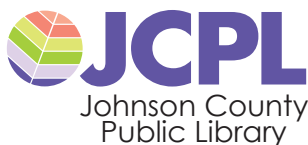


# 2023 Holiday Book Gift Guide



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The Book Gift Guide 2023 is a list compiled by the Johnson County Public Library staff.

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## EARLY READERS

### **"Big" by Vashti Harrison**

Praised for acting like a big girl when she is small, as a young girl grows, "big" becomes a word of criticism until the girl realizes that she is fine just the way she is.

### **"Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Sleigh" by Mo Willems**

The pigeon really, really wants to drive Santa's sleigh but reconsiders once he learns how it flies.

### **"The Skull: A Tyrolean Folktale" by Jon Klassen**

In a big abandoned house on a barren hill lives a skull. A brave girl named Otilla has escaped from terrible danger and runs away, and when she finds herself lost in the dark forest, the lonely house beckons. Her host, the skull, is afraid of something, too, something that comes every night. Can brave Otilla save them both?

### **"The Library Fish Learns to Read" by Alyssa Satin Capucilli**

Library Fish, who calls the library her home, decides it is time to learn to do what everyone around her loves doing--read.

### **"This Little Kitty" by Karen Obuhanych**

This picture book catches rascally kittens being their adorable (and mischievous!) selves from morning to nap to night.

### **"Nell Plants a Tree" by Anne Wynter**

Three generations of a family grow up and come together around one pecan tree.

### **"The Very Best Hug" by Smriti Halls**

From bear hugs to koala cuddles, hippo huddles to walrus wiggles, penguin pecks to porcupine prickles, there are a lot of hugs to choose from. But the perfect hug may not be far. In fact, it might be right where you are! The ones at home who love you the best give the best hugs of all.

### **“Oona in the Arctic” by Kelly DiPucchio**

A mermaid and her otter friend go on a journey to help a lost beluga whale return to the Arctic.

### **“Real Princesses Change the World” by Carrie A. Pearson**

This picture book compiles biographies of 11 princesses, highlighting who they truly are: diplomats, engineers, activists, athletes, and so much more. It focuses on their achievements and contributions, situating them as active global and local community members. From Nigeria to Japan, Saudi Arabia to Sweden, and Thailand to Tonga. This picture book takes readers on a trip that spans the whole world.

### **“Wei Skates On” by Nathan Chen**

Olympic gold medalist and three-time World Champion Nathan Chen delivers an inspirational picture book about facing your fears and finding joy in sports, no matter the outcome. Wei has loved ice skating ever since his first visit to the rink. He loves gliding across the ice, taking flight on jumps, and moving with the music--there's nothing else like it! But as Wei's first big competition draws near, he begins to worry. He's been training hard, but what if he doesn't win? With help from Mom, can Wei find a way to handle his nerves? What would it feel like to skate without the pressure of winning?

## JUVENILE AGES 8 - 12

### **“The Boy with Wings” by Lenny Henry**

When Tunde sprouts wings and learns he's all that stands between Earth and total destruction, suddenly, school is the least of his problems. Luckily, his rag-tag group of pals has got his back, and with his new powers, Tunde is ready to fly in the face of danger. So what if he can't even stand up to the school bully? He's the boy with wings--this is his destiny. No pressure then.

### **“Greenwild: The World Behind the Door” by Pari Thomson**

Eleven-year-old Daisy Thistledown is on the run. Her mother has been keeping big, glittering secrets, and now she has vanished. Daisy knows it's up to her to find Ma-- but someone is hunting her across London. So when Daisy flees to safety through a mysterious hidden doorway, she can barely believe her eyes--she has stepped out of the city and into another world. This is the Greenwild. Bursting with magic and full of amazing natural wonders, it seems too astonishing to be true. This land of green magic is real and holds the key to finding Daisy's mother. And someone wants to destroy it. Daisy must band together with a botanical genius, a boy who can talk with animals, and a cat with an attitude to uncover the truth about who she really is. Only then can she channel the power that will change her whole world . . . and save the Greenwild itself.



