Magical Realism Booktalks

**Nathaniel Fludd, Beastologist** by R.L. LaFevers (L 640) (series)
Nate’s not the sort of boy who enjoys adventure...somewhat orphaned by his parents, who have been missing for years, and left to be taken care of by his less-than-caring nanny Miss Lumpton, Nate is more interested in going to the zoo or drawing pictures. So when his parents’ lawyer explains to him that his parents have officially been “lost at sea,” and he is to leave Miss Lumpton to go live with a distant relative named Phil A. Fludd, Nate starts to feel pretty lost.
When Nate meets Phil (short for Philomena) and her pet Dodo bird Cornelius, who—as far as Nate knew—should be extinct, and is shortly whisked away onto a plane that looks positively antique to go in search of a Phoenix, Nate realized that as much as he hates adventure, he may have to get used to the idea pretty soon.

**Fern Verdant and the Silver Rose** by Diana Leszczynski (L 740) (audio)
Fern Verdant hates her name, and hates plants. After all, it is because of plants that her mother is constantly leaving her to go around the world to save rare species of plants, and it is also because of plants that her father is always huddled in his greenhouse studying his precious ferns. She hated the whole situation so much that, when her mother was getting ready to leave on a trip to save a one-of-a-kind Silver Rose, she told her mother: “I don’t understand why you and Dad bothered to have a kid when you love plants so much better.” Fern didn’t realize that those might be the last words she speaks to her mother, because soon after making contact with the owner of the Silver Rose, her mother disappears. Soon, however, Fern starts hearing and communicating with voices who are giving her clues as to where her mother might be. But who—or what—is talking to her? And can she trust the voices and roam off to save her mother?

**Tuck Everlasting** by Natalie Babbitt (L 770) (audio)
Winnie Foster lives with her family outside the town of Treegap. The fancy Fosters are not the kind of people who welcome you to their home. That is probably why no one ever trespasses on the woods on their land. Winnie rarely goes into the woods but on this beautiful day, she does. And what does she find? A teenage boy drinking from a spring that flows deep in the woods. Winnie questions the young man about why he is on her land. The young man tries to explain what is happening but then Winnie finds herself the victim of a kidnapping! Can what this strange family tell her possibly be true? They tell her they will live forever. You see, the water from the spring has magical qualities and once you drink it, you never grow older again. And, you can never die. What seems to be a good thing can actually be a curse. The Tucks try to convince Winnie not to tell anyone about their secret. But isn't this a miracle that should be
shared? Especially if it's true that they have found the fountain of youth? Would you take a sip if it were offered to you?

100 Cupboards by N.D. Wilson (650) (series)
12-year-old Henry is sent to live with his aunt and uncle after his parents get kidnapped...but that’s just the beginning of the story. See, one night he wakes up to find small bits of white plaster falling from the walls in his attic room. Being curious about what might be behind the walls, he spends days chipping away at the plaster, trying his best to keep quiet so that his cousins or aunt and uncle don’t find out what he is doing. But, Henrietta—one of Henry’s cousins—is particularly nosy and figures it out; but instead of telling, she helps Henry to uncover what ends up being 99 cupboards—big and small—that were hidden away behind the plaster walls. They can’t seem to open any of them up but one—which is actually a lot like a mail-slot with a window. One night, Henry sees lights in the slot window and peeks in, and sees legs walking back and forth. Further investigations reveal a key that opens another cupboard, and, as you can imagine, the investigations begin. But what things or worlds are behind the cupboards? And are they good? Or bad?

Savvy by Ingrid Law (1070) (audio)(read Scumble)
The Beaumont family is a bit different from those you may know. You see, when the children reach their 13th birthday, they get their savvy. A savvy is a special power that only they have. Mibs is looking forward to her birthday to find out what her savvy will be. One brother has the savvy of controlling electricity and another can cause storms. Her mother has the savvy of doing things perfectly. But before Mibs can celebrate her birthday, her beloved father is in a horrible car accident and her mother goes to stay in the hospital with him. It won’t be much of a birthday with all the worry. But Mibs does get her savvy, and she now must find a way to get to her father to help.

