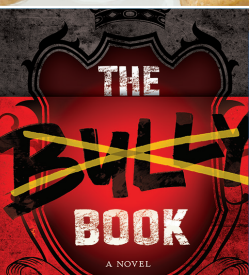
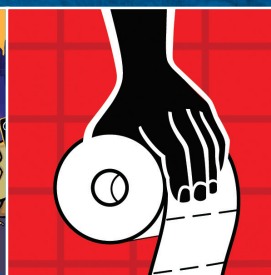


HARPERCOLLINS PRESENTS

# CLASS ACTS

★ ★ ★ AUTHORS IN THE CLASSROOM ★ ★ ★

## SUMMER READING GUIDE

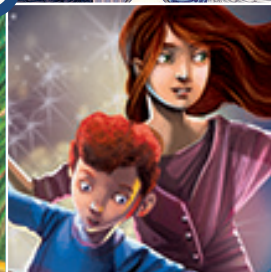
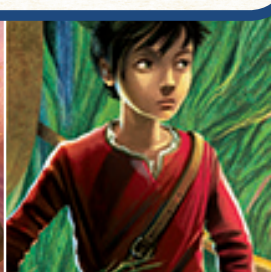
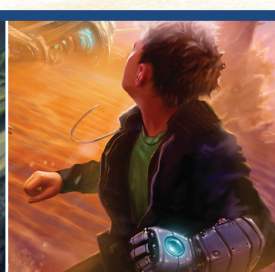
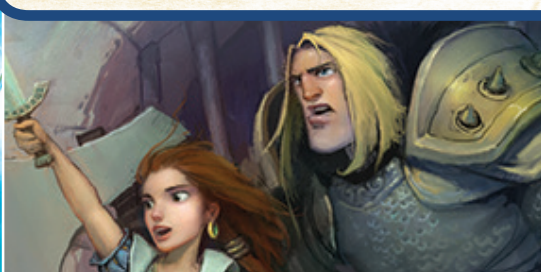
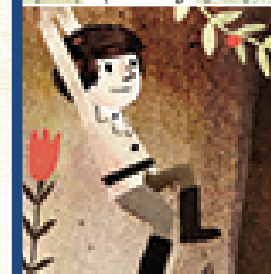


**Get your tweens reading this summer with our guide for parents, teachers, and librarians!**

### About Class Acts

We've paired classic middle grade authors with terrific newcomers to create our Class Acts Middle Grade program—and this guide to help you make Summer Reading a success in your home, school, or library! Within you'll find author and book information, discussion questions, and read-alikes, as well as details on how to integrate Class Acts into your classroom or library once summer is over.

Aligned to  
the Common  
Core State  
Standards



For more CLASS ACTS authors and books, visit [www.classactsbooks.com](http://www.classactsbooks.com)



HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks



# EPIC ADVENTURES

## SEVEN WONDERS BOOK 1: THE COLOSSUS RISES



Great for  
Grades:  
**5-7**

### ABOUT THE SERIES

No one ever asked Jack if he wanted to be a hero. He just has to be one. One kid. One mission. One big problem. The thrills begin in *The Colossus Rises*, the first installment in the adventure series, Seven Wonders.

### FOR FANS OF . . .

. . . Modern Adventure, Ancient Secrets, Epic Sagas, *Percy Jackson*, and The 39 Clues series!

## MEET THE AUTHOR

PETER LERANGIS is the author of more than one hundred and sixty books, including two books in the *New York Times* bestselling The 39 Clues series and one book in The 39 Clues: Cahills vs. Vespers series. Peter is a Harvard graduate with a degree in biochemistry. He has run a marathon and gone rock climbing during an earthquake—though not on the same day. Peter lives in New York City with his wife, musician Tina deVaron, and their two sons, Nick and Joe. In his spare time, he likes to eat chocolate.



Peter Lerangis  
"The Colossus of Class"

Photo by Joseph Aramath

### Discussion Questions

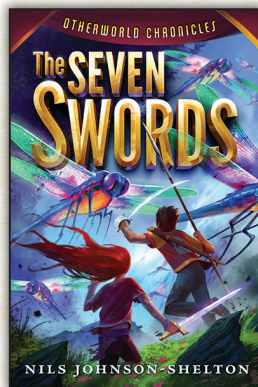
1. Why is Jack brought to the institute? What does he ultimately discover about himself that makes him important to their mission?
2. What powers do Jack and his friends possess as a result of this?
3. Can you name the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World? Why do you think people would create a list of Seven Wonders?
4. If you had to create a list of Seven Wonders of Your School, what would be on it?

