

Resource Links

CONNECTING CLASSROOMS, LIBRARIES & CANADIAN LEARNING RESOURCES

Editor's Comments

Hi Everyone

It's hard to believe that we are beginning our twenty-third year of *Resource Links*. It seems like only yesterday that I took over as editor and that is almost twenty years ago. Where does the time go?

I am proud to say that the quantity and quality of Canadian children's and young adult literature has not diminished over the years, in fact, it has grown in both facets to become a renowned collection recognized not only in our own country but in many other countries throughout the

world.

Those of you who have been subscribers over the years will probably be looking for our regular feature column *Contemporary Adult Titles for Strong Readers*, which has for many years appeared in our October issue. This year, however, we had too many reviews to accommodate this column and it will now appear in our December issue. Be on the lookout for the column at that time!

This issue once again contains reviews of a wide variety of new titles. There is something for everyone - lots of new and exciting picture book for

the young readers, good choices for the middle grade group as well as the more mature readers, and a good choice of non-fiction with topics of current interest for all ages. There are also quite a number of French titles which will be of interest to our French Immersion and French First Language schools as well as our public libraries.

As always, check out our Awards and Announcements pages for the latest award winners and pertinent announcements in the field of Canadian children's and young adult literature.

Vicki

Resource Links

P. O. Box 9
Pouch Cove, NL
A0A 3L0
Tel: 709-335-2394
Fax: 709-335-2978
E-mail: resourcelinks@nl.rogers.com

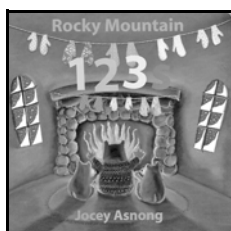
Volume 23, Number 1

October 2017

Picture Books

ASNONG, Jocey
Rocky Mountain 123s
Rocky Mountain Books,
2017. 28p. Illus. Gr. Pre-school - K. 978-1-771602112.
\$12.00

E



This engaging and very Canadian board book by Canmore, Alberta author/

artist, Jocey Asnong, teaches number recognition and counting from 1 to 20 with the help of different alpine animals participating in a range of fun mountain activities with simple mountain-specific terms added in. Examples of this are: "three bears slide down mountain scree" and "eleven moose are loose in the fen". As-

nong's folk-art style is engaging and whimsical. Each Rocky Mountain locale is labelled along the side in hand-lettering, and the font on each page is easy to read for beginning readers. Those familiar with the Rocky Mountains will be thrilled to see their favourite locations profiled (e.g. Takakkaw Falls, Lake Louise, Mt. Rundle, etc.)

Highly recommended for personal and library collections.

Thematic Links: Animals; Counting; Rocky Mountains; Canada

Erin Hansen

BAILEY, Linda
Under-the-Bed Fred
Illustrated by Colin Jack.
Tundra Books, 2017. 64p.
Illus. Gr. 2-3. 978-1-770495531.
Hdbk. \$16.99

E

Marking the beginning of a new early chapter book series, Linda Bailey's latest is an absolute delight. It is a perfect transition for those eager readers wanting to try a chapter book, and with its carefully chosen, sometimes repeating text it will be an excellent aid in developing reading confidence.

Leo is frightened by noises under his bed every single night. One night, he has to go the bathroom so bad that he decides to risk getting grabbed by whatever might be under there. To his surprise, the monster asks him if he wants him to go along! He declines, and safely makes it to the washroom. Leo struts back to bed (as evidenced by the wonderful illustrations), and,



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filled with confidence, strikes up a conversation with the monster. It isn't long before the two are chatting again, and soon meet face to face. The monster is thrilled with his new name, Fred, and while they have a couple of scary encounters, Leo soon learns that Fred has his back.

Illustrations by Colin Jack are by turns mildly frightening and fun, and the style is very appealing and detailed. The book also plays with text placement and size occasionally in a very effective way.

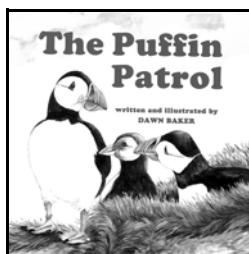
Highly recommended for all libraries who serve children beginning to read on their own.

Thematic Links: Fears; Friendship; Monsters; Bullying; Early Chapter Books

Nicole Rowlinson

BAKER, Dawn
The Puffin Patrol

Pennywell Books/Flankers Press, 2017.
Unp. Illus. Gr. K-4. 978-1-77117-605-7. Pbk. \$12.95



Dawn Baker has created another simple story that is both informative and reassuring. Susan, her friend Ryan, and Ryan's older sister Megan are out late on an August night "...roaming around gloomy streets and

gardens.." in Witless Bay, Newfoundland. Their mission is to look for lost pufflings. Why are there lost pufflings? When pufflings embark on their first flights, they fly at night and head out to sea beneath the stars. However, pufflings, flying on cloudy nights, can be confused by lights on shore and fly in the wrong direction ending up in coastal towns instead of the ocean. The story follows the trio through the August evening as volunteers locate and gently capture

13 pufflings and through to the next day when Susan and Ryan accompany members of the patrol to release the pufflings. The crew and pufflings travel by boat far from shore. Susan and Ryan each have an opportunity to release a puffling and watch as the pufflings reunite with puffins who "...were flying and bobbing on the water and diving. They all seemed to be having a great time!"

The book is informative with puffin and patrol facts seamlessly incorporated into the text as well as in the "Did you Know?" section. Did you know that a group of puffins was called a circus?! The colourful illustrations of the puffins and their habitat enhance the text.

The book is reassuring because it portrays a positive outcome and resolution to a problem in the environment created by civilization. Baker's artwork captures the 'warm glow' that the children feel by participating in a worthwhile and successful cause. "How you can Help" gives the young reader constructive advice on specifically helping puffins and general advice on helping all birds.

The book is highly recommended for both school and public libraries. The book can be used in environmental learning units about puffins, light pollution and local nature groups. In Newfoundland students can study the real life Puffin Patrol and in other provinces students can investigate their area for local initiatives involving birds.

Thematic Links: Puffins; The Puffin Patrol; Bird Rescue; Witless Bay, Nfld.; Light Pollution

Laura Reilly

BLAKE, Rodger

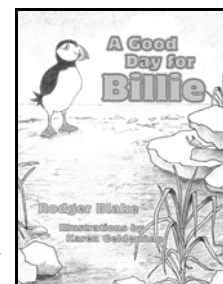
A Good Day for Billie

Illustrated by Karen Gelderman.
Boulder Publications, 2016. 35p. Illus. Gr. 1 - 3. 978-1-927099810. Pbk. \$13.95

In this charming, attractive story, Billie the puffin decides to take advantage of a beautiful, calm day to go exploring on the beach. The tide is out, the waves are gently crashing, and the seashells are plentiful. While Billie searches the shells for food, he spots a peculiar sight nestled among the rocks - a reddish, eight-legged creature. A potential new friend! Billie approaches and introduces himself, only to be harshly rejected, with the new being, Lava, telling him that since she is a crab and Billie is a puffin, they can't possibly interact.

Billie is deeply hurt and does not understand Lava's reaction. He believes anyone can be friends if they try. Billie decides to find his friend Charlie to get advice, while Lava is regretting her reaction and feeling lonely. She vows that if Billie returns, she will give him a chance to become a friend without being overly distrustful. With Charlie's encouragement and wisdom, Billie realizes that perhaps Lava was scared of him and he needs to be empathetic to that, and possibly prove to her that he is no danger to her. He returns to the beach where Lava is, and because she too has been rethinking her response to Billie, the two are able to give their potential friendship another try.

