been bad since he can remember! This seed cuts in line every time, stares at everybody and never listens. But what happens when one mischievous little seed changes his mind about himself, and decides that he wants to be—happy?

**Kid's Review:** "It's not nice to call anyone bad, because no one is bad all the time. He decides to be good, and he realizes how fun it is!" – Mikey, age 6

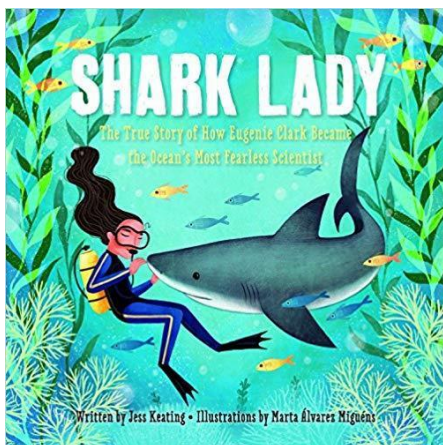


**Book Title:** Sofia Valdez, Future Prez

**Author:** Andrea Beaty

**Summary:** Every morning, Abuelo walks Sofia to school . . . until one day, when Abuelo hurts his ankle at a local landfill and he can no longer do so. Sofia (aka Sofi) misses her Abuelo and wonders what she can do about the dangerous Mount Trashmore. Then she gets an idea—the town can turn the slimy mess into a park! She brainstorms and plans and finally works up the courage to go to City Hall—only to be told by a clerk that she can't build a park because she's just a kid! Sofia is down but not out, and she sets out to prove what one kid can do.

**Kid's Review:** "I think it's cool that she saw a problem and tried to make it better. Sofia is making her world a better place."  
- Dylan, age 8



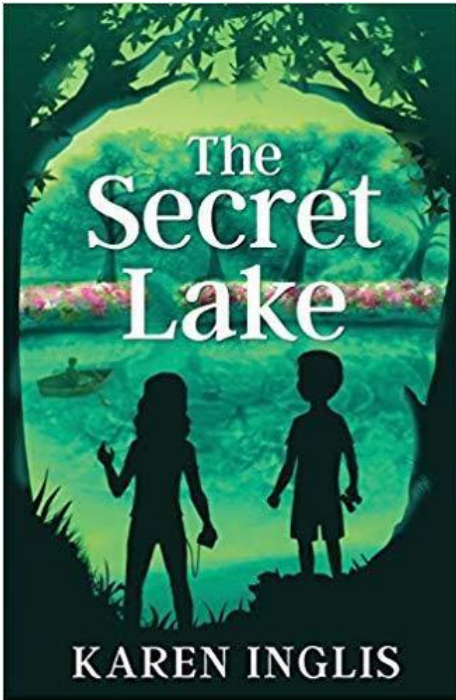
**Book Title:** Shark Lady: The True Story of how Eugenie Clark Became the Ocean's Most Fearless Scientist

**Author:** Jess Keating

**Summary:** Eugenie Clark fell in love with sharks from the first moment she saw them at the aquarium. She couldn't imagine anything more exciting than studying these graceful creatures. But Eugenie quickly discovered that many people believed sharks to be ugly and scary—and they didn't think women should be scientists.

**Kid's Review:** "Girls can do anything boys can do! So I love the Shark Lady." – Mae, age 8

## Books for Kids Ages 9-12



**Book Title:** The Secret Lake

**Author:** Karen Inglis

**Summary:** When Stella and her younger brother, Tom, move to their new London home, they become mystified by the disappearances of Harry, their elderly neighbor's small dog. Where does he go? And why does he keep reappearing wet?

Their quest to solve the riddle over the summer holidays leads to a boat buried under a grassy mound, and a tunnel that takes them to a secret lake. Stella and Tom soon discover that they have travelled back in time to their home and its gardens almost 100 years earlier. Here they make both friends and enemies and uncover startling connections between the past and present.