**“Maizy Chen’s Last Chance” by Lisa Yee**

Eleven-year-old Maizy Chen visits her estranged grandparents, who own and run a Chinese restaurant in Last Chance, Minnesota; as her visit lengthens, she makes unexpected discoveries about her family’s history and herself.

**“The Museum of Lost and Found” by Leila Sales**

When eleven-year-old Vanessa discovers an abandoned museum, she starts filling it with her projects, art, and memories, thinking maybe if she can put them all together in the right way, she can finally understand why she and her relationship are the way they are.

**“Once There Was” by Kiyash Monsef**

When fifteen-year-old Iranian American Marjan discovers her murdered father was secretly a veterinarian to magical creatures, she realizes she must take up his mantle despite the many dangers.

**“Lasagna Means I Love You” by Kate O’Shaughnessy**

When eleven-year-old foster kid Mo finds a handmade cookbook filled with someone else’s family recipes, she collects the stories behind them. She builds a website to share them, secretly hoping a long-lost relative will find her and give her a family recipe all her own.

**“The Wild Robot Protects” by Peter Brown**

Witnessing the devastation caused by the poisonous tide, Roz, the wild robot, sets out to stop it in order to save her island and everything she loves, encountering amazing geological formations and incredible creatures along the way.

**“You Are Here: Connecting Flights” edited by Ellen Oh**

In a crowded Chicago airport, an incident at TSA impacts twelve young Asian Americans, all strangers to one another before this day. As events cause their journeys to intertwine, they discover the challenges of friendship, the perils of younger siblings, the power of words, and the unexpected significance of a blue Stratocaster electric guitar.

## GRAPHIC NOVELS

**“Misfit Mansion” by Kay Davault**

“Misfit Mansion” is a spooky-sweet graphic novel about a monster girl who sneaks into a human town to find a family for herself and her mythical housemates, only to unravel long-kept secrets.

**“Sunshine” by Jarrett Krosoczka**

The author shares his extraordinary experiences as a counselor at Camp Sunshine, a camp for seriously ill kids and their families. It is here he meets campers and fellow counselors who forever change the course of his life.



### **“The Princess and the Grilled Cheese Sandwich” by Deya Muniz**

Lady Camembert wants to live life on her terms, without marriage. Well, without marrying a man, that is. But the law of the land is that women cannot inherit. So when her father passes away, she does the only thing she can: She disguises herself as a man and moves to the capital city of the Kingdom of Fromage to start over as Count Camembert. But it's hard to keep a low profile when the beautiful Princess Brie catches her attention with her fierce activism and great sense of fashion. Camembert can't resist getting to know the princess, but as the two grow closer, will she be able to keep her secret?

### **“Squished” by Megan Wagner Lloyd**

Tired of feeling squished by her six siblings, 11-year-old aspiring artist Avery Lee hatches a plan to finally get her room until everything around her gets complicated, especially when she finds out her family might move across the country.

### **“Bea Wolf” by Zach Weinersmith**

When their evil neighbor, also known as the guardian of gloom, lays siege to Treeheart, a kid-forged sanctuary, turning them into pimply teenagers and sullen adults, the survivors of the onslaught call out for Bea Wolf—an unbreakable warrior with a penchant for mischief.

### **“Lo and Behold” by Wendy Mass**

With her life recently turned upside down, 12-year-old Addie is uncomfortable in her own skin. Until the virtual reality world sparks her imagination and leads to an exciting new project, a new friend, and reconnecting with who she's always been.

### **“Belle of the Ball” by Mari Costa**

Wallflower and high school mascot Belle Hawkins, who will do anything to get closer to her crush Regina, agrees to tutor Regina's girlfriend, Chloe, but soon finds herself caught in the middle of a love triangle when she also catches unexpected feelings for Chloe.

### **“The Moth Keeper” by Kay O'Neill**

Kit is excited to prove her worth as a Moth Keeper, a protector of the lunar moths that allow the Night-Lily flower to bloom once a year. Still, she quickly finds that life as a Moth Keeper is not what she imagined.