In beautifully descriptive prose, Blake sets scenes in such a way that it is easy for a reader to imagine themselves there, whether it is the serenity of watching the gentle breeze sway the tall grass while hearing the soothing splashing of cool waves, or the cautious curiosity of seeing a new and potentially dangerous sight. The variety of the geography of the area is both seen in the drawings, and mentioned in the text, and include fishing villages, rocky cliffs and shorelines, and icebergs. Illustrations, created in coloured pencils, are



Resource Links

CONNECTING CLASSROOMS, LIBRARIES & CANADIAN LEARNING RESOURCES

Promoting an awareness of the availability and use of Canadian learning resources, in print, electronic and other media, in schools and libraries, to sustain and enhance Canada's unique cultural heritage and perspective.

EDITOR

Victoria Pennell

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Resource Links

P. O. Box 9,
Pouch Cove, NL A0A 3L0
Tel: 709-335-2394; Fax: 709-335-2978
E-mail: resourcelinks@nl.rogers.com

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equally calming and a perfect match to the tone of the story. The back cover teases that this is Billie's first adventure, and another collaboration between this author and illustrator would be wonderful to see.

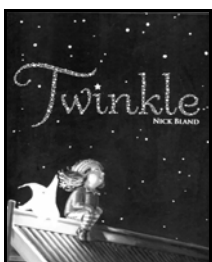
Thematic Links: Friendship; Perseverance; Trust; Accepting Differences; Puffins; Crabs; Atlantic Canada

Nicole Rowlinson

BLAND, Nick

Twinkle

Scholastic Canada, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. Preschool - 1. 978-1-4431-0098-4. Hdbk. \$14.99



Penny Pasketti longs for a friend; preferably a shiny, glowing one that lives in the night sky. When a star does fall in her backyard, she retrieves it and they become friends. After an evening of jumping on the bed and sharing secrets, Penny has

to figure out a way to get the star back up in the sky. She tries to tie a balloon around his belly, and she wraps him up like a parcel with the address, The Sky, but, "Little Star was too heavy and the sky, too far away." In the background of the acrylic illustrations, the reader will see that Little Star wasn't the only star that fell to earth, and Penny wasn't the only child lucky enough to find a new friend. The book winds down with views of shooting stars going in the opposite direction from atop a skyscraper, and then an illustration of Penny back in her bed, but this time sleeping.

I wish I could give this book a rating higher than an E. It's an E+. The story and the illustrations are some of the best I have ever seen in my seventeen years of working in a library.

Thematic Links: Falling Star; Home; Night Time; Friendship; Secrets

Tanya Boudreau

BRYAN, Tegwen Gwenthwyfar & Gregory Bryan

Penny the Penguin Learns to Fly



Illustrated by Jennifer Gate-Bryan. Peanut Butter Press, 2017. Unp. Illus. Gr. Preschool - 2. 978-1-927735-12-1. Hdbk. \$19.95

This book is a family effort. The text was written by 13 year-old Teg-

wen with assistance from her professor father, Gregory, and illustrated by her mother, Jenni-fer.

Penny is a young penguin who longs to fly, but is discouraged by all those around her (including her friends, the local librarian and a flying instructor) due to it being physiologically impossible for penguins to fly. She continues to dream about this goal, nonetheless. She trips and falls one day and slips off the edge of Iceberg Hill. As she is falling, she flaps her wings and there is a two-page spread declaring that she flies and the next pages reveal that she still has had a hard landing with a "bump", "thump" and "ker-flump". The reader is left to discern if she actually flew or just slowed her plummet by flapping her wings to create a bit of resistance, or was completely imagining it and hit as hard as if she had not even tried. This is very confusing. However, her friends congratulate her after her fall and when she declares that her next goal is to make it to the North Pole, everyone encourages her thoughts. The message of this book is to believe in yourself and not become discouraged by naysayers. Additionally, if you look hard enough, you could pull out the message that you can achieve a lot by redefining success in the face of discouragement by changing your perspective. Success can look different for each person. Penny may not have traditionally flown, but she did flap her wings when falling.

However, children may be asking - did she still succeed? The message, though important, is a bit muddled and may confuse many young readers. It could have been presented with more clarity for greater effectiveness.

Unfortunately, much of the text seems repetitive and lacks originality, and the illustrations are simplistic and lacking depth. Further editing and clarification would have helped with this literary effort to help make it a stand-out.

Thematic Links: Animals - Penguins; Determination; Perseverance

Erin Hansen

CALI, Davide

Cinderella and the Furry Slippers

Illustrated by Raphaëlle Barbanègre.



Tundra Books, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. Preschool - 2. 978-1-101-91898-2. Hdbk. \$21.99

Cali's follow-up to *Snow White and the 77 Dwarfs* is hilarious. Blonde-haired Cinderella longs to go to the ball and escape her three evil step-sisters, but when her fairy godmother helps her get there,

it's not what she expected. She arrives at the ball in a turnip carriage, wearing a dress that "didn't look like the picture from the magazine." She is assisted by bats and llamas, not mice and horses, and the Prince, who lacks basic hygiene, lives in a tiny castle decorated with one bouquet of balloons. She does live happily ever after though when she goes to a girls-only job fair where she learns about new career opportunities such as dragon tamer, stone carver, potion maker, and spider hunter.

Barbanègre's *Snow White and the 77 Dwarfs* digital illustrations make unique characters by exaggerating body proportions and clashing colours. Dialogue is minimal, (and funny), and the recognisable parts of the well-known Cinderella story are changed slightly. The step-sisters have dogs. Cinderella makes an appointment with her fairy godmother by using a phone, the fairy godmother looks like a green skinned witch, and Cinderella loses her shoe in a dance competition, not because she was running out of the castle.

This book is recommended for storytimes about princesses or fractured fairytales, or for parents and teachers who want to share stories about characters who learn to be independent and resilient.

Thematic Links: Cinderella; Fractured Fairy Tales; Independence; Expectations; Humour

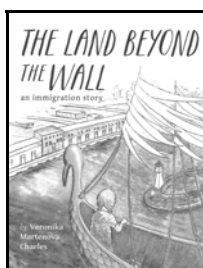
Tanya Boudreau

CHARLES, Veronika Martenova

The Land Beyond the Wall: An

Immigration Story

Nimbus Publishing, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. K-4. 978-177108-465-9. Hdbk. \$22.95



In this immigration story, author Veronika Martinova Charles shares

E Excellent, enduring, everyone should see it!

G Good, even great at times, generally useful!

A Average, all right, has its applications

P Problematic, puzzling, poorly presented

a version of her personal story (1970) as a sort of fairy tale that has aspects of magic realism. A young girl in a communist country encounters hardship and heartache before escaping to a new country (Canada) full of hope. A talking doll is her companion as she experiences the long voyage and several months at Pier 21 in Halifax (in its last days as a place for new immigrants). Angst and hardship, as well as hope and the potential of new beginnings are portrayed. This is a solid picture book, though the text is sometimes uneven in pace and phrasing.

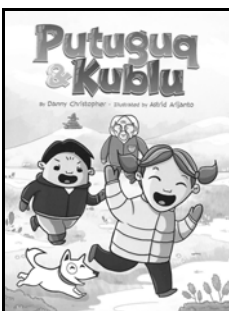
The final pages show Emma as an adult seated at her drawing table in an image that pays homage to the author and the final page contains a biography of the author's own immigration journey. The message clearly portrayed is that if the author can thrive in an uncertain situation in a new country, you can, too. This book would be a useful addition to a library immigration collection for young readers. Even recent immigrants would be able to identify with the feelings portrayed in the book, as well as those seeking to learn about the experience.

Thematic Links: Immigration; Canada; Pier 21; Czechoslovakia; Magic Realism

Erin Hansen

CHRISTOPHER, Danny
Putuqu & Kublu

Illustrated by Astrid Arijanto. Inhabit Media, 2017. 32p. Gr. K-2. 978-1-77227-143-0. Pbk. \$5.95



Putuqu and Kublu are a brother and sister who live in a small town just north of the Arctic Circle. The two of them love to play outside and play tricks on each other. One day, one of Putuqu's failed pranks turns into a race across the tundra, where the siblings run into an inuksuk. When their grandfather sees them, he uses the opportunity to teach them a bit about the history of their ancestors and inuksuit.