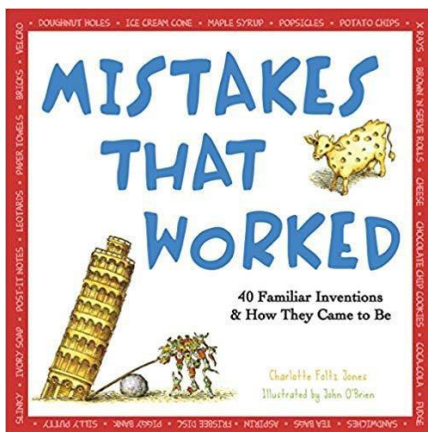
**Kid's Review:** "The kids go to a secret lake where they go back in time. They have to learn to work together to overcome fights with their nemesis to get back home." - Hannah, age 12

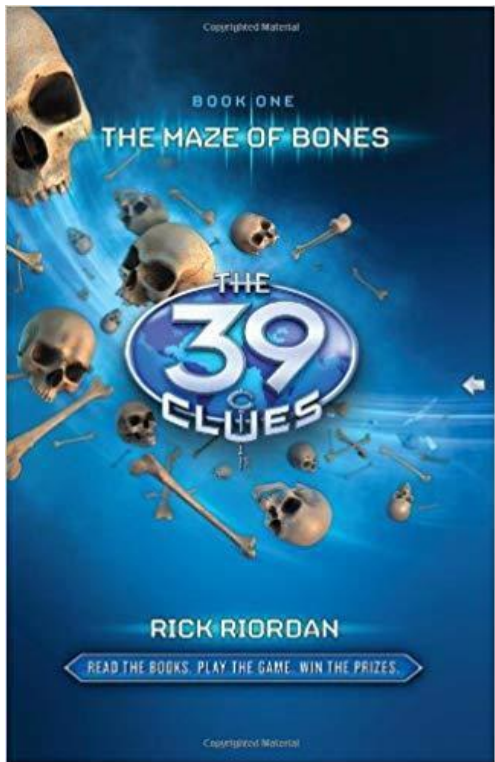
**Book Title:** Mistakes that Worked: 40 Familiar Inventions and How They Came to Be

**Author:** Charlotte Foltz Jones

**Summary:** SANDWICHES came about when an English Earl was too busy gambling to eat his meal and needed to keep one hand free. POTATO CHIPS were first cooked by a chef who was furious when a customer complained that his fried potatoes weren't thin enough. Coca-Cola, Silly Putty, and X rays have fascinating stories behind them too! Their unusual tales, and many more, along with hilarious cartoons and weird, amazing facts, make up this fun-filled book about everyday items that had surprisingly haphazard beginnings.

**Kid's Review:** "Everybody makes mistakes but these lucky ducks made really smart mistakes that we still do today" -Max, age 11



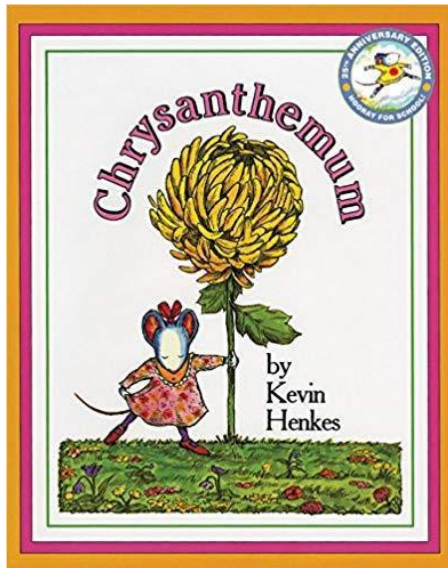


**Book Title:** The 39 Clues: The Maze of Bones

**Author:** Rick Riordan

**Summary:** Amy and Dan realize how large their family really is at Grandma Grace's funeral. Relatives from all over come to pay their respects and are given a special challenge. Grandma provides clues to a mystery that they must solve to win the inheritance and become the richest, most powerful Cahill family member OR they can take one million dollars and walk away. What would you choose?

**Kid's Review:** "This book has tons of clues that you have to keep reading to answer. I kept reading to find out what was going to happen to Amy and Dan" – Shannon age 12