Relates to CCSS ELA: Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.6.1, ELA: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.6.1, and ELA: Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.6.1.

## OTHERWORLD CHRONICLES



Great for  
Grades:  
**4-7**



### ABOUT THE SERIES

In Artie Kingfisher's world, wizards named Merlin, fire-breathing dragons, and swords called Excalibur exist only in legends and lore—until the day his video game Otherworld springs to life. Artie soon discovers that he is none other than King Arthur, brought to life in the twenty-first century—and he's about to embark on a quest worthy of the Knights of the Round Table.

### FOR FANS OF . . .

. . . Video Games, The Knights of the Round Table, Dragons, Epic Quests, and Septimus Heap!

## MEET THE AUTHOR

Hail, Readers! We present Sir NILS JOHNSON-SHELTON (not really a knight, but whatever), who would like nothing more than to play video games or go rock climbing. But alas, he cannot, because he must finish penning the Otherworld Chronicles series, which are three swashbuckling books full of derring-do written for the ages!



Nils Johnson-Shelton  
"The Knight Writer"

Photo by Bonnie Johnson

### Discussion Questions

1. Artie hints that he feels somewhat inferior to his sister Kay (p. 8 *Otherworld Chronicles: The Seven Swords*). Do you think Artie uses that as an excuse to blend into the background?
2. Artie asks Kynder about his adoption (p. 32), but doesn't get many answers. Do you think Artie would have gone back to the Invisible Tower if his origins weren't as mysterious?
3. Why do you think Kay and Artie have such a strong bond?
4. The idea of participating in a real-life battle is super scary to Artie. Do you think his video game expertise will serve as any kind of preparation for the real thing?

Relates to CCSS ELA: Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.1, ELA: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.5.1, and ELA: Reading: Foundational Skills: Fluency: RF.5.4.



# MADCAP MYSTERIES

## THE INCORRIGIBLE CHILDREN OF ASHTON PLACE

Great for  
Grades:  
**5-7**



### ABOUT THE SERIES

Of especially naughty children it is sometimes said: "They must have been raised by wolves." The Incurrable children actually were. Found running wild in the forest, the Incurrables are no ordinary children. Luckily, Miss Penelope Lumley is no ordinary governess. Can Penelope successfully instruct her young charges while also solving the many mysteries of Ashton Place?

### FOR FANS OF . . .

. . . Mysteries, Madcap Adventure, Satire, Jane Eyre, Governesses, and Lemony Snicket!

### MEET THE AUTHOR

MARYROSE WOOD is the author of the Incurrable Children of Ashton Place series. Although she was never enrolled at the Swanburne Academy for Poor Bright Females, she attended other less interesting schools. In addition, she has experience as a professional thespian, a governess (well, a mother), and is the owner of several rather spoiled pets. For more information, visit [www.maryrosewood.com](http://www.maryrosewood.com).



Maryrose Wood  
"The Wild Child"

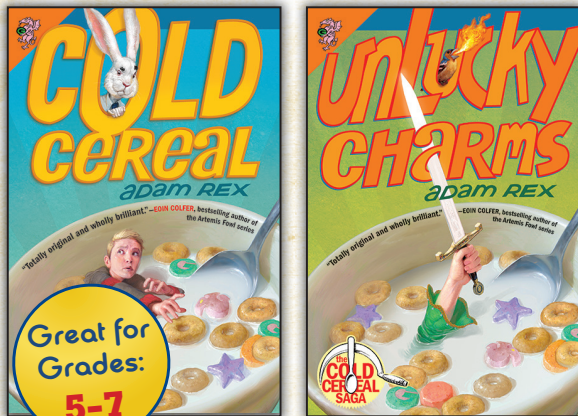
The Snicket

### Discussion Questions

1. What does incurrable mean? Why are the children of Ashton Place considered incurrable?
2. What is foreshadowing? How does the author incorporate it into the story, especially on Penelope's journey to Ashton Place?
3. Lord Fredrick picks out names for the children. Why do you think he chooses these names? What do his choices say about his own personality?
4. Do you think Lady Constance cares about the Incurrables? Why or why not?

Relates to CCSS ELA: Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.6.1, ELA: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.6.1, and ELA: Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.6.1.