Putuqu and Kublu stands out because it is a story set in the Canadian Arctic, a part of the country that isn't often represented in books and other media. However, there are a few missed opportunities in the story. The banter between Putuqu and Kublu is sometimes drawn out too long. Their antics could have been shortened to allow for more elaboration on the topics of inuksuit and Tuniit, which is the real star of the story. As well, there is a detailed map of the siblings' village in the front of the book, which is never really utilized in the story. Perhaps this map is setting up the book to become a series, where other parts of the town would come into

play. Aside from these setbacks, **Putuqu and Kublu** is a very well-designed graphic novel. There are many design details throughout the book, like the endpapers and the map, that make the book very attractive. The characters, while a bit predictable, are expressive and funny. The northern setting, funny characters, and historical elements could easily allow this book to develop into a longer series that younger elementary school kids will enjoy.

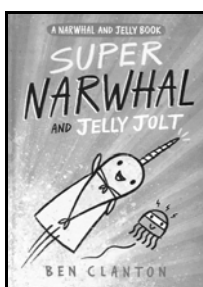
Thematic Links: Siblings; Inuit Culture; Ancestors

Alice Albarda

CLANTON, Ben

Super Narwhal and Jelly Jolt

Tundra Books, 2017. 64p. Gr. 1-3. 978-1-101-91829-6. Hdbk. \$16.99



Narwhal and Jelly are back, but this time they have super powers! This book is the second Narwhal and Jelly book, which features three short stories, a bonus comic by Narwhal and Jelly themselves, and some super information about sea life. Superheroes are an extremely appropriate theme for a graphic novel series, and Ben Clanton's treatment of the topic does not disappoint. There are many moments in the book that poke fun at the stereotypical superhero narrative, like when Narwhal reveals his secret identity - Clark Parker Wayne.

As in the first book, Narwhal uses his super power of imagination not only to be silly with Jelly, but also to help his friends when they need him. The book is a perfect balance of clever superhero jokes and heart-warming stories, combined with Ben Clanton's adorable and funny illustrations.

Thematic Links: Narwhals; Jellyfish; Sea Creatures; Superheroes; Comics

Alice Albarda

CRAWLEY, Oksanna

Super Hammy (My First Reading Series)

DC Canada Education Publishing, 2017. Boxed set 3 levels = 15 books & Audio CD. Gr. K-1. 978-1-77205-206-0. \$89.95



This is a basic three-level reading primer series comprised of 15 books in

total (5 for each of the three levels) and an audio CD. I was surprised that there are absolutely no instructions for use given on the box, in any of the books, or on the CD. No information is present (for the reader, for a teacher or a parent) as to lexile level(s), alignment with any specific reading program or guided reading levels at all. No context is given for any of the three levels in the series, nor indication of age-appropriateness. The illustrations are overly simplistic with the hero depicted with thick glasses and eyes (pupils) that are misaligned on each page, which leads to a negative impression of our hero. The text, though it does progress in difficulty, seems uneven in many places. Use of ellipsis (...) on several pages seems out of place in beginning-level reading books. There are many other higher quality guided reading/beginning reading sets out there that are more even in content and provide detailed information for their effective use in a learning-to-read setting.

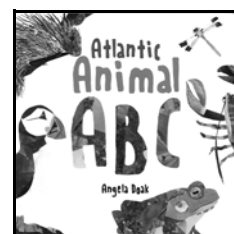
Thematic Links: Reading Recovery; Learn To Read; Superheroes; Guided Reading

Erin Hansen

DOAK, Angela K.

Atlantic Animal ABCs

Nimbus Publishing, 2017. 26p. Illus. Gr. Preschool - K. 978-1-77108-463-5. Bdbk. \$14.95



The gorgeous paper collage illustrations by photographer and collage artist, Angela Doak, make this board book eye catching and vibrant. To be expected with a limited list of animals (only those who have habitats in Atlantic Canada), some animals are more loosely matched to the letters of the alphabet with second parts of their name used for the corresponding letter or their scientific genus and species given, which may cause confusion for some young readers (e.g. **K** - belted Kingfisher, **X** - Xiphias Gladius [Swordfish]). Both capital and lowercase letters are shown in bold font, which is helpful when introducing young readers to their letters. It would have been helpful to include some end notes for parents that describe some of the more obscure animals or give a bit more detail about habitats to enrich this book, but this is a minor omission.

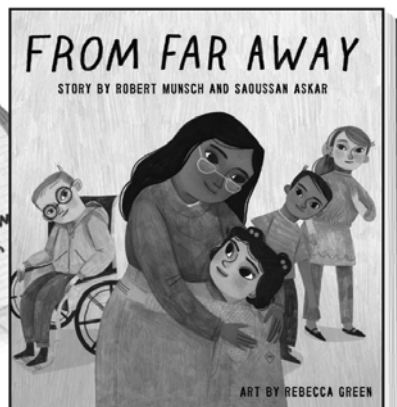
This is a strong title that has a solid place in libraries and personal collections for babies and toddlers.

Thematic Links: Alphabet; Atlantic Canada; Animals

Erin Hansen

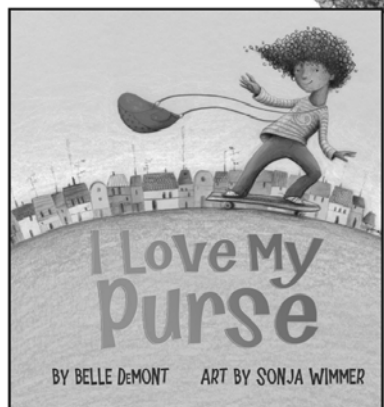


Picture books to love



The heartwarming story about an immigrant child adjusting to her new school, by celebrated author Robert Munsch.

Ages 4-7 / 978-1-55451-939-2 pb / 978-1-55451-940-8 hc



"With his polite determination not to conform to other people's gender expectations, Charlie is the heart of this delightful story."

—Quill & Quire, *starred review

Ages 4-7 / 978-1-55451-954-5 hc

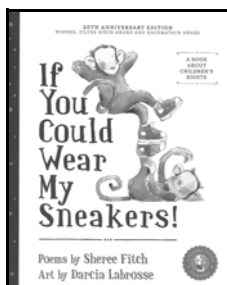


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FITCH, Sheree

If You Could Wear My Sneakers
(Twentieth Anniversary Edition)

Illustrated by Darcia Labrosse. Nimbus Publishing, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. Preschool -5. 978-1-77108-469-7. Hdbk. \$22.95



The classic children's book *If You Could Wear My Sneakers* by Sheree Fitch is now available in the 20th anniversary edition. Winner of both the *Hackmatack* and *Silver Birch* awards in 2000, this collection of 15 poems is whimsical,

funny, and silly and subtly connected with children's rights; each poem reflects on an article of the UN Convention on Rights of the Child. At the end of the book, readers are asked to match the poem to the appropriate article (answers are provided on the final page). Produced in association with UNICEF, Sheree Fitch and Darcia Labrosse have created a stellar book that brings a global awareness of the rights of a child. The quiz may be a bit difficult for younger children to complete and comprehend, but with the guidance of teachers and/or parents, the message will be truly un-

E

derstood through reading and discussions.

The goofiness of the poems will delight all readers, both children and adults alike. Article 2 of this internationally accepted convention reads: "You have these rights no matter what; all children do" is explored by the first poem in the book that is also the title of the book *If You Could Wear My Sneakers*. The poems provide children with an understanding of their rights, in a fun, imaginative manner, learning about their rights for health care, privacy play, protection from abuse and war, etc. Fitch is well-known for her nonsense poems, and *If You Could Wear My Sneakers* displays rhythm and tempo associated with her work. Each poem is different. Each has its own message and each poem portrays a playful example of how the written word can be shaped into whatever the author's purpose and intent is. And Fitch clearly excels at just that.