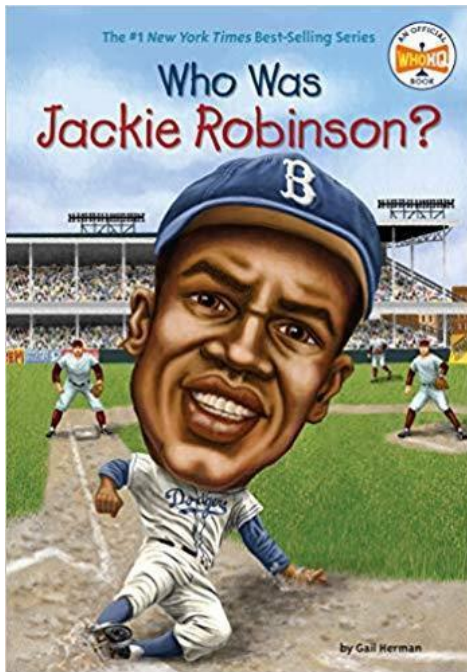


**Book Title:** Chrysanthemum

**Author:** Kevin Henkes

**Summary:** Chrysanthemum thinks her name is absolutely perfect—until her first day of school. "You're named after a flower!" teases Victoria. "Let's smell her," says Jo. Chrysanthemum wilts. What will it take to make her blossom again?

**Kid's Review:** "This book showed me that even if you get teased about something, you can find a way to still feel special. Any kid can get teased but you have to be stronger. That's why I like this book!" – Grant, age 9

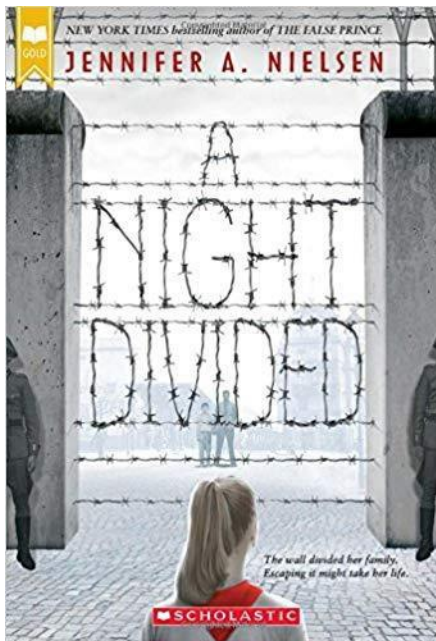


**Book Title:** Who Was Jackie Robinson

**Author:** Gail Herman

**Summary:** Jackie Robinson was an important man in history. He had a tough life growing up during the time of racial segregation. Black people didn't have the same rights as white people. They didn't go to the same schools and were made to sit in the back of buses. But guess what? Jackie Robinson became the first black man in major league baseball. How did he do that? You will have to read the book to find out! Jackie was rookie of the year the first year he played. Two years later he became the MVP of the National League. He and the Dodgers went on to win the World Series and after he retired, he was voted into the Hall of Fame.

**Kid's Review:** "I would recommend this book to anyone, if you like baseball or not. Jackie Robinson was a great baseball player who changed the world by being strong enough to prove that it doesn't matter what color your skin is. Everyone can dream!!" – Nathan, age 11



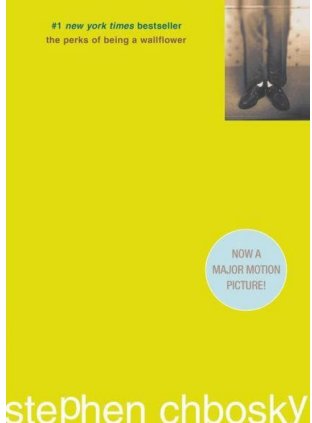
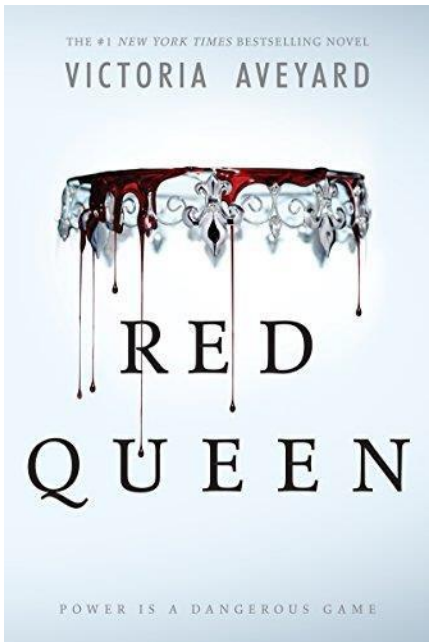
**Book Title:** A Night Divided

**Author:** Jennifer A. Nielsen

**Summary:** With the rise of the Berlin Wall, Gerta finds her family suddenly divided. She, her mother, and her brother Fritz live on the eastern side, controlled by the Soviets. Her father and middle brother, who had gone west in search of work, cannot return home. Gerta knows it is dangerous to watch the wall, yet she can't help herself. She sees the East German soldiers with their guns turned on their own citizens; she, her family, her neighbors and friends are prisoners in their own city.

