

Greater Victoria Public Library Staff Picks for Gift Giving this Christmas

Kids Books

Picture Books for Getting Cozy on the Couch

Everything I Need to Know Before I'm Five by Valorie Fisher (Schwartz & Wade, 2011)
This clever concept book with a vintage flavour will be sure to fascinate you and your child. Numbers, letters, shapes and many other concepts are illustrated with delightful photographs of adorable tiny dolls, animal figures and other toys. For ages 2-5

He Came With the Couch by David Slonim (Chronicle Books, 2005)
Have you ever bought more than you bargained for? When Sophie's family buys a new couch, it comes with a "thing" that resembles one of Jim Henson's muppets. This quirky picture book is both imaginative and funny. For ages 4-7

Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes by Eric Litwin. (HarperCollins, 2010)
This book is an instant hit! Pete the Cat sings his favourite song "I love my white shoes" while he takes life in stride. A colourful picture book about a hip blue cat which reminds us that when it comes to change "it's all good". For ages 3-7

Three by the Sea by Mini Grey (Random House, 2011)
Beware the Winds of Change and foxy Strangers bearing gifts! A quirky, engaging read that speaks to the meaning of happiness and true friendship. For ages 4-7

Christmas Books to Treasure

The Night Before Christmas by Jan Brett (G.P Putnam's Sons, 2008)
Jan Brett's lavish and detailed illustrations will appeal to children and adults and make this a perfect book for sharing around the fire. Clement Moore's poem will find a new generation of fans in Brett's tenth anniversary edition. For all ages

The Nutcracker by Karen Kain, paintings by Rajka Kupesic (Tundra, 2005)
Kain's lively retelling, along with Kupesic's radiant oil paintings, make for a new Canadian Christmas-time classic. Based on James Kudelka's production for the National Ballet of Canada, set amidst snowy Russian nights. For ages 3-7

How Santa Really Works by Alan Snow (Atheneum, 2007)
If you really, really want to know happens up at the North Pole, this is the book for you. Learn all the ins and outs of how Santa and his merry elves get it all done by Christmas Eve. For ages 6+

Easy Reading & Graphic Books

Benjamin Bear in Fuzzy Thinking by Philippe Coudray (Toon Books, 2011)
French comic book artist Philippe Coudray has created a funny and lovable character in Benjamin Bear. The easy-to-read comics published by Toon Books are a fun way for new readers to explore the world of graphic novels. For beginning readers.

Binky Under Pressure by Ashley Spire (Kids Can Press, 2011)

When Binky the cat finds an annoyingly well-mannered foster kitty named Gracie in his domain, it's time to find some dirt on the newest feline. This is the third book in the clever Canadian graphic novel series that features a cat that will appeal to fans of Chester and Garfield.

The Unsinkable Walker Bean by Aaron Renier (First Second, 2010)

Pirates, sea monsters, and a bespectacled boy inventor make for a thrilling graphic novel that will appeal to boys and girls. For ages 9+

We Are In A Book! By Mo Willems (Hyperion, 2010)

Gerald the elephant and Piggie are two cartoon characters that become aware they are being read in a book. It's surreal, it's silly, it's the kind of book you can read over and over. For beginning readers.

Novels for Sharing and Escaping Into (Middle Readers)

The Familiars by Adam Jay Epstein (HarperCollins, 2010)

The fate of three young wizards depends on the courage and ingenuity of their animal familiars. Full of adventure, magic and laughs – an entertaining family read-aloud. For ages 7-10

No Ordinary Day by Deborah Ellis (Groundwood Books, 2011)

Fans of Deborah Ellis' trilogy set in Afghanistan will find a new heroine to love: Valli is a tough, resourceful, hard working and kind-hearted girl who has spent most of her childhood in survival mode, scrabbling for coal in the Indian city of Jharia. For ages 8-12

Rise of the Darklings (The Invisible Order Book One) by Paul Crilley (EgmontUSA, 2010)

A fast-paced Victorian fantasy, in which piskies, goblins, faeries and the like live and wage war, hidden amongst ordinary Londoners. Emily and Jack risk life and limb to foil the vile Mr. Ravenhill and ultimately, save the city of London from the belligerent Faerie. Sequel: The Fire King (2011). For ages 8-12

The Whole Truth by Kit Pearson (HarperCollins Canada, 2011)

It's 1932 and times are tough for Polly and her older sister Maud. Their father is gone and the girls are being sent from Winnipeg to live with their unfamiliar grandmother on a tiny island off the coast of Vancouver Island. Victoria author, Kit Pearson has created a wonderful story of secrets, boarding school and the joys of island living. For ages 8-12

Information Books for Young Readers

Human Footprint: Everything You Will Eat, Use, Wear, Buy, and Throw Out in your Lifetime by Ellen Kirk (National Geographic, 2011)

This book provides a big picture overview of how our everyday consumption adds up over a lifetime. Flip through the pages and see, for example, how many pop cans the average human will consume in a lifetime. Filled with amusing facts and solutions for creating a sustainable way of living, this book will introduce younger minds to the dimensions of consumption.

Kaboom! Explosions of All Kinds by Gillian Richardson (Annick, 2009)

It's possible that all life started with a Big Bang! ...and ever since then we've been fascinated with explosions: volcanoes, geysers, popcorn, fireworks - this book explains combustion with colour and style and even addresses the question, Did explosions kill the dinosaurs?

Teen Books

Beauty Queens by Libba Bray (Scholastic, 2011)

A hilarious story is about a group of beauty queens whose plane crashes on a desert island. It's like Survivor in high heels with lots of digs at pageant princesses. Non-girly girls will rejoice at the snappy sarcasm throughout.

Castle Waiting by Linda Medley (Fantagraphics, 2009)

Have you ever wondered what happened after "Happily Ever After"? This graphic novel is a modern tale that incorporates fairytale characters and settings. Funny, thoughtful and not at all what you'd expect.

Daughter of Smoke & Bone by Laini Taylor (Little Brown 2011)

Set amidst the beauty of Prague, Karou is a 17 year old art student whose family lives within the pages of her sketchbook. She's well travelled, a master of several languages and grows blue hair from her beautiful head. A fast paced story of adventure, romance and the tensions between good and evil, with definite appeal to fans who have outgrown the *Twilight* series.

Death Benefits by Sarah Harvey (Orca Books, 2010)

Royce is new to Victoria, having moved across the country with his mother to keep a closer eye on his crusty, cranky and once famous grandfather. Humour, insight and familiar landmarks will appeal to teens who may have forgotten that their grandparents were once young. For ages 13+

Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs (Quirk Books, 2011)

Action, magic, romance, time travel and more. What makes this eerie book really special are the vintage black and white photographs scattered throughout: these wonderfully creepy photographs are all real, and they take the story to another level. A great crossover book for older teens and adult fans of gothic tales..