Fablehaven by Brandon Mull (700)
Kendra and Seth are being forced to stay with their weird grandparents on their mysterious estate in the middle of nowhere. No TV, tons of rules, and their grandfather says if they break the rules they will be forced to stay in the nursery in the attic the ENTIRE visit. And Seth isn’t so good at following the rules. Kendra notices the handyman, Dale, putting out trays of milk which the amazing insects - butterflies, dragonflies - all drink from. And she notices that those same insects are really interested in a mirror. And then she follows some clues to a note that says, "Drink the milk." (Note to presenter: Show in the book on the very last page, it says it there too.) So she does. Those butterflies aren’t butterflies - they’re fairies. Seriously. It’s a fairy preserve. And then Seth breaks the worst rule of all and the adults are missing and the house is ruined and it's up to Kendra to save the world. Literally.
The Shadows (#1 The Books of Elsewhere) by Jacqueline West (gr. 3-6)
Old Ms. McMartin is definitely dead. Now her crumbling Victorian mansion lies vacant. When eleven-year-old Olive and her dippy mathematician parents move in, she knows there's something odd about the place—not least the walls covered in strange antique paintings. But when Olive finds a pair of old spectacles in a dusty drawer, she discovers the most peculiar thing yet: she can travel inside these paintings to a world that's strangely quiet . . . and eerily like her own. Yet Elsewhere harbors dark secrets—and a boy named Morton, an undersized boy with a huge temper. As she and Morton form an uneasy alliance, Olive finds herself ensnared in a plan darker and more dangerous than she could have imagined, confronting a power that wants to be rid of her by any means necessary. It's up to Olive to save the house from the dark shadows, before the lights go out for good.

Do-Over by Christine Deriso
Imagine having the power to turn back time. Not 100 years—just 10 seconds. Enough to take back those embarrassing missteps and wrong answers. Elsa’s mom died suddenly one year ago, but she appears one night to grant Elsa do-over power. Elsa thinks she dreamt it until she utters the words the next morning and watches her whole world rewind 10 seconds. Elsa needs the do-over power to become cool at her new school. It’s fun taking people’s answers and being a star student one day, and gossip-queen the next. Even the ultra-popular Slice Girls want to be her friend now. Elsa can re-do anything until she gets it right. So why doesn’t her new life feel so perfect?

Half Magic by Edward Eager (830) (audio)
You ever heard that saying, “See a penny pick it up and all day long you’ll have good luck!”? Well, for Jane, the coin she found and picked up ended up being more than just lucky. Jane and her siblings—Martha, Katherine and Mark—figured out soon enough that the coin Jane picked up was magic…but the problem is that they don’t know what kind of magic it is, where it is coming from, how long it will last, and just how exactly to use it. Especially when the magic is only half-magic. Imagine if you wished for a trip to London…but you ended up only halfway there, smack in the middle of the Ocean! Or, maybe you wish that your dog could talk—but he ends up only speaking English every other word, the other words in the sentence being “bark!” This is what Jane and her siblings are up against, and when they start making wishes you can imagine the trouble half-magic can cause.

Ibby’s Magic Weekend (670)
Ibby REALLY doesn’t want to go spend the weekend with her Aunt and two troublemaking cousins Alex and Francis. She gets especially worried when she sees something the size of her thumb scuttle across the floor only to realize it is Francis! Once Francis is back to normal size he shows Ibby and Alex a magician’s kit he found in the attic, which is how he learned how to shrink himself. Not to be outdone, Alex decides that he wants to be a magician too and the
weekend begins to become a major disaster. Ibby finds herself constantly trying to keep her cousins safe and out of trouble. But when she hears the story of her Uncle who has been missing for 5 years, she realizes that she may have a little magic herself.

Alcatraz versus the Evil Librarians (730) (audio)
"So, there I was, tied to an altar made from out-dated encyclopedias, about to get sacrificed to the dark powers by a cult of evil Librarians." Alcatraz Smedry, an orphan, has never been able to stay at any one foster home very long because he breaks things, though not on purpose. This incredible talent just may save the world! On his thirteenth birthday, he receives a bag of sand from his long–lost father and a visit from his formerly unknown grandfather. His grandfather explains the importance of the sand and the many pairs of glasses he shares with Alcatraz. The librarians have stolen the special sand and taken it to the grand library where they plan to take over the world. This is a unique book filled with humor, adventure and EVIL librarians. How can a bungling klutz with a set of crazy eye glasses and his grandfather stop the EVIL Librarians?