## THE COLD CEREAL SAGA



Great for  
Grades:  
**5-7**

### ABOUT THE SERIES

Magic, adventure, and humor abound in this trilogy about three kids who must save the world from the diabolical schemes of an evil breakfast cereal company that has been luring magical creatures to our world through a rift in the time-space continuum. (Really!)

### FOR FANS OF . . .

. . . Adventure, Arthurian Legends, Breakfast Cereal, Leprechauns, and Bartimaeus!

### MEET THE AUTHOR

ADAM REX is the author of many children's books, including the *New York Times* bestselling picture book *Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich*, the middle-grade novel *The True Meaning of Smekday*, the novel *Fat Vampire*, and most recently the Cold Cereal Saga. He lives in Arizona with his wife. You can visit him online at [www.adamrex.com](http://www.adamrex.com).



Adam Rex  
"The Lucky Charm"

Country Adam Rex

### Discussion Questions

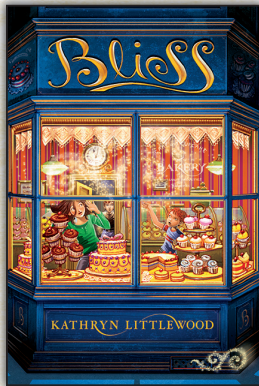
1. What is a prologue? How does the prologue in *Cold Cereal* set up the story?
2. Mrs. Wyvern gives the Project: Potential class Erno's puzzle as a homework assignment. What do you think the puzzle means?
3. Why do you think Erno doesn't want to sit with Emily on the bus?
4. Emily is bullied a lot at school, particularly by Carla. How would you react to being bullied?

Relates to CCSS ELA: Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.6.1, ELA: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.6.1, and ELA: Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.6.1.



# MAGICALLY DELIGHTFUL

## BLISS



### ABOUT THE SERIES

*The Bliss Cookery Booke* is an ancient, leather-bound volume of enchanted recipes—and the Bliss family’s biggest secret. Rose and her siblings are forbidden from using the *Booke*, but all that changes when their mysterious “Aunt” Lily comes to town. A few Love Muffins and a few dozen Cookies of Truth couldn’t cause too much trouble . . . could they?

### FOR FANS OF . . .

. . . Sweet Treats, Magical Bakeries, Zany Adventures, Silly Siblings, and The Mysterious Benedict Society!

## MEET THE AUTHOR

**KATHRYN LITTLEWOOD** is a writer, actress, comedienne, and bon vivant who lives in New York City, works often in Los Angeles, and has a sweet tooth for *pain au chocolat* and sweet novels for tween readers.



Kathryn Littlewood  
“The Sweetest”

Photo by Chris Mader

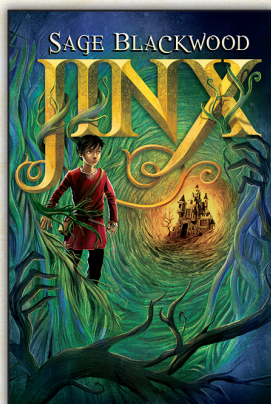
Great for  
Grades:  
**5-7**

### Discussion Questions

1. Why use a recipe book when cooking? What would happen if you didn’t use a recipe?
2. What other books do *Bliss* and *A Dash of Magic* remind you of? Why?
3. Both *Bliss* and *A Dash of Magic* are stories about family—what adventures have you and your family taken together?

Relates to CCSS ELA: Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.6.1, ELA: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.6.1, and ELA: Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.6.1.

## JINX



### ABOUT THE SERIES

Jinx knows two things very well: wizards are evil, and he should never step off the path in the Urwald. But after Jinx is abandoned, he must ignore his instincts and take shelter with a wizard named Simon Magus. And as Jinx learns more about magic from Simon, he becomes more and more determined to explore beyond the safety of the Urwald’s paths.

Is there more to magic than he thought?

### FOR FANS OF . . .

. . . Magic, Cranky Wizards, Spooky Forests, Scrappy Main Characters, and Septimus Heap!

## MEET THE AUTHOR

**SAGE BLACKWOOD** lives at the edge of a large forest, with thousands of books and a very old dog, and she enjoys carpentry, cooking, and walking in the woods of New York State.



