

# Blurb

FOR READERS OF CHILDREN'S NOVELS

NOVEMBER- DECEMBER 2021

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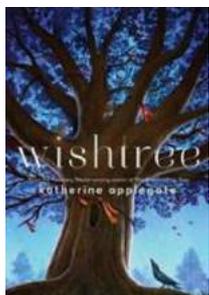
## THE HAPPY TREES ISSUE

Perhaps TREES is a weird theme for an end of the year issue. Don't we often associate trees with the spring and summer when they first blossom, when they grow green and full of leaves, when they become homes for birds and squirrels, when they are perfect for climbing and providing shade?

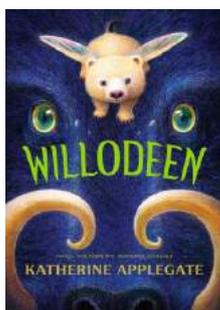
But I might think about trees even more at this time of year when they start to change bright colors, when you hear the shush of raking leaves, when we use their wood for campfires, and when we bring trees into our houses for the holidays.

### WISHTREE AND WILLODEEN

TWO BOOKS BY KATHERINE APPLGATE



**WISHTREE** - You don't see books from a tree's point of view very often, but Wishtree is told through the voice of Red, an old oak tree. Red is home to lots of wild creatures and also home to the people's wishes. Everyone who lives in Red's neighborhood writes their wishes on pieces of cloth and ties them to Red's branches. Red does its best to help everyone but is really put to the test when a new family moves to town.



**WILLODEEN** - Everything in nature relies on everything else. That's the lesson the villagers in Perchance have to learn when their beloved hummingbirds start to disappear. Somehow the survival of the hummingbirds also involves some loud, smelly creatures called Screechers, some snails, and blue willow trees. But how do all these pieces fit together? Only our heroine Willodeen can figure it out.



### THE ONE AND ONLY APPLGATE

Katherine Applegate not only wrote the two books on the left, she also wrote *The One and Only Ivan*, *The One and Only Bob*, *Crenshaw*, the *Endling Series*, and she co-created the *Animorphs* series!

### CLICK ON THE BOOK JACKETS

Did you know that if you're reading this newsletter on a screen that the books have clickable links? A book cover will always lead you to the library's website so you can check the book out or put it on hold.

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## Big Word in a Small Space - **Ligneous**

In short, the word **LIGNEOUS** means that something is woody. But more specifically it can mean any of three separate things.

1. That something is totally made of wood.
2. That something is partially made of wood.
3. That something resembles wood but is really not.



So, if I said my favorite chair is ligneous, you wouldn't necessarily know if it was a completely wooden chair, part wood/part something else, or made of something that only looks like wood. You'd only know that it was, well, kind of woody.

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FOREST AND THE WOODS?



The two words, forest and woods, in many ways are interchangeable, but there actually is a difference. You may think that a forest is bigger than the woods, and in some ways that is accurate. We tend to call large areas of trees, like state parks, forests,

and we call small groups of trees, like we might find in our neighborhoods, woods. But more than that, scientists make the distinction between woods and forests by the density of trees, that is, the number of trees in the area. Forests are more thickly populated with trees than a woods. In the forest, there are more trees which means it is shadier, darker, and it provides more habitat for wildlife, while in the woods the trees are spaced out, increased sunlight comes through, and there is less cover for animals.

## TREE HOUSE MYSTERIES

You know about the Magic Tree House series, and perhaps about the 13-Story Treehouse books, but here's a couple other mystery series that take place in a tree house.



### **Boxcar Children Tree House Mystery - Gertrude Warner**

From their tree house, the Boxcar Children can see a mysterious window at the neighbor's house...a window the neighbors don't even know is there.

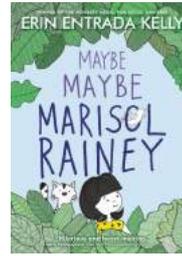


### **Riddle of the Spinning Sycamore Seed - Ken Bowser**

Fiction for fans of science! From her tree house, Jesse starts to wonder why acorns hit the ground faster than sycamore seeds.