**Kid's Review:** "This is a book that always keeps the reader guessing, and you never know what will happen next. You will like this book if you enjoy historical fiction and mysteries. I like this book simply because I could not put it down, because I wanted to know what was going to happen." – Marco, age 12

## Books for Teens

	<p><b>Book Title:</b> <u>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</u></p> <p><b>Author:</b> Stephen Chbosky</p> <p><b>Summary:</b> The critically acclaimed debut novel from Stephen Chbosky, Perks follows observant “wallflower” Charlie as he charts a course through the strange world between adolescence and adulthood. First dates, family drama, and new friends. Sex, drugs, and The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Devastating loss, young love, and life on the fringes. Caught between trying to live his life and trying to run from it, Charlie must learn to navigate those wild and poignant roller-coaster days known as growing up.</p> <p><b>Kid Review:</b> “High School isn’t always G rated, and this book isn’t either. But Charlie’s perspective is one I identify with.” - Hannah, age 16</p>
	<p><b>Book Title:</b> <u>Red Queen</u></p> <p><b>Author:</b> Victoria Aveyard</p> <p><b>Summary:</b> Mare Barrow's world is divided by blood—those with common, Red blood serve the Silver-blooded elite, who are gifted with superhuman abilities. Mare is a Red, scraping by as a thief in a poor, rural village, until a twist of fate throws her in front of the Silver court. Before the king, princes, and all the nobles, she discovers she has an ability of her own. One wrong move can lead to her death, but in the dangerous game she plays, the only certainty is betrayal.</p> <p><b>Kid Review:</b> “I picked this book because it has an action filled plot along with a love story. There are unexpected plot twists that really kept my interest!!” – Emily, age 15</p>



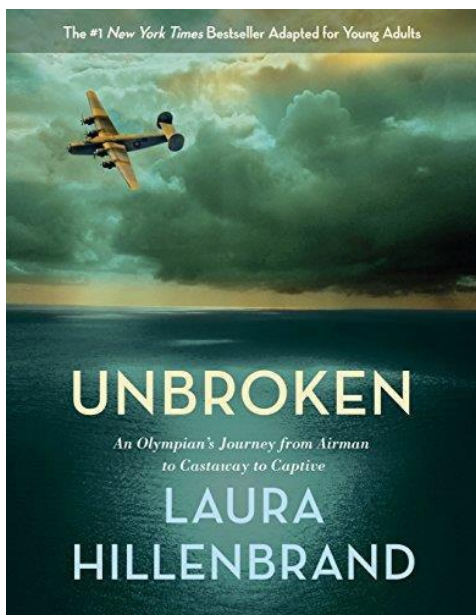


**Book Title:** The Outsiders

**Author:** S.E. Hinton

**Summary:** No one ever said life was easy. But Ponyboy is pretty sure that he's got things figured out. He knows that he can count on his brothers, Darry and Sodapop. And he knows that he can count on his friends—true friends who would do anything for him, like Johnny and Two-Bit. But not on much else besides trouble with the Socs, a vicious gang of rich kids whose idea of a good time is beating up on “greasers” like Ponyboy. At least he knows what to expect—until the night someone takes things too far.

**Kid Review:** “Throughout the novel, Ponyboy is in a constant battle between what is right and what is wrong, and struggles to understand how privilege affects those within his society. He and his buddies must find a way in which to be accepted into a world that views them as outsiders. This book is my favorite because it is relatable to teenagers and how cliques affect the characters. Each character is unique and well developed. It is an easy read and extremely enjoyable!” – Liv age 18



**Book Title:** Unbroken

**Author:** Laura Hillenbrand

**Summary:** In boyhood, Louis Zamperini was an incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when World War II began, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that led to a doomed flight on a May afternoon in 1943. When his Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean, against all odds, Zamperini survived, adrift on a foundering life raft. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will.

**Kid Review:** “Hillenbrand presents the audience with Louie Zamperini's life story. This American hero fought in the Pacific during World War II, and lived through the toughest of conditions, where the chance of survival were low. The story encapsulates the uncapped potential of human resilience, and the true prevail of good over evil.” Luke, age 18