

Get your kids off screens for March break with this reading list

2 book lovers share 6 titles for young adults, children

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Imagine just starting to live with dementia and driving across the country to revisit your past one last time. Or waking up every day inside a new body, never knowing who you will be and whose life you will be interrupting.

These scenarios are the basis of two books on a March break reading list put together by a local librarian and a bookstore manager to encourage young readers to get immersed in a book rather than a tech gadget.

"They are so much better," Hilary Porter, manager of Books on Beechwood, told CBC Radio's *Ottawa Morning* Tuesday. "You can travel so much further, create your own ideas about things, you make new friends in books; it's just a much more tactile experience and I would recommend it any day."

Porter and Sandra Hobbs of the Ottawa Public Library shared a list of six books with host Robyn Bresnahan. Here's more on the titles they suggest.

For kids

Shark Lady by Jess Keating.

This book tells the story of Eugenie Clark, a female scientist who was determined to prove sharks were not vicious killers as stereotypes would suggest. During a time when people thought women shouldn't be scientists, she dives deep into her research and the ocean, and proves everyone wrong.

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut by Derrick B. Barnes.

It's a feel-good picture book about a little boy who gets the perfect haircut and feels like anything is possible, even perfect grades and love from everyone. The author said he wrote the rhythmic, read-aloud book about self-affirmation and about the fact that while not everyone will always see your beauty, you and the people who love you can, said Hobbs.

Restart by Gordan Korman.

This book is about an eighth-grader named Chase who falls off the roof and ends up with amnesia. He doesn't remember hitting his head and, in fact, doesn't remember anything at all. At the start, thanks to friends and family, he feels like he has a handle on who he is. But he soon learns that he is not the person everyone told him he is. He learns he was actually a bully, someone he does not like. While living with amnesia, he goes on a journey to become the person he desires and to reconcile with his past.

For young adults

How Not to Disappear by Claire Furniss.

This book is about a young girl named Hattie whose summer is not going the way she wants it to. Her two best friends have abandoned her, she's stuck babysitting her younger siblings, and her mother is getting remarried. On top of that, she's just discovered she is pregnant. Her summer takes on another unexpected twist when she learns she has a long-lost great aunt, Gloria, who has just developed dementia. The two end up going on a road trip across the country, revisiting Gloria's past before she forgets it all. Hattie spends the time trying to decide what to do with her own future.

Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus by Dusti Bowli.

This book tells the story of Aven Green, who was born without arms and has to learn to do everything with her feet, including eating cereal and typing on a computer. The book centres around her move to Arizona, where her father gets a job running an old wild-west carnival. She starts at a new school and manages to find some new friends to bond with. Together, they explore the strange carnival park. The group discover that Aven may have a connection to the park they didn't know about. The book title, Porter said, refers to a giant cactus overlooking the park. "The idea is that all the events in Aven's life are significant to her, but, in the life of this ancient cactus these would all be insignificant little happenings," she said.

Every Day by David Levithan.

This book is a story about a teen who wakes up every morning in a different body, living a different life. He has to be careful not to mess up that life or cause any problems while he's "borrowing" it. But things take a strange turn when he falls in love with a girl and tries to be near her no matter where he wakes up or who he is. "It's a really interesting story because when you wake up in a new place every day, you are not making those memories that make us human and you don't have those same relationships," said Porter. "It really makes you think."

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