### **“Monstrous: A Transracial Adoption Story” by Sarah Myer**

Bullied by her classmates, Sarah, a Korean-American girl growing up in a rural community with few Asian neighbors, channels her rage into her art and cosplay until it threatens to explode.



# YOUNG ADULT

## **“The Stolen Heir” by Holly Black**

Hiding in the human world, Suren, the tormented child queen of the Court of Teeth, must guard her heart against a manipulative prince she cannot trust when she agrees to join him on a mysterious quest.

## **“Fake Dates and Mooncakes” by Sher Lee**

Dylan Tang wants to win a Mid-Autumn Festival mooncake-making competition for teen chefs in memory of his mom and to bring much-needed publicity to his aunt’s struggling Chinese takeout in Brooklyn. Enter Theo Somers: charming, wealthy, with a smile that makes Dylan’s stomach do backflips. Their worlds are sun and moon apart, but Theo keeps showing up. He even convinces Dylan to be his fake date at a family wedding in the Hamptons. In Theo’s glittering world of pomp, privilege, and crazy rich drama, their romance is supposed to be pretend. . . but Dylan finds himself falling for Theo. Then Theo’s relatives reveal their true colors—but with the mooncake contest looming, Dylan can’t risk being sidetracked by rich people’s problems. Can Dylan save his family’s business and follow his heart—or will he fail to do both?

## **“Under This Forgetful Sky” by Lauren Yero**

When rebels infect his father with a fatal virus, 16-year-old Rumi escapes the armored walls of St. Iago to find a cure. He is joined on his journey by 15-year-old Paz but wonders if they can trust each other enough to imagine a different world.

## **“Seven Faceless Saints” by M.K. Lobb**

During Omrazia’s Second War of Saints, former friends Rossana Lacertosa and Damian Venturi—she is a rebel who wants to dismantle the corrupt system responsible for her father’s death while he is the young head of security who serves the city and the saints with unswerving devotion—must work together to investigate murders within the city.

## **“The Love Match” by Priyanka Taslim**

When her mother sets her up with handsome, aloof Harun, eighteen-year-old Bangladeshi American Zahra pretends to date him. At the same time, she pursues her coworker, Nayim, but she quickly finds herself second-guessing her true feelings.

## **“The Davenports” by Krystal Marquis**

Inspired by the real-life story of C.R. Patterson and his family, this sweeping novel centers around Davenports, one of the few Black families of immense wealth. It follows four determined and passionate young Black women who discover the courage to take charge of their lives—and love.



**“Threads That Bind” by Kika Hatzopoulou**

In a world where the children of the gods inherit their powers, Io, a descendant of the Greek Fates, must solve a series of impossible murders to save her sisters, her soulmate, and her city.

**“She is a Haunting” by Trang Thanh Tran**

Seventeen-year-old bisexual Jade Nguyn is spending the summer in Vietnam at the French colonial house her estranged father is fixing up as a vacation rental, but unbeknownst to her family, the house and its ghosts have other plans.

## ADULT NONFICTION

**“Of Time and Turtles: Mending the World, Shell by Shattered Shell” by Sy Montgomery**

A National Book Award finalist for *The Soul of an Octopus* and New York Times best-seller turns her journalistic curiosity to the wonder and wisdom of our long-lived cohabitants—turtles—and through their stories of hope and rescue, reveals to us astonishing new perspectives on time and healing.

**“The Half Known Life: In Search of Paradise” by Pico Iyer**

From Iran to North Korea, from the Dalai Lama’s Himalayas to the ghostly temples of Japan, this thought-provoking book tracing the author’s almost 50-year journey around the world, offers a surprising, original, often beautiful exploration of how we might come upon paradise in the midst of our lives.

**“Interstellar: The Search for Extraterrestrial Life and Our Future in the Stars” by Avi Loeb**

Combining cutting-edge science, physics and philosophy, the New York Times best-selling author of *Extraterrestrial* revolutionizes the approach to our search for extraterrestrial life and our preparation for it, showing how this interaction will be essential for humanity’s survival.