Sage Blackwood  
“The Magic Maker”

Photo Credit: Anna Schwabach

Great for  
Grades:  
**6-8**

### Discussion Questions

1. Simon saves Jinx from his stepfather but then allows Jinx’s stepfather to be captured. Is Simon good or evil? Or is he somewhere in between?
2. Jinx can see people’s emotions through colorful clouds and auras that surround them. How can you also “see” people’s emotions? What do you look for?
3. The trees call Jinx “the Listener.” How does being a listener foster respect? How is respect for other living things, whether they can speak for themselves or not, important?
4. Does Jinx trust Simon? Why or why not?

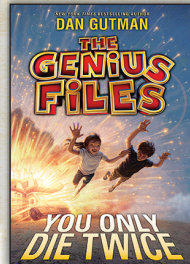
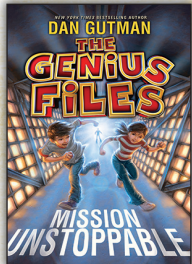
Relates to CCSS ELA: Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.7.1, ELA: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.7.1, and ELA: Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.7.1.



# HUMOROUS ADVENTURES

Great for  
Grades:  
**4-7**

## THE GENIUS FILES



### ABOUT THE SERIES

Coke and Pepsi McDonald are about to turn thirteen. Before then, they'll jump off a cliff, get chased cross-country by murderous lunatics, thrown into a vat of SPAM, and visit the world's largest ball of twine! There's more, but if we told you, we'd have to kill you. Join Coke and Pep on their quest to uncover what it means to be part of The Genius Files!

### FOR FANS OF ...

... Wacky Landmarks, Road Trips, Mysterious Notes, Kid Geniuses, and Artemis Fowl!

## MEET THE AUTHOR

**DAN GUTMAN** is the author of the overwhelmingly popular My Weird School, My Weird School Daze, and My Weirder School series, as well as the Baseball Card Adventures—which together have sold more than seven million copies. Dan lives in Haddonfield, NJ, with his wife and their two children. You can visit him online at [www.dangutman.com](http://www.dangutman.com).



Dan Gutman  
"The Weird Genius"

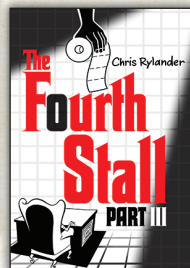
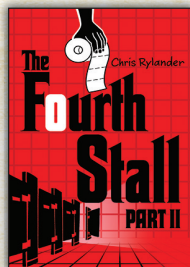
Howard Wolf

### Discussion Questions

1. Rhetorical questions are questions that aren't meant to be answered. How does author Dan Gutman use rhetorical questions (see p. 5, p. 19 *The Genius Files* #3: *You Only Die Twice*)?
2. Coke and Pep must cooperate to escape the men in bowler hats. How do you cooperate with your siblings or classmates?
3. The McDonalds are planning to visit places like the World's Largest Ball of Twine and Mount Rushmore. Where would you like to go on a family vacation and why?
4. Would you want to be a part of the Genius Files? Why or why not?

Relates to CCSS ELA: Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.1, ELA: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.5.1, and ELA: Reading: Foundational Skills: Fluency: RF.5.4.

## THE FOURTH STALL



### ABOUT THE SERIES

Mac and Vince can get you anything you need, if you name the right price. Their methods might run afoul of the school code of conduct, but business is still booming. At least it was, until things turn ugly after they provide protection for a needy third grader. The duo must ask themselves, when you solve everyone else's problems, who will help you solve yours?

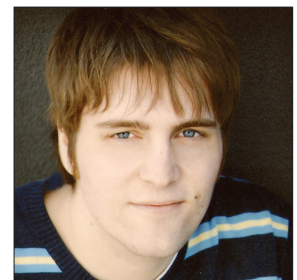
### FOR FANS OF ...

... Mysteries, Tween Noir, *The Sopranos*, Jon Scieszka, and Diary of a Wimpy Kid!

## MEET THE AUTHOR

**CHRIS RYLANDER** is the author of the Fourth Stall saga. A fan of strawberry jam, one-armed cowboys, and the Chicago Cubs, he lives in Chicago, Illinois.

Great for  
Grades:  
**4-7**



Chris Rylander  
"The Godfather"

Patricia Duggan

### Discussion Questions

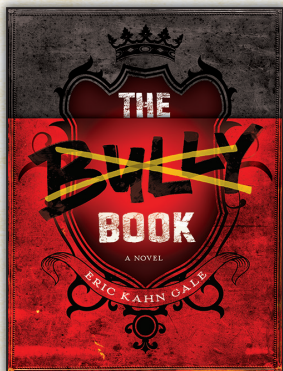
1. Fred is the only person to quit working for Staples. Why do you think the other kids still listen to him?
2. Rhetorical questions are questions that aren't meant to be answered. How does the author use rhetorical questions to tell the story?
3. Staples is one of the meanest bullies in history. How would you deal with a bully in your school?
4. Staples and Mac both break school rules in their businesses. Are Mac's methods better than Staples's? Why?