The illustrations by Darcia Labrosse, an award-winning illustrator, are cheery, bright, and animated; each one reflective of the text connected to it. The illustrations are exactly the same in both editions, but in the anniversary edition they seem brighter and cheerier than the original. The illustrations are full-page water-colour drawings, each enabling a light-hearted feel on a serious topic. For example, the poem "To Each A Home" (Article 27; standard of living) portrays a big bear holding a snail in its

hand, and intently looking at the snail; the use of a snail (who carries their home with them) cleverly, without saying anything, drives the message of the poem and the article "home".

This anniversary edition includes an introduction by Sheree Fitch, which differs from the previous edition of Peter Gzowski's words. Also new to this edition is Fitch's dedication to Harry Black, the former executive director of UNICEF who passed away in 2017; the dedication shares some of Black's endeavours and projects in developing countries, always striving for better conditions for children. Mr. Black also was a firm believer that books could make a difference in the lives of children everywhere.

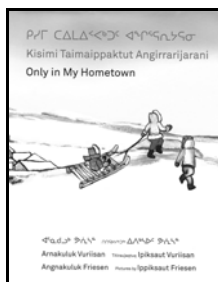
A delightful book of poetry with a serious message but in a very child-like approach, through humour, silliness and fun! Of course, adult guidance may be required to share in the enjoyment!

Thematic Links: Children's Rights; Poetry; United Nations Convention on Children's Rights

Carmelita Cechetto-Shea

FRIESEN, Angnakuluk
Only in my Hometown
Illustrated by Ippiksaut Friesen.

E



Translated by Jean Kusugak. Greenwood Books/House of Anansi Press, 2017. 20p. Gr. K-3. 978-1-55498-884-6. Hdbk. \$18.95

Written and illustrated respectively by sisters Angnakuluk and Ippiksaut Friesen, *Only in My*

Hometown uses richly painted illustrations and simple yet evocative language to depict its creators' unique childhood experiences growing up in Nunavut. Written in both Inuktitut and English, the book crafts a complete picture of an Inuit community. The book's images and words work in tandem to bring the narrator's fragmented memories to life. The story begins with the narrator describing herself "sitting on the elephant, / always remembering what my mom said." The illustration on the adjacent page contextualizes this reminiscence, depicting a young girl on a giant metal tube that could potentially resemble an elephant. This initial image sets up a thread of perception versus reality that runs through the story. A few pages later, the narrator describes clothes and toys strewn about her childhood home. While an outsider might see this as something to be cleaned up, the narrator instead chooses to focus on the children playing who left these toys behind. The accompanying illustration depicts a young girl standing almost defiantly in front of the mess: this is a feature - not a bug - of her hometown.

One of the story's closing couplets further drives home the idea that different doesn't have to mean bad: "We share in times of plenty and are helped in times of need." While life may not be perfect in their community, it is still a life filled with caring, love and family. By carefully representing every facet of their community, the Friesen sisters present a refreshingly balanced portrait of contemporary Inuit life that needs to be told more often.

Thematic Links: Inuit Communities; Memory; Childhood; Family; Love

Natalie Colaiacovo

FULLERTON, Alma
Hand Over Hand

Illustrated by Renne Benoit. Second Story Press, 2017. 24p. Illus. Gr. Preschool - 3. 978-1-77260-015-5. Hdbk. \$16.95



Nina longs to go fishing with her Lolo (grandfather) even though people in her Filipino fishing village insist fishing is not for girls. One day her kind grandfather agrees to take her fishing. He patiently

teaches her what to do and throughout the day Lolo catches fish. Nina is frustrated because there is no tug on her line. Then suddenly, near the end of the day, she feels a strong tug from a very large fish! With Lolo's encouragement, Nina brings in the huge fish all by herself!

The text is rhythmic and flows. The story is appealing and encourages girls to strive for anything they wish to accomplish. It demonstrates a girl can do anything she wishes if she puts her mind to it. The lovely watercolour illustrations evoke the small Filipino village atmosphere with the ocean colours of blue green. An excellent story set in the Philippines that speaks to every child about personal achievement!

Thematic Links: Fishing; Philippines; Grandfathers; Gender Equality

Isobel Lang

GALBRAITHE, Bree
Milo and Georgie

Illustrated by Josée Bisallon. Owlkids Books, 2017. Unp. Illus. Gr. K-3. 978-1-77147-170-1. Hdbk. \$16.95



Milo and Georgie are the children of a single Mom, who are forced to move to a new city when Mom gets a new job. For Georgie, the move is exciting and challenging, but for Milo the prospect is daunting and he thinks he will "never be happy again". In the time before the move he plays a lot of baseball and stays out of the house doing everything for the last time, thinking that at eight and a half years old he is going to retire from having fun.

When they arrive at their new home Georgie loves everything and Milo hates it. Soon she wants to get out of the flat and Milo ties a piece of yarn to her so that he will call her home. This continues until one day he pulls the yarn and she doesn't come.....

This is a wonderfully reassuring tale for children who have to face the prospect of a move, as sometimes new places can provide opportunities beyond one's wildest expectations.

Thematic Links: Moving House; Anxiety

Mavis Holder

GEORGE, Pamela
Three Little Piggy Banks

Illustrated by Meridith Luce. DC Canada Education Publishing, 2017. 40p. Illus. Gr. Preschool - 3. 978-

1772051766. Pbk. \$12.95

As a librarian, I haven't often come across books that teach financial literacy to kids, so when I read *Three Little Piggy Banks*, I wasn't sure what to expect. Financial literacy can seem intimidating, even for adults who have been paying bills and other expenses for years and years. It seems almost impossible to unpack such a mature subject for the youngest of children, but author Pamela George deftly simplifies the subject for young children. The book provides a very basic understanding of money: saving it, sharing it, and spending it. In the book, five-year old twins, Ella and Andy, are taught about saving money by their parents, who buy them each three piggy banks for their birthday. One piggy bank is for saving, one piggy bank is for sharing, and one is for spending.

In this book, children are shown how to be fiscally responsible in the simplest way. Each week, the children receive an allowance and they must decide how much to put in each bank. The kids each want to buy something big: Ella wants a camera and Andy wants a bicycle. Their parents guide them to getting what they want by setting goals, setting aside money every week, calculating how long it will take to save up enough money, all the while setting aside some of their allowance for sharing with others and for savings. Even though the book is about financial literacy, it also teaches about having compassion for others less fortunate, which is why one of the piggy banks the children receive is for sharing.

The note to parents and teachers by the author at the beginning of the book outlines some of the goals the author hopes the book will accomplish. Among these goals are to teach delayed gratification, keeping track of expenses, living within one's means, and separating spending and saving. There is even an exercise that parents can do with kids, such as buying or making piggy banks and decorating them with children (modelled after the story). There is even a worksheet at the end of the book to help kids create financial goals and keep track of how much they are saving, spending, and sharing. This is an excellent book to help parents and educators teach children about financial literacy and why it is so important.

Thematic Links: Financial Literacy; Being Responsible with Money; Spending; Sharing; Saving; Delayed Gratification; Setting Goals; Allowance; Learning Skills

Catherine Bellamy



GHIGNA, Charles

First Times

Illustrated by Lori Joy Smith. Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 32p. Gr. Preschool-3. 978-1-459811980. Hdbk. \$19.95

E

"My first slide down the slide, my first swing on the swing!"



When you're a kid, your life is full of first times. From the first time tying your shoes to the first time traveling on an airplane, every new day comes with a new adventure. *First Times* lists many of these exciting firsts, as demonstrated by a trio of smiling kids. In this book, both Charles Ghigna and Lori Joy Smith have produced exceptional work. Ghigna's poetry lends itself perfectly to being read aloud because the rhymes and rhythms are uncomplicated yet well-crafted. Smith's bright illustrations have a vintage and timeless feel, while also being colourful and dynamic. These elements combine to create a book that families will love to read together and that should become a classic in years to come.

