

A Page in a Book[®]

RECOMMENDING THE BEST BOOKS FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

By Gerry Paige Smith

The Beauty of Solitude

Because our children are growing up in an age of social media, flash mobs and Skype, it's easy to assume that they will never be alone. But there are times that they will be alone, either by choice or through circumstance and it's important that children understand the differences between being alone and being lonely. Being alone gives children the opportunity to hone in on details typically lost in the clatter of company; to appreciate sights, sounds and feelings that can be buried by outside stimulation. Even loneliness has its place in our hearts as it makes our time of reunion and together moments even more cherished and special. The following titles explore solitude, loneliness and alone time with great beauty and sensitivity, helping young readers appreciate the special times that are theirs, alone.



Octopus Alone

By Divya Srinivasan (Penguin / Viking)

Octopus is very comfortable in the quiet confines of her cave, watching the underwater world and its beauties float by. But when a group of seahorses discover her refuge (and her), their friendly interest and enthusiasm feel like too much to bear. Octopus quietly goes into camouflage mode and sneaks away. As she slips into the darker deeps alone, Octopus finds herself enjoying the spaces where no one is watching. She twirls, wiggles and somersaults as she revels in the peaceful, quiet darkness. She is comfortable and happy. But after a while, she remembers the sea horses and decides to return – refreshed by the solitude – to get reacquainted with her new friends. Beautifully transitive illustrations celebrate both the lively wonders of the sea and the serenity of the deep ocean.

Snook Alone

By Marilyn Nelson, Illustrated by Timothy Basil Ering (Candlewick Press)

Nothing gives Snook more pleasure than his days spent in the company of Abba Jacob, with whom he shares a monastic life on a quiet island. Snook spends every day by Abba Jacob's side while he works, prays, and gardens: they are a constant pair. But when a violent storm separates them, Snook is left stranded on the island to make his way alone. At first sad and afraid, Snook begins to explore his home on his own. New adventures and elements of the island are Snook's alone to discover with increasing pleasure while he waits for the return of his friend. Recognizing the fear that comes with isolation, this title offers a poignant balance, celebrating the heightened awareness that comes with being alone. An inspiration for kids who struggle with separation and alone time, this story finds the bright side to being solitary while you wait to be reunited with your companions.



Silence

By Lemniscates (Magination Press)

Told from the perspective of a young girl, *Silence* is an expansive exploration of the quiet beauty of being alone. When the girl is by herself, she can hear her heart beating as she runs, her breath moving to and fro. The sounds of her legs swimming, her feet dancing might be lost in a crowd, but when she's

alone, she can hear them like never before. Birds talking, bees buzzing and the wind blowing are not hidden behind the murmur of conversation and company. Being alone among silence gives voice to the quieter sounds, awakening subtle senses that may be rarely used in world of distractions that demand our attention. The undiscovered pleasures of solitude and silence are everywhere in this breezy and beautiful ode to quiet times and quiet spaces.