Relates to CCSS ELA: Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.1, ELA: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.5.1, and ELA: Reading: Foundational Skills: Fluency: RF.5.4.



# NEW PERSPECTIVES

## THE BULLY BOOK



### ABOUT THE BOOK

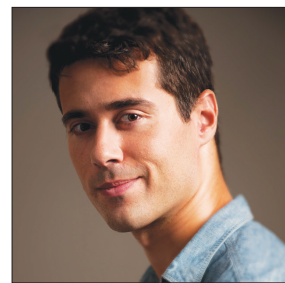
The rules governing sixth grade are often a mystery, but for Eric Haskins it's a mystery he needs to solve, and fast. He's a normal, average kid—until sixth grade starts. For some inexplicable reason, the class bully and his pack make Eric the Grunt. Eric can't figure out why. Then he hears about *The Bully Book*, a cryptic guide that gets right inside the head of the Bully. Eric may be this year's sixth-grade Grunt, but he's not going to stay at the bottom of the social ladder forever.

### FOR FANS OF . . .

. . . *Mysteries*, *Bullying Prevention*, *A Book-Within-a-Book*, *Jerry Spinelli*, and *Wonder*!

## MEET THE AUTHOR

ERIC KAHN GALE lives in Chicago, and *The Bully Book* is his first novel. He is determined to get this book into the hands of as many children as possible. He also loves to hear comments—feel free to email yours to [thebullybook@gmail.com](mailto:thebullybook@gmail.com).



Eric Kahn Gale  
"The Kid"

Photo by Aaron Gang

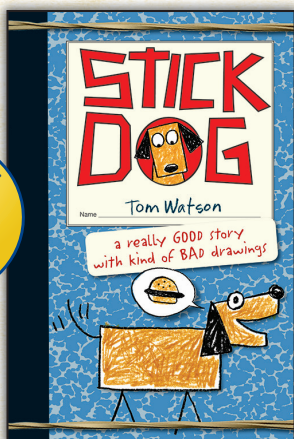
Great for  
Grades:  
**4-7**

### Discussion Questions

1. What is bullying? Why does bullying go on, and what can you do to combat it? Why is it hard to stand up to a bully or to stop bullying from happening?
2. According to *The Book*, what is the Social Order? Does a social order exist at your school?
3. Eric says, "We're not living in a fair world" (p. 21). How has life turned unfair for Eric?

Relates to CCSS ELA: Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.5.1, ELA: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.5.1, and ELA: Reading: Foundational Skills: Fluency: RF.5.4.

## STICK DOG



Great for  
Grades:  
**3-6**

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Here comes a new middle-grade humorous hero, this time with four legs, a wet nose, and an insatiable appetite. Along with his four dysfunctional friends, Stick Dog embarks on an epic quest to steal a hamburger. Told with hilarious illustrations and pitch-perfect humor, *Stick Dog* is destined to be top dog!

### FOR FANS OF . . .

. . . *Dogs*, *Comics*, *Hamburgers*, *Goofy Friends*, and *Big Nate*!

## MEET THE AUTHOR

TOM WATSON lives in Chicago with his wife, daughter, and son. He also has a dog, as you could probably guess. The dog is a Labrador Newfoundland mix. Tom says he looks like a Labrador with a bad perm. Early in his career Tom worked in politics and quickly realized a very important thing: kids are way smarter than adults. And it's a lot more fun and rewarding to write stories for them than to write speeches for grown-ups.



Tom Watson  
"Top Dog"

Photo by Bill Kirby

### Discussion Questions

1. What are the characteristics of Stick Dog and his friends Poo-Poo, Karen, Mutt, and Stripes? How do you think they became friends?
2. Why are Stick Dog and his friends always in search of food? Why are hamburgers their favorite food?
3. Stick Dog and his friends come up with an elaborate plan to distract a family cooking hamburgers outside. What is their plan? Does it work out?
4. Create another dog that could be friends with Stick Dog and the gang. Draw your animal in stick form too! Make sure to include details like the animal's name, how they met Stick Dog, and their favorite food.