Thematic Links: First Times; Growing Up; Adventure

Alice Albarda

HARBRIDGE, Paul

When The Moon Comes

Illustrated by Matt James. Tundra Books, 2017. 36p. Illus. Gr. 1-6. 978-1-101-91777-0. Hdbk. \$21.99

E

"It is dark, dark now, and the face of the sky is freckled with stars...The moon is rising"



Rich descriptions convey the mood and cold winter nights atmosphere in Paul Harbridge's picture book *When the Moon Comes*. This mid-night adventure story covers a group of children in a small farming community waiting for the weeks to go by, watching the loons "flock south" and the moon to grow until the winter sets in deep and for the ice to be strong of the "snowy flat of the beaver flood." "...we see the moon rise large and ready...we decide "Tonight's the night."

The children criss-cross, wade and stumble to get to the frozen flood in among some pine trees and start a fire to keep warm, facing their "skates to the flames", eventually making their way to the "Wonderful ice...Magic ice." "We take turns pushing the shovel, and it plows

the light, playful snow as if there were nothing there at all."

"The game is on, and our shouts rise up and disappear into the cold, black sky..."

The vivid and pictorial descriptions continue as we feel the sudden silence of the children isolated within nature and illuminated by the moon. In contrast we are given a dose of thrill and excitement from them jostling their hockey sticks, zooming around and sweating, "we play hard and sweat...the cold air burns our lungs..." on the perfectly circular, smooth silver landscape, and "it is so cold there is a ring around the moon..." As the story continues the author articulates warmth and elation as the kids make tea and stand at the top of the mountain, for "we look back at the slash of silver lining, silent now in the expanse of white..." Eventually one by one they end up in their cozy beds, ready for school the next day!

The majestic chilly snow-scapes and the midnight scenery is magnificently illustrated by Matt James. A perfect pairing with the author's descriptive text, these icy backdrops are still, yet move with whimsical strokes and curvy lines. The specs of warm reds and yellows are selectively rendered on the children, contrasting against the silvery-white light accents of the moon's reflection on the very dark cool marine-blackish backgrounds. Incorporating many techniques of overlaying paints and crayons this creates an illusion of reflective ice or synergy of the children and the reflection of the moon.

When the Moon Comes draws children into the magic of the moon, an enchanting adventure that could easily become a Canadian children's classic of kids spirit and determination to play hockey no matter what the cool quiet stillness of nature offers.

Thematic Links: Canada; Winter; Snow; Hockey; Friendship; Moon; Night Sky

Lara Chauvin

HOHN, Nadia L.

Malaika's Winter Carnival

Illustrated by Irene Luxbacher. Groundwood Books, 2017. Unp. Illus. Gr. K-2. 978-1-55498-920-1. Hdbk. \$18.95



and returns bringing a man and his daughter to the Caribbean island. Her mother intends to marry the man and take Makaila back to a country very different from the warm island to which she is accustomed. We like to think that

This continues the story of Malaika from an earlier book, *Malaika's Costume*, published in 2016. Malaika's mother has been working in Canada

G

we are welcoming to newcomers, but when the food, the language and the climate are all so strange, feeling at home is not so easy.

A great read aloud to start a conversation about providing a warm welcome to new Canadians into this cold land.

Thematic Links: Moving; Family Relations

Mavis Holder

HORROCKS, Anita

Silas' Seven Grandparents

Orca Book Publishers, 2010/2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. Preschool - 1. 978-1-4598-1640-4. Pbk. \$10.95

G

A reissue of a charming picture book from 2010. Silas has seven active grandparents who love him very much, but it can be exhausting! When his parents decide to go on a trip, who will he decide to stay with?

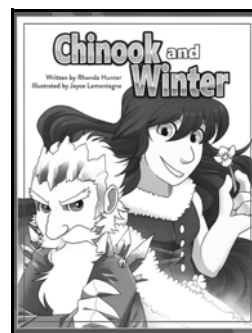
As can be expected with a story that has a number in it, this book lends itself to counting. Both the narrative and the illustrations depict seven grandparents doing all sorts of things in a variety of configurations, and many readers will find it hard to resist ensuring that the two match up. This is a great way to subtly support early numeracy.

While the plot itself is not particularly amazing, this book really shines in the depiction of Silas' grandparents. Not only are they active and passionate about life (something that is sadly lacking in many children's books involving grandparents), they are also extremely diverse: Most are in couples, but one is single; they have a wide variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds; and they range from moderately grey to notably wrinkled.

This is a book with detailed, colourful illustrations and a story that values inclusiveness. Recommended for preschoolers 4+.

Thematic Links: Family; Diversity; Grandparents

Sadie Tucker



HUNTER, Rhonda
Chinook and Winter

Illustrated by Jayce Lamontagne. Pemmican Publications, 2016. 39p. Illus. Gr. K-5. 978-1-926506-01-2. Pbk. \$10.95

G

Told in the style of an updated legend or myth, this story explores the Alberta (and Saskatchewan) phenomenon of the warming Chinook winds that help break up a cold winter. The story of an anthropomorphized gruff 'Old Man Winter' and playful young 'Chinook' plays out one cold winter, as seen through the eyes of a young Alberta girl (Kiaya). This year, Old Man Winter seeks to beat his competitor (Chinook) by starting early and settling a stronghold of winter over the prairies. He succeeds in keeping Chinook away by being mean to her and sending the prairies month after month of cold until the restless dreams of Kiaya begin to bother him and he remembers the playful games that he and Chinook used to play.

Though the narrative is at times a bit wordy and is quite abrupt in one place (Old Man Winter's change of heart seems to happen very quickly and requires further description to be believable) this story will successfully teach children about the unique prairie phenomenon of winter Chinooks. A useful page of more "scientific" information about Chinooks and their role in indigenous culture is included at the end of the book. The illustrations are playful and reminiscent of Manga-style art, which may draw young readers.

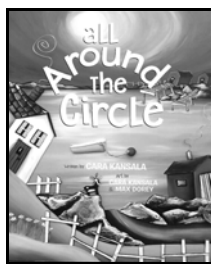
This book would be a useful tool for cross-curriculum studies and humanities programs, as it successfully weaves science, ELA, social studies and First Nations culture into its narrative and focus. It is a recommended addition to Canadian First Nations/Indigenous collections for home, school or public libraries.

The author is a former teacher-librarian from Alberta, and the illustrator is a self-taught digital artist in grade 11 from northern Saskatchewan.

Thematic Links: Alberta; Saskatchewan; Manitoba; Prairies; Canadian Studies; First Nations; Indigenous; Winter; Weather - Chinook; Mythology; Legend

Erin Hansen

KANSALA, Cara
All Around the Circle
Illustrated by Cara Kansala & Max Dorey. Breakwater Books, 2017. 32p.



Illus. Gr. K-3. 978-1-55081-675-4. Pbk. \$19.95

All Around the Circle by Cara Kansala is a delightful book of verse that celebrates the spirit and scenery of outport Newfoundland. This collection of seventeen poems tells

the tale of many Newfoundland themes and landscapes. Some are humorous such as "Marc Chagull" about a seagull named Marc who is of French origin; others reflective of Newfoundland way of life such as "While Uncle Jack was Jigging".

Although Kansala was born in Northern Ontario, Newfoundland is now her home, and **All Around the Circle** is her first children's book. Kansala is well known in Newfoundland as a full-time visual artist, with artistic creations in oil that have become her trademark in the province. Many of the scenes in drawings in the book are also paintings on canvas that Kansala has exhibited and sold in art galleries in St. John's. The drawings in the book are whimsical, evocative, and reflective of everyday life in Newfoundland. Kansala herself states in her paintings, she "strives to find the laughter and joy in the hard things that life sometimes throws at us"; **All Around the Circle** is exactly that! With vibrant colours, and detailed sketches of the drawings, the poems come to life beyond the written text to bring the reader on a journey to Newfoundland even if they have never travelled there. The book lists Max Dorey as part of the art duo, but there doesn't seem to be any reference to his contributions in the book or on the publisher's website.