## MAYBE MAYBE MARISOL RAINEY

BY **Erin Entrada Kelly**



There is a magnolia tree in Marisol's backyard that everyone calls Peppina. It's just made for climbing. The branches are spaced just the right distance apart and practically hug your feet and hands.

Absolutely everyone in the neighborhood climbs that tree, except for Marisol. Will she ever climb the tree?

**Absolutely not. No. Never.  
But.  
Maybe. Just maybe.**

## TREE SUPERLATIVES

Superlative is a word that means a way of describing how something is greater than or surpasses something else. Think of the Guinness Book of World Records, and how things in that book are always the tallest, fastest, oldest, etc. Those are all examples of superlatives.

**Oldest Tree:** The Great Basin Bristlecone Pine lives longer than any tree that has been discovered so far. There is one particular Bristlecone Pine named Methuselah that is more than 5000 years old, making it know only the oldest living tree, but the oldest living thing!!!! The tree resides in California but its exact location is a mystery so no one messes with it.

**Tallest Tree:** Located in the Sequoia National Forest, the world's tallest tree, named Hyperion, stands at 380 feet tall! Let's put that in perspective. The tallest building in Paducah is the 19-story Jackson House Apartments building. It stands at 185 feet, which means the world's tallest tree is more than twice as tall as Paducah's tallest building.

**Fattest Tree:** The tree with the largest circumference (meaning the distance around the trunk) is a Montezuma Cypress tree located in the town center of Tule, Mexico. It measures 138 feet around. That's the same height as an 11-story building. This tree is called the "Tree of Life" by some locals, and as part of an annual school project, kids give tours of the tree to tourists, pointing out some of the neat features and weird shapes in the trunk.

## WHY DO SO MANY FAIRY TALES TAKE PLACE IN THE FOREST?



Fairy tales, myths, and fantastical stories rely on their settings to provide excitement and mystery. The settings in stories like these should be places that are full of possibility, danger, and opportunity. They should be places where the rules are a bit different,

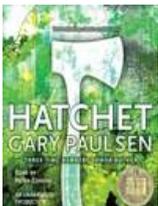
where anything can happen. That's why Harry Potter takes place at a magical school, Viking myths occur by the deep sea, and science fiction travels to other planets.

In the time and place that many of the classic fairy tales were written, the forest was just such a dark and mysterious place. The woods were a wild place that were full of the unknown. Small villages were places of safety, but once a character went into the woods, the whole world changed. In forests, animals could talk and houses were made of candy.

## INTO THE WOODS!

Getting lost in the woods isn't just for kids in fairy tales. Check out some of these survival stories.

### Hatchet by Gary Paulsen



Classic story of 13-year old Brian who gets stranded in the Canadian wilderness after a plane crash. All he has to keep him alive are the clothes on his back, a hatchet, and his own courage.

### Alone in the Woods by Rebecca Behrens



Jocelyn and Alex are former best friends who think that a rafting trip might help rekindle their friendship. But then tragedy strikes and they find themselves lost in the forest with only the contents of their wet backpack. Critics love this one.

### Wildfire by Rodman Philbrick

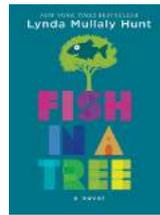


Sam is at summer camp in Maine when wildfires force all the campers to evacuate. Except for Sam. He gets left behind, and suddenly, he finds himself running for his life. This book is fast...it never slows down.



## Fish in a Tree

by Lynda Mullaly Hunt



So this book isn't literally about a fish in a tree. It's an expression that portrays how the main character, Ally, feels. Here's a quote from the book: *"Everybody is smart in different ways. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its life believing it is stupid."*

You see, Ally has trouble reading. She knows she is smart. In fact, she's smart enough to have fooled a lot of people into thinking she can read. But she feels stupid because every time she tries to read she feels like a fish trying to climb a tree. Her frustration turns her into a troublemaker.

But at her school, a new teacher, Mr. Daniels, sees her as the smart, creative person she really is and helps Ally find a way to climb...without feeling like a fish.

## TREE IDIOMS

The book title above, **Fish in a Tree**, is an example of idiom. An idiom is a phrase or saying that means something different from its literal meaning. We use idioms all the time. Like if you say, "I feel under the weather," it doesn't mean you're standing in the rain. It means you feel sick. Here's some common tree idioms:



### **The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.**

Meaning: A child behaves just like their parents. In this sense, the parent is the tree and the kid is the apple.