Relates to CCSS ELA: Reading: Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.4.1, ELA: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.4.1, and ELA: Reading: Foundational Skills: Fluency: RF.4.4.



# CLASS ACTS

★ ★ ★ AUTHORS IN THE CLASSROOM ★ ★ ★

## Have a Class Acts Event in Your Classroom or Library!

1. Download author yearbook pages and book excerpts for two authors at [www.classactsbooks.com](http://www.classactsbooks.com).
2. Divide your students into two teams, assigning one Class Acts author to each group.
3. Prepare students by having them read the book excerpt for their Class Acts author, practice their Class Acts cheer, and review the discussion questions individually.
4. Prepare a list of trivia questions based on each book excerpt (you can include some general trivial too!).
5. Hold your Class Acts event in an auditorium, cafeteria, or gymnasium, seating each group of students together so that they can support and cheer for their author as a team.
6. With a teacher, librarian, or parent volunteer leading each team, hold a Class Acts challenge where students cheer and answer trivia to win their authors the title of "Best in Class!" The team with the most spirit and the highest number of correct answers wins.



\*Offer students the opportunity to order copies of the Class Acts authors' books by partnering with a local bookstore or by ordering books directly from HarperCollins by calling 1-800-C-HARPER.

## Do You Want Class Acts Authors to Visit Your School?

The biggest names and freshest voices in middle grade lit are touring the country in an interactive competition to win the coveted title of "Best in Class." Meet the Class Acts authors, find a tour stop near you, and learn how to have a Class Acts author competition in your classroom! Visit [www.classactsbooks.com](http://www.classactsbooks.com) to nominate your school or library for a future Class Acts visit.



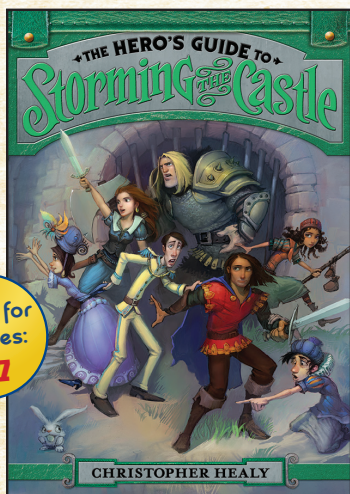
HARPERCOLLINS PRESENTS

# CLASS ACTS

★ ★ ★ AUTHORS IN THE CLASSROOM ★ ★ ★

## The Fun Doesn't End Here!

### More Class Acts Books



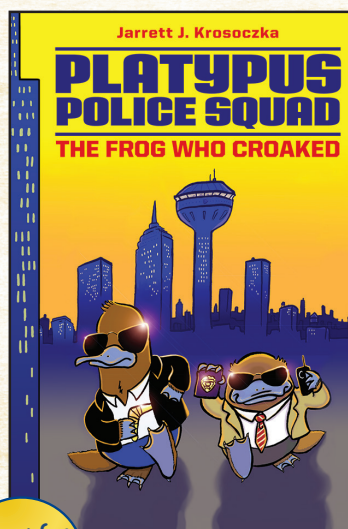
Great for  
Grades:  
**3-7**

### The Hero's Guide to Storming the Castle

by Christopher Healy

About the Series: Dive into the tales-behind-the-tales of the most famous princes and princesses in the world.

Available  
April 2013



Great for  
Grades:  
**3-7**

### Platypus Police Squad: The Frog Who Croaked

by Jarrett J. Krosoczka

About the Book: From the acclaimed author/illustrator of the Lunch Lady series comes a fast-paced, action-packed, and hilarious middle grade series about two platypus detectives and the city they protect and serve.

Available  
May 2013



Great for  
Grades:  
**3-7**

### The School for Good and Evil

by Soman Chainani

About the Book: Witch-girl Agatha is "mistakenly" sent to the School for Good, and wannabe-princess Sophie to the School for Evil. As rivalries bloom and jealousy sets in, Agatha and Sophie discover that these fates may not be a mistake, after all. . . .

Available  
May 2013



Great for  
Grades:  
**3-7**

### Starbounders

by Adam Jay Epstein  
& Andrew Jacobson

About the Book: *Star Wars* meets *Percy Jackson* in this exciting series about a camp that turns kids into intergalactic heroes, and sends Zachary Night and his friends on a dangerous mission much earlier than they expected, from the dynamic duo behind *The Familiars* series.

Available  
June 2013