At the end of the book, a dedication to her grandmother displays humour and visual tones in the style of Cara Kansala. A visually impressive book for readers of all ages, even if Cara's intention was a children's book of verse. Be prepared for a few chuckles while reading this wonderful book.

Thematic Links: Poetry; Humour; Outports; Newfoundland; Paintings

Carmelita Cechetto-Shea

LANGSTON, Laura
Fabulous Feathers in her Hair
Illustrated by Sonia Nadeau. Peanut Butter Press, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. 1-3. 978-1-927735-49-7. Hdbk. \$19.95

G

The author sets the scene of two young girls who are "bestest" friends. They play together and dream of what their futures might be until one of them is just not there anymore, and the survivor has to come to terms with the death of her friend. This is not a book that one can expect to be a popular reading but when it is needed, the recognition that our memories are with us forever, and our friend, or family member will never change and grow away from us may help to bring comfort to the bereaved.

Illustrator Sonia Nadeau has used different coloured, and textured papers as background to her chalk pastel drawings, which capture the changing moods of the book beautifully.

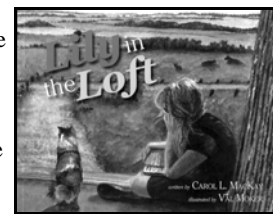
Thematic Links: Death; Friendship; Memories

Mavis Holder

MACKAY, Carol
Lily in the Loft
Illustrated by Val Moker. Your Nickel's Worth Publishing, 2017. 32p. Gr. 1-3. 978-1-927756911. Pbk. \$14.95

E

Frances loves to sit in the hayloft on her family's farm and write stories and poems. Aunt Margaret encourages her to submit a poem to the Young Co-operators' Club, a section of the local newspaper that publishes poems and stories written by kids. Frances submits her best poem under the pen name "Lily in the Loft." Then the waiting begins... Will Lily in the Loft ever see her writing in print?



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This unexpectedly lovely book tells the story of one member of the Young Co-operators' Club, which was published in Saskatchewan from 1927 to 1994, encouraging generations of young writers to write. Young readers will love to learn about this little-known piece of Saskatchewan culture that influenced the lives of children like them. The text and illustrations are both simple with moments of beauty. The two-panel composition of each page make Val Moker's illustrations really stand out, because they provide extra details that add depth and meaning to the story. Overall this is a book that young readers will enjoy for its historical elements, lovely illustrations, and relatable childhood story.

Thematic Links: Saskatchewan; Writing; Newspapers

Alice Albarda

MACLEAR, Kyo

Yak and Dove

Illustrated by Esmé Shapiro.

Tundra Books, 2017. 56p. Illus. Gr.

Preschool - 1. 978-1-770494-94-7. Hbk.

\$22.99



Yak and Dove is an unusual picture book consisting of three stories about an unlikely animal friendship between a Yak and a Dove.

Dove wishes that they were twins, so that they could be more alike. Dove is small and loud while Yak is big and furry. The text is written completely in a conversational question and answer style. Longer than the standard 32-page picture book, the three chapters flow easily as the two friends find out about the world they live in, and ultimately about themselves; less pages may have affected the overall success of the story in reaching the readers. With different fonts and sizes, the text is clear for the character transitions, giving the characters voice as well. Learning about their differences is a perfect message for readers to realize that it is okay to be different. But Yak and Dove also learn that despite their differences, they are more alike than they initially believe. The two grow in their friendship and realize that a true friendship allows each to give their own unique voice to the relationship. The story moves from the friends wondering about their differences, into the audition where Dove wins back Yak's heart, into the three stories where the pair create a quiet garden together.

It is Esmé Shapiro's illustrations that bring the wonderful story to life in a whimsical and endearing display of watercolour, gouache and coloured pencil drawings. Readers observe

Yak and Dove in different attires. Yak wears high top sneakers, Dove wears a hat and bowtie, Wolf wears a blue tutu. The characters' faces show expressions contributing to the story and artwork.

Yak and Dove is a delightful picture book for preschoolers and the kindergarten/primary classes/readers. It is funny, thought provoking and a clever way to get the message that it is okay to be different! Sincere text with outstanding illustrations in a story you won't soon forget.

Thematic Links: Animals; Friendship

Carmelita Cechetto-Shea

MUIRHEAD, Laurie

Lullaby Lilly

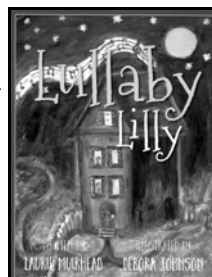
Illustrated by Deborah Johnson. Your Nickel's Worth Publishing, 2017. 48p.

Illus. Gr. 2-5. 978-1-927756-94-2. Pbk. \$14.95

This delightful picture book is a blend of prose and poetry. It is a celebration of language and letter sounds and big words. What a delightful read-aloud for young children (alone or within the classroom). It would take an advanced reader to tackle this alone before grade 2, at least. It is a very approachable introduction to poetry and paying attention to word sounds.

Lilly is a "persnickety girl, a most persistent girl with pig-tails, a pair of pink woolly socks and an infectious love for lullabies". She exhausts her entire family in her quest to hear more lullabies at night until, in exasperation, they finally tell her to make up her own lullabies. At first, she is uncertain and discouraged because her writing skills are not what she would like them to be, her rhyming is awkward, and she thinks that the only way to create a lullaby is to write it down. Discouraged, she seeks out her mother and together they spend a wonderful afternoon spinning verses. The poems they come up with are magical and lyrical. Lilly finds this activity to be an epiphany and it lights a fire in her for playing with language. She boldly states that she will win a Nobel prize for her future writing efforts, and the narrative shows her winning the prestigious prize on the last page (perhaps fantastical, but still inspirational in the lesson to follow your passions).

For younger kids, some of the words may need to be explained, but even if they are not, children will be captivated by the rhythmic and melodious flow of sounds. There is much expression that could be imbued by a reader (both silently in the head when reading alone, and verbally when read aloud). The illustrations are reminiscent of folk art, and are at times child-



like. Highly recommended for personal and library collections and for use in the English Language Arts curriculum as an exceptional exploration of language.

Thematic Links: Poetry; Determination; Perseverance; Nature; English Language Arts

Erin Hansen

MUTALA, Marion

More Babas, Please!

Illustrated by Olha Tkachenko. Your Nickel's Worth Publishing, 2017. 24p.

Illus. Gr. Preschool - 3. 978-1927756928. Pbk. \$14.95

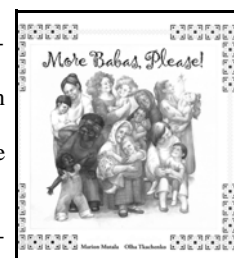
More Babas, Please!

More Babas, Please! is a fun, heart-warming poem about "babas", the Ukrainian word for "grand mother". However, the book is not just about Ukrainian grandmothers, but all grandmothers of different cultures, nationalities, shapes, sizes, and appearances. The poem celebrates grandmothers and the relationship they have with their grandchildren. The rhythm of the poem is fun and upbeat and the rhyming scheme is sure to make it a favourite to read aloud. It is a sentimental and sweet book for the narrator declares they don't need candy or sweets or new clothes, all they need is their baba. Each page ends with, "More babas, please!" This short, predictable text makes it an excellent story to read out loud and get children to participate. The soft illustrations evoke feelings of warmth and happiness, adding a touch of sentimentality to the text. Each picture features a grandchild being cared for and loved by their baba.

This is a great book to read when talking about family, especially grandmothers, or even the history of Ukrainians in Canada. In fact, in the author's note, author Marion Mutala discusses briefly the history of Ukrainians who immigrated to Saskatchewan and dedicates her book to those Ukrainian pioneers, as well as to all women in every culture. She also notes that a percentage of the proceeds from the sale of the book will go to the Stephen Lewis Foundation for *Grandmothers for Grandmothers*, which helps grandmothers in Africa care for their grandchildren who are orphaned due to the AIDS epidemic.