**“King: A Life” by Jonathan Eig**

Drawing on recently declassified FBI files, this first significant biography in decades of the civil rights icon reveals the courageous and often emotionally troubled man who demanded peaceful protest but was rarely at peace with himself while showing how his demands for racial and economic justice remain just as urgent today.





**“What’s Gotten into You: The Story of Your Body’s Atoms, from the Big Bang Through Last Night’s Dinner” by Dan Levitt**

In this enlightening, entertaining and eminently readable book, a science and history documentarian brings to life the story of our atoms’ long strange journey from the Big Bang to the creation of stars, through the assembly of our world and the formation of life as we know it.

**“The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny and Murder” by David Grann**

In this tale of shipwreck, survival and savagery, the #1 New York Times best-selling author of *Killers of the Flower Moon* recounts the events on His Majesty’s Ship *The Wager*, a British vessel that left England in 1740 on a secret mission, resulting in a court-martial that revealed a shocking truth.

**“Life in Five Senses: How Exploring the Senses Got Me Out of My Head and into the World” by Gretchen Rubin**

Drawing on cutting-edge science, philosophy, literature and her efforts to practice what she learns, the #1 New York Times best-selling author of *The Happiness Project* offers profound insights and practical suggestions for heightening our senses and using our powers of perception to live richer lives.

**“The Watchmaker’s Daughter: The True Story of World War II Heroine Corrie Ten Boom” by Larry Loftis**

This first major biography of the female Dutch watchmaker who sheltered Jews from the Nazis at the cost of losing her family and being sent to a concentration camp, shows how, upon her release, she embraced the power of forgiveness to minister to people in need around the world.

**“Queen of the Court: The Many Lives of Tennis Legend Alice Marble” by Madeleine Blais**

A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist presents the dramatic and untold story of legendary tennis star and one of America’s greatest female athletes, Alice Marble, a glamorous worldwide celebrity known for best for helping break tennis’s color barrier, who had previously remained largely forgotten until now.

**“The Burning of the World: The Great Chicago Fire and the War for a City’s Soul” by Scott W. Berg**

Recounting one of the most infamous natural disasters in history—the 1871 Great Chicago Fire, this gripping book traces the fire’s devastating path and its aftermath during which a new political order rose out of the ashes, causing a power struggle over the city’s future.



# ADULT FICTION

**“The Sunset Years of Agnes Sharp” by Leonie Swann** - When Agnes and the other inhabitants of Sunset Hall, a house share for the old and unruly in the sleepy English countryside, investigate the murder of their neighbor while covering up another, they step out of their comfort zone to tangle with inept criminals, the local authorities and their dark secrets.

**“An American in Scotland” by Lucy Connolly**

Leaving Seattle for a small-town doctor position in Scotland, Dr. Emilia McRoy continually butts heads with the unhelpful local constable when she stumbles across a dead body, which goes missing before she can even begin the autopsy.

**“All the Sinners Bleed” by S. A. Crosby**

Former FBI agent Titus Crown returns to his hometown and decides to run for sheriff to fight a bigoted police force. He must trust his instincts when a serial killer appears to be hiding in plain sight.

**“A Line in the Sand” by Kevin Powers**

A former interpreter in Iraq who lost his wife and child in an assassination attempt discovers a dead body on the beach in Virginia and believes it is connected to his past.

**“With My Little Eye” by Joshilyn Jackson**

To escape a relentless – and increasingly unhinged – stalker, actress Meribel Mills, along with her daughter, moves from Los Angeles to Atlanta for a fresh start only to find herself alone in the fight of her life, desperate to protect those she loves as danger closes in from all sides.

**“Symphony of Secrets” by Brendan Slocumb**

When he is asked to authenticate a newly discovered piece from famed 20th-century composer Frederick Delaney, Bern Hendricks uncovers clues that indicate Delaney may have had help composing his most successful work, which makes him a target of a powerful organization that will stop at nothing to keep its secret hidden.