Things not Seen by Andrew Clements (690) (audio)
Have you ever felt invisible? Overnight Bobby has become invisible. Nobody knows how, and nobody can find out. Now he can’t go to school, see his friends, live his life, or make his own choices. In fact he has become a missing person and his parents are the number ONE suspect. Then one day Bobby meets Alicia at the library. Alicia is blind and so Bobby feels safe talking to her, because she can’t see the fact that he is invisible. They become friends and eventually Bobby trusts her with his secret. Can Bobby, his parents, and Alicia find out how to bring Bobby back from the missing? Read Things Not Seen by Andrew Clements to find out.

Candy Shop War by Brandon Mull (750)
Nate, Summer, Trevor and Pigeon can’t wait until the new candy shop opens. On opening day they run over after school to check it out; so many good smells, the candy and ice cream overflowing! They have some samples, and meet the owner—a really nice lady named Mrs. White. She is so nice, in fact, that she invites them back another time to sample her really “special” candy. When they finally get to try her special candy, they realize just how special it is: it can make them fly! They want more, especially when Mrs. White tells them she has lots more special candy that lets you do different magical things, but this time Mrs. White isn’t just going to let them have the candy this time. From now on, they have to work for their candy. And we aren’t just talking sweeping the shop or helping customers...Mrs. White wants them to do really crazy top-secret stuff, like break into the museum and steal things!! What would you do? And what do you think Mrs. White is up to?

The Girl who could fly by Forester (920)
Have you ever had those dreams where you can fly? I always did when I was a kid, and I remember always being so disappointed when I woke up and realized that it was a dream. Piper
was born to fly; she floated as a baby and taught herself to fly as a young girl. Because of her flying, her parents, worried that they may seem different, kept Piper indoors and wouldn’t let her make friends or go to school. But at the 4th of July picnic, wanting so badly to make friends, Piper leapt up into the air during a softball game...and forgot to come back down. The whole town was there, and they saw her fly...and they were NOT pleased. Piper’s family quickly went home, but soon enough there were news vans and reporters in the front yard, and things were NOT normal anymore. So when a wonderful woman named Dr. Leticia Hellion came to their house offering Piper an invitation to an institution for unique children like Piper, they jumped at the chance.

Sisters 8 by Baratz-Longsted (700’s)
A rather large problem has befallen the Huit girls. (Sisters, actually. Octuplets to be exact.) One particular New Year’s Eve, the girls wait for their mommy to bring them hot chocolate and their daddy to return with more wood for the fire. But they don’t. Mommy and Daddy, that is. They’re gone. Poof! Maybe dead—no one knows for sure.
You must see the problem here. Eight little girls on their own, no mommy or daddy to take care of them. This is not a good thing.
So now these little girls must take care of themselves. Get to school, cook the meals, feed the cats (eight of them, too), and pay the bills. They can’t ask for help, oh no. Any self-respecting adult would surely call in social services, and those well-meaning people would have to split them up. After losing their parents, being split up would be completely unbearable.
At the same time, the question remains: What happened to Mommy and Daddy? The Sisters Eight (as they are called, affectionately and otherwise) are determined to find out. Luckily, they do seem to have someone or something helping them who is leaving random notes around giving them clues about what to do. Eight girls, eight cats, and one big mystery.

Drizzle by Kathleen Van Cleve (650)
Eleven-year-old Penny Peabody knows her family’s rhubarb farm is rather...unusual. The rhubarb tastes like chocolate, diamonds sprout from the ground, and every Monday at 11 o’clock it rains. The whole town knows there is something special about the Peabody farm too, so when Monday comes and it doesn’t rain everyone knows something bad is happening at the farm. Soon the rhubarb dries up, and Penny’s family considers selling the farm to a rich relative. Penny, shy and unable to believe that she has any courage at all, realizes that if nobody else is willing to try and save the farm then it might just be up to her...but how will she do that? And who will help?

Magnificent 12 (Gr. 4-12) (series) http://www.themag12.com/
Do you ever feel like you have a serious case of “mediumness?” That is how 12 year old Mack feels about himself. Kinda boring, ALWAYS scared of everything, and certainly not ready for any
adventure. Unfortunately for Mack, a 3,000 year old wizard named Grimluk shows up to let Mack know that he is one of 12 magical kids that have to save the world from the ancient Pale Queen and her daughter. Oh, and he has to find the 11 other magical kids...and face his phobias...and figure out how to stay away from bullies. That’s all.