Thematic Links: Grandmothers; Multigenerational; Grandparenting; Customs; Ukraine; Saskatchewan; Caring; Love; Ukrainian Immigrants to Saskatchewan; Poetry

Catherine Bellamy



NICHOLOSON, Caitlin Dale & Leona Morin-Neilson
Nipêhon/I Wait
 Groundwood Books, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. Preschool - 2. 978-1-55498-914-0. Hdbk. \$18.95

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Written in English and Cree (standard roman orthography and syllabics), **Nipêhon/I Wait** is a picture book about a daughter, a mother, and a grandmother who pick wild yarrow for tea. The acrylic illustrations are realistic in style and

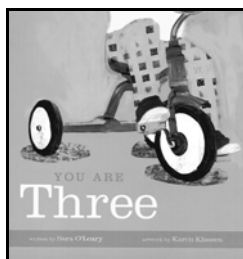
show each person doing a similar activity (waiting, walking, praying, picking the yarrow) and then leaving the fields with smiles on their faces and bags of yarrow in their arms. A playful dog accompanies them while they are searching for the flowers. The fields are full of butterflies and there is a view of a lake. The book ends with a simple recipe for yarrow tea, and a dedication to the different generations of women the author and illustrator have known throughout their lives. The story is told with only two to three words per page, with the illustrations adding detail about love and family.

Thematic Links: Cree and English Language; Grandmothers; Yarrow Tea; Mothers and Daughters; Team Work; Connections; Elders

Tanya Boudreau

O'LEARY, Sara
You Are Three
 Illustrated by Karen Klassen. OwlKids Books, 2017. Unp. Illus. Gr. Pre-school - 1. 978-1-77147-074-2. Hdbk. \$15.95

E



In the third of her series which includes *You are One* and *You Are Two*, the author demonstrates the changes children go through once they are three years old. At three, children

constantly are moving, curious and have become more involved in imaginary adventures. They know their colours, shapes, and alphabet. Parents understand their drawings better and can have long conversations with them.

The one constant is that parents will always love their children no matter how old they become. This reassuring tale is an engaging picture of a typical three year old and gives the

child the comfort of knowing that their parents will always love them. The text is simple but depicts the characteristics of a three year old poetically and succinctly. The lovely ink and wash illustrations are partly realistic with beautifully rendered faces but more sketchily done bodies and backgrounds; an intriguing blend of styles.

Thematic Links: Child Development; 3-Year-Olds; Preschoolers

Isobel Lang

PASQUET, Jacques
My Wounded Island
 Illustrated by Marion Arbona. Translated from the French by Sophie B. Watson. Orca Book Publishers, 2017. Unp. Illus. Gr. 1-3. 978-1-459815650. Hdbk. \$19.95 (Reviewed from Advance Reading Copy)

G



My Wounded Island is written from the perspective of an Inupiat child named Imarvaluk which means "the song of the waves." Imarvaluk lives with her family on a small island, Sarichef, near the Arctic Circle.

Imarvaluk is frightened by the rising sea level and how it is affecting the lives of the people on the island. Outsiders present the scientific explanation of climate change. "Because of the warmer temperatures, glaciers are melting and the water is rising." Imarvaluk views the problem from a mythological perspective and has nightmares about it. She thinks that a monster is hurting the island. "This creature is greedy and invisible." Imarvaluk wonders "Why isn't the goddess of the sea, Sedna, protecting us?"

Throughout the story, Imarvaluk describes the island way of life and the changes that are happening. For example the protective winter pack ice is no longer stable and inhibits hunting. As the story concludes plans are in place to move shore houses like Imarvaluk's to the centre of the island. The solution is temporary and Imarvaluk's family, in particular her grandfather, ponders the continued existence of their traditions and customs if they move off the island.

The text of **My Wounded Island** is done well conveying information from the convincing voice of a thoughtful child. The description of Imarvaluk's fears and nightmares may prompt questions and concerns from young readers. The art work, of gouache, ink, pencil and toothbrush, is exquisite in its depiction of contrasts of the daily lives of the Inupiat people with that of the disruptive phantom creature in the sea.

This book is recommended for school libraries. Although it does not offer solutions, it would be useful in a study of climate change. It is a thought-provoking depiction of causes and effects of climate change on a physical environment and the people inhabiting that environment. The book includes a glossary. **My Wounded Island** could also be incorporated into a study unit on northern indigenous cultures. The book could be used as an inspiration for art projects expressing perceptions of problems and fears. Exploring the use of a toothbrush in creating art would be intriguing as well.

Thematic Links: Climate Change; Rising Sea Levels; The Inupiat; Northern Indigenous Communities; Nightmares

Laura Reilly

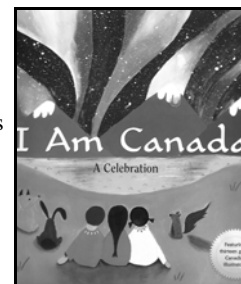
PATTERSON, Heather
I am Canada: A Celebration
 Illustrated by Thirteen Canadian Illustrators (See review for complete list). North Wind Press, 2006/2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. Preschool - 1. 978-1-4431-6304-0. Hdbk. \$19.95.

E

I am Canada: A Celebration is a free-verse children's poem written by Heather Patterson and includes illustrations from 13 various Canadian illustrators. They include: Jeremy Tankard, Ruth Ohi, Barbara Reid, Jon Klassen, Marie-Louise Gay, Danielle Daniel, Ashley Spires, Geneviève Côté, Cale Atkinson, Doretta Groenendyk, Qin Leng, Eva Campbell and Irene Luxacher. Originally published in 2006, the book features illustration instead of photos as seen in the 2006 edition. Patterson's text remained the same in the newer edition.

With it being the 150th celebration of Canada's birthday, this book is a timely edition where the illustrators share what Canada means to them. Each double page illustration depicts the illustrators unique style, and reflect the text within; each is a glorious celebration of what Canada is, and provides the reader with themes of hope, diversity, possibilities and the native homeland of Canada.

The idea came to fruition by Scholastic Canada's vice-president of publishing, Diane Kerner who also edited the new edition. Kerner wanted something that would celebrate both Scholastic's 60th anniversary and Canada's 150th anniversary; the result was **I am Canada: A Celebration**. The simple text enhanced by fabulous illustrations was the perfect way to celebrate the milestones. The illus-



trators symbolize what Canada truly is, a diverse land with diverse people with various cultures, experiences, and perspectives. At the end of this edition, the author and each illustrator provides a short paragraph on what Canada means to them, from a place where dreams can come true to illustrations which depict Canada today, as in Barbara Reid's tobogganing illustration inspired by Reid watching videos of Syrian children who had arrived in Canada having their first toboggan ride, and witnessing the excitement on their faces.

I am Canada: A Celebration is a delightful picture book for this special year in Canada's history. Its message is as simple as its text: celebrate who you are as well as your differences.

Also available in French. See p. 58.

Thematic Links: Canada; Celebration; Diversity

Carmelita Cechetto-Shea

REKULAK, Jason

The X-Files: Earth Children are Weird

Illustrated by Kim Smith. Quirk Books, 2017. Unp. Illus. Gr. K - 2. 978-1-59474-979-7. Hdbk. \$19.99



In this X-Files alternate universe, Dana Scully and Fox Mulder were the best of friends since they were young children, and their future beliefs and passions were already firmly in place. During a camp-out in Dana's backyard, Fox is absolutely certain that they are in the presence of alien life. Dana, of course, uses logical reasoning to debunk his theories. She determines that an alien shadow is actually that of Buster the dog, the giant crater in the ground is from preparations for a swimming pool, and the spooky noises are simply coming from a squeaky tire swing. The twist at the end, however, shows that Fox may not be too far off the mark after all.