**“The Last Ranger” by Peter Heller**

While investigating the background of a local poacher, Officer Ren Hopper, an enforcement ranger at Yellowstone National Park, discovers a frightening conspiracy in this masterful portrait of the American West where greed, love, family and community play out amidst the stunning beauty of the natural world.



### **“Whalefall” by Daniel Kraus**

Diving in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Monastery Beach to find the remains of his deceased father, Jay Gardiner, in a terrifying turn of events, is swallowed by a sperm whale and has only one hour before his oxygen tanks run out—one hour to defeat his demons and escape.

### **“The September House” by Carissa Orlando**

Determined to stay in her dream home—a haunted Victorian in which, every September, the walls drip blood, Margaret, when her husband leaves abruptly, finds every attempt made at finding him causes the hauntings to grow more harrowing because there are some secrets the house needs to keep.

### **“Land of Milk and Honey” by C. Pam Zhang**

Accepting a job at a decadent mountaintop colony, a young chef, with the help of her enigmatic employer and his visionary daughter, is awakened to the pleasures of taste, touch and her own body until she is pushed beyond her boundaries in a plot to reshape the world far beyond the plate.

### **“Starter Villain” by John Scalzi**

When his long-lost uncle dies, leaving him his supervillain business, Charlie, as rich, soulless predators backed by multinational corporations and venture capital come after him, finds going bad looking pretty good with unionized dolphins, hyperintelligent talking spy cats and a terrifying henchperson at his side.

### **“The Fragile Threads of Power” by V. E. Schwab**

As two royals fight to keep their crowns amidst old friends and new enemies in fantastical realms connected by a single city—London, a girl with an unusual magical ability comes into possession of a device that could bring them together—or unravel it all.

### **“Forever Home” by Graham Norton**

When Declan, the love of her life, becomes ill, Carol, a divorced teacher living in a small town in Ireland, is forced out of their beloved home by his untrusting and cruel children and moves back with her parents where her mother becomes determined to get to the bottom of things.

### **“The Happy Life of Isadora Bentley” by Courtney Walsh**

What happens when a desperately lonely woman stumbles upon a magazine article outlining the “31 Ways to be Happy” and decides to use it as a last-ditch attempt to turn her life around?





### **“Other Birds” by Sarah Addison Allen**

Arriving on Mallow Island, right off the coast of South Carolina, to claim her late mother’s apartment, Zoey meets her eccentric and secretive neighbors, including a girl on the run, a lonely chef, a legendary writer and three ghosts, each with their own stories whose endings haven’t been written yet.

### **“Gay Best Friend” by Nicolas Didomizio**

He’s always been the token gay best friend. Now, stuck between a warring bride and groom hurtling toward their one perfect day, he’s finally ready to focus on something new: himself.

### **“Cleat Cute” by Meryl Wilsner**

Sideline with an injury, 26-year-old Grace Henderson, a star of the US Women’s National Team, falls for Phoebe Matthews, whom she considers her rival, and as the World Cup approaches and Grace gets back in the game, they must decide what’s more important—being together or making the roster.

### **“Better Hate Than Never” by Chloe Liese**

Making a rare visit home, Katerina Wilmot finds her and Christopher Petruchio’s fiery animosity rekindled into a raging inferno until a drunken night leads to a confession and an impassioned kiss, forcing them to decide if it’s truly better to hate than never to risk their hearts.

### **“Knockout” by Sarah MacLean**

One of the Hell’s Belles—a group of vigilantes operating outside the notice of most of London; Lady Imogen Loveless, who has a penchant for experiments and explosives, meets her match in a brilliant detective who caught up in her chaotic world, tempts her like no other.

### **“Public Domain #1: Past Mistakes” by Chip Zdarsky**

Syd Dallas is responsible for pop culture’s greatest hero: THE DOMAIN! But his sons Miles and David have a complicated relationship with the creation and their creator. Can they convince their dad to fight for their family’s legacy?