### **You're barking up the wrong tree.**

Meaning: You're incorrect about something or making a mistake, like a dog barking at a squirrel that isn't there.



### **Can't see the forest for the trees.**

Meaning: Someone who gets so focused on the little details that they miss the big picture.



### **Go out on a limb.**

Meaning: Try something risky, like if you were climbing a tree and scooted out on a skinny branch.

So based on these examples what do you think this one means?

### **Like Trying to Nail Jello to a Tree**



## SKELETON TREE BY KIM VENTRELLA

Skeleton Tree is NOT some weird idiom. This is the story of Stanly who finds a finger bone in his garden that eventually grows into a full skeleton. Kinda cool except for two problems - only kids can see it and Stanly can't figure out if the skeleton is good or bad.

## WHAT IS A BOTTLE TREE?



A bottle tree is exactly what it sounds like...it's a tree with bottles hanging on it. Making bottle trees is a southern custom that has its roots in Africa. Nowadays its mainly used as a way to decorate your yard, but according to the ancient tradition, hanging a bottle upside-down from a tree was a way to catch evil spirits. At night, the spirits would enter the bottle, get stuck, and then they would be destroyed when the light hit the bottles in the morning. Blue bottles, made of cobalt, were especially prized for their spirit catching abilities.

Imagine walking past a bottle tree on a breezy night, the clinking noises and the sound of the wind blowing across bottle tops. I bet it sounds quite eerie.

## TRISTAN STRONG PUNCHES A HOLE IN THE SKY BY KWAME MBALIA



A bottle tree plays prominently in the brilliant book *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky*. It tells the story of Tristan who is spending a month with his grandparents in Alabama. On his first night, a strange creature appears in his bedroom, and Tristan chases it outside to the base of a bottle tree. Tristan wrestles the creature and accidentally punches the tree which releases all the spirits trapped within, the good spirits and the bad ones. Such a great book!

## FRUIT TREE BOOKS

### The Boy Who Grew Dragons - by Andy Shepherd



Here's a comedy for you. Tomas finds a weird tree covered with weird fruit in his grandfather's garden. He takes the fruit back to the house, finds out it's called a dragon fruit, and wouldn't you know, a dragon hatches out from it. Whoa.

### The Mulberry Tree - by Allison Rushby



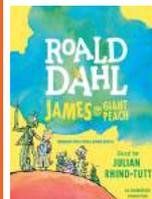
Here's a scary one. Immy's new cottage home comes with a downside: in the backyard, there's an ancient, dark mulberry tree that ceased bearing fruit. There's a legend that the huge tree steals away girls who live in cottage on the eve of their eleventh birthday. Immy is ten. Yikes!

### Ice Cream Summer - by Megan Atwood



Here's a mystery. Four friends run an ice cream stand at the Garrison Family Apple Orchard. The summer looks like it's going to be great, until a disaster on opening day leaves them with a mysteriously empty cash register. Can they remain friends and solve the mystery?

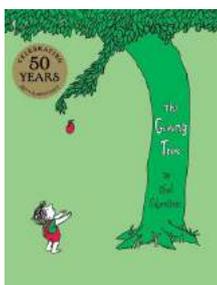
### James and the Giant Peach - by Roald Dahl



Here's a classic. After James's parents are tragically eaten by a rhinoceros, he goes to live with his two horrible aunts, Spiker and Sponge. Life there is no fun, until James accidentally drops some magic crystals by the old peach tree and strange things start to happen. The peach at the top of the tree begins to grow and grow...and so do some of the other creatures in the garden.

## BECAUSE ONE CANNOT LIVE ON NOVELS ALONE

### PICTURE BOOK Spotlight



**The Giving Tree** by Shel Silverstein is the classic, tender story of the relationship between a boy and a tree, and their timeless message about the gift of giving.

### NON-FICTION Spotlight

**From Acorn to Tree** by Camilla de la Bedoyere.

How exactly does an acorn grow into a giant oak tree? And what is a catkin? Find all the answers in this simple, photographic book about the lifecycle of an oak.

