IDEAS FOR RELIEVING “HUNKERED” DOWN BOREDOM

It’s safe to say things are justifiably stressful right now. As the world reacts to the pandemic, people are staying home, quarantining, and social distancing as an effort to stay safe. This means many have an abundance of free time. If you’re struggling to figure out how to keep you and your family occupied, you’re not alone.

WCPL has some fun ideas to assist with staying at home and keeping the family entertained. Are you dreaming of that vacation? Take a virtual tour or trip. Many websites offer these virtual tours. Interest in furry creatures? Watch an animal live stream at home.

Some fun activities are learning how to make cool face masks to wear while in public. Play good old-fashioned board games. Have a scavenger hunt. Schedule a dance party every day for 30 minutes. Have everyone journal about their experiences during the pandemic. Then pick a date in the future to read them. Enjoy one of the virtual story times or programs given by WCPL online.

Bonding as a family helps reduce stress and gives support to each other. We all could use support during these trying times. — Missy Chapman, Cataloging Supervisor
“Hachiko Waits” by Leslea Newman

Loyalty is a trait that we all admire. This is the story of a special friendship that captured a nation, and then the world.

The nation was Japan, and the year was 1924. A professor had adopted an Akita puppy, who he named “Hachi”, which is the numeral eight in Japanese. The dog accompanied his master to the train station every workday, and would return from home at 3:00 to meet him after his day in the city. After a year and a half of friendship, Professor Ueno passed away unexpectedly at work. For the next ten years, until his own death, the loyal Hachiko waited at the station for his master to return. His story was reported in newspapers around the country, and a statue was created in his honor. It was melted down during World War II, but was later recast. Now, nearly 100 years later, people visit Shibuya Station from all over the globe to honor the dog who remembered.

Multiple books have been written about the dog who never forgot his friend. We have two fictionalized accounts in the Children’s Department, as well as an available eAudio. A movie is also available, another fictionalized version, but with all the feels. This tale is set in the U.S. and stars Richard Gere. Any of these resources will give you an overview of the story a relationship that has stood the test of time, although the protagonists have been

The Boxcar Children, by Gertrude Chandler Warner

The story opens up with the four children finding a letter in an old house. They set out to find the man that wrote the letter. A mystery and an adventure! What’s not to love? While on the search for the old friend of their grandpa who wrote the letter, Henry, Jesse, Violet and Benny run into some difficult circumstances and have to persevere in order to continue on.

This particular version of the well loved Boxcar Children tale is an easy reader version. It has been adapted from the original so that the main story remains true but the words are simplified. I love the fact that a young reader can pick up one of these books and be able to read at their level. The friendly atmosphere of the more advanced version is the same and the challenges are just as engaging.

This is perfect for a reader that is starting out and needs a book to hold their interest while they improve their reading skill. They will be learning great character lessons as well, like not giving up or valuing friendship too. — Erin Streeter, Children’s Librarian
Pacho Nacho, by Silvia Lopez

This is a classic folktale from Japan that has been customized to the Hispanic culture. The story is about a Mexican family that two sons are born to. Naming them proves to be difficult so in order to keep everyone happy, one of the sons ends up with an enormously long name. When disaster happens during playtime it almost costs the boy his life because his name is too long to say. The Moral of the story is not to try to make everybody happy, it always costs you something.

Silvia Lopez does a lovely job transforming this folktale into a Mexican atmosphere and it is a cute little book to read especially if you would like a peak into a little bit of Hispanic culture at a young age. Pablo Pino did a beautiful job with the artwork. It is so cute and colorful yet gives you the feel of the dusty environment that these people live in.

The one thing I would call attention to in Pacho Nacho is the use of the Spanish expletive, Caramba. Though it is often used as a harmless, “oh wow”, it also can be used as “darn” or even the harsher version. If that is a concern to parents, then perhaps it could be read omitting that word. It can be found on the 20th page in the section with the carpenter.

Other than that, I think this book is a great story for a young reader or for a parent to read aloud. I would give it 3 out of 5 stars.
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