While the illustrations are quite good, and definitely evoke the child-size versions of David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson, it isn't really enough to save the storyline, especially since the age group the book is targeted at won't be familiar with the X-Files phenomenon. The foreshadowing of the ending twist in the second half of the book might garner a few excited reactions, but ultimately it is quite original.

Although the book does coincide with the TV show reboot, it is unlikely to create any

new fans. Simon Bartram's *Man on the Moon: a Day in the Life of Bob* is a similar, but much more entertaining, choice.

Thematic Links: Aliens; Scepticism; Television Show Adaptations; Cause and Effect

Nicole Rowlinson

SHIRTLIFFE, Leanne

Saving Thunder the Great: The True Story of a Gerbil's Escape from the Fort McMurray Wildfire

Illustrated by Georgia Graham. Boulder Publications, 2016. 32p. Illus. Gr. Preschool - 2. 978-1-927099-85-8. Hdbk. \$21.95



Saving Thunder the Great: The True Story of a Gerbil's Escape from the Fort McMurray Wildfire is based on a true

story of a young boy and his mother who orchestrated the rescue of his pet gerbil Thunder, and their escape from the May 2016 wildfire that raged through Fort McMurray, Alberta. Jackson was safe in Newfoundland with his grandparents, but his mom and pet gerbil were caught in the fire's path. The mother, an oil sands worker, checks on the gerbil who seems to have a voracious appetite as he has eaten through his tunnel and the water dish; Thunder really needs a new cage too. The next day, she is awakened by a roommate, telling her that the wildfire has now jumped the river and they all need to evacuate. The mandatory evacuation was forcing everyone to leave their homes, grabbing what little they could, hoping to escape the fire and survive. Jackson's mom does just that; she gets Thunder and heads north in her car to safety. The journey takes the mom through various obstacles and situations where she is both the helper and the person being helped. But the chaos around her, and the other 88,000 people trying to escape the city was treacherous, scary and very difficult.

Shirtliffe has written a beautiful story that is both realistic and timely. The topic of this poignant tale is dealt with in a very sensitive way for young readers and provides feelings of hope, acts of bravery and a mother's love. It informs the world of how terrible that time really was, yet doesn't elaborate on details that could cause fear or anxiety in a young child reading or hearing the story. Such a terrible moment in the city's history, and the courage shown by those affected. The story is based on a real family, and their ordeal during this terrible time. One over-lying theme the author has subtly included is that of community helping

community; strangers helped strangers, the people united in one common cause, to bring everyone to safety as quickly and as easily as possible.

The illustrations are extremely well done, and very realistic in nature, taking from true events of the time period. For example, the two pages in the book showing horses being taken to safety by a young girl captured the hearts of many when it went viral that day, showing the world another example of bravery and courage of the people of Fort McMurray. The paintings are vivid, detailed and extremely authentic; you almost can feel the heat as you look at them closely. The author provides a two-page note at the end of the story,

Saving Thunder the Great: The True Story of a Gerbil's Escape from the Fort McMurray Wildfire is a perfect picture book that packs a lot of information (and love) about the events in Fort McMurray at that time. It reminds people of how quickly life can turn around on a dime, and provides a compassionate story that will resonate in the reader's heart forever. One important factor needs to be mentioned: 88,000 people were evacuated that day, with no one being hurt or any loss of human life. The rebuilding has begun, with lots left to accomplish, but *Saving Thunder the Great: The True Story of a Gerbil's Escape from the Fort McMurray Wildfire* reveals the best in humanity, from one's own family to that of the city, province and country affected. A definite purchase for all school and public libraries in Canada.

Thematic Links: Forest Fires; Courage; Love; Community; Fort McMurray

Carmelita Cechetto-Shea

SMITH, Monique Gray

You Hold Me Up

Illustrated by Danielle Daniel. Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. Preschool - 3. 978-1459814479. Hdbk. \$19.95

You Hold Me Up is a simply written book with a powerful message: we need each other. It reinforces the need for community and the need to make and maintain connections with one another. Children and caregivers are encouraged to show one another love, kindness, and respect. They are encouraged to share with one another, learn with one another, and laugh with one another. This book puts an



emphasis on relationships and being connected to people in our sphere: parents, caregivers, educators, and peers. It models how we should treat others and how we should expect to be treated by other people.

Author Monique Gray Smith, who is of Cree, Lakota, and Scottish ancestry, wrote this book as a part of the reconciliation and healing journey Canada is undertaking as a nation. In her author's note, she wrote that this book is to remind us of our common humanity, and hopes to inspire empathy and love for one another, starting with the littlest children. It is important to hold each other up with "respect and dignity". The illustrations are composed of rich hues and feature two or more people engaging in acts that exemplify dignity and respect.

The story is simple enough that the youngest reader can read and understand; the vocabulary is not difficult or challenging for most readers. The book is an excellent way to start dialogue with children about ways we can show respect for one another and talk about how we treat each other. This book could certainly be used in lessons on reconciliation, manners, friendships, and relationships in general. It is an excellent book to use for reading aloud and prompting students to list examples of kindness and sharing. It would be a wonderful addition to any children's library.

Thematic Links: Reconciliation; Empathy; Compassion; Sharing; Relationships; Community; Friends; Family Caregivers; Parents; Kindness; Love

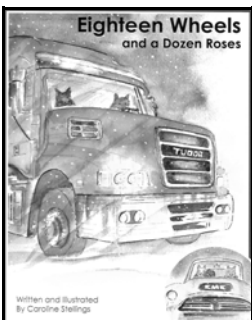
Catherine Bellamy

STELLINGS, Caroline
Eighteen Wheels and A Dozen Roses
Peanut Butter Press, 2017. 32p. Illus.
Gr. Preschool - 3. 978-1-927735-14-5.
Hdbk. \$19.99

G

*"The one thing Matt wanted was a truck
a big one with
eighteen wheels."*

Caroline Stellings' book ***Eighteen Wheels and a Dozen Roses*** is a delightful book using the personification of animals to tell a story of good fortune found through giving kindness to others. As the cliché saying goes, what comes around goes around!



Matt is a poor dog that stays at his friend Ben's garage, fantasizing about an *eighteen wheeler*. Instead, he finds car wrecks from decades past that would

make do on his dream even though they aren't exactly *eighteen wheelers*! With the help of his friend they spend spring, summer and autumn restoring three wrecked cars, changing "...gears, gauges, switches, shocks, spark plugs, fenders..." and restoring them to their original condition.

After each season with a completely restored vehicle and the keys in his hand, intending to finally drive the car himself, Matt comes across a friend in need, Harry the cat. Harry's bike falls apart and he would lose his job if he were to be late for work, so Matt hands him the keys to the first car through kindness. Subsequently the next car is handed over to Mrs. Potter and her litter of bunnies that were struggling to walk to school on a rainy day. Finally, around Christmas, when at the hardware store, a serendipitous encounter leads Matt to repaint the car, as it reminded a customer of his wedding day where his wife stood in front of a "Neptune Green GMC Truck".

Through his generous heart, Matt hands over the final restored car to the customer where he gifts his wife the vehicle with a dozen roses. This customer happens to be the president of the "Tudor Truck Company" making Matt's dream come true!

The earthy soft watercolour, charcoal and ink illustrations contribute nicely to the settings of the story, in particularly Stellings' strength in rendering the early-mid twentieth century vehicles during and after restoration. However, if there was more consideration placed into the overall design, and positioning of the text and illustrations and a different cover image, possibly a wrap around of the eighteen wheeler without the red border, it may have made more of an initial head turn. What would have been wonderful to see would have been to have a full double page image of the eighteen-wheeler (or even a fold out) at the end of the book. If children are reading this they may not completely grasp the idea of an eighteen wheeler visually, as we only see it in part within this book.

Good things happen to kind people, and ***Eighteen Wheels and a Dozen Roses*** is a lovely story to engage children in the kindness of giving and what good consequences could come out of it!

Thematic Links: Kindness; Restoration; Trucks; Vintage Cars; Friendship; Karma; Altruism; Animals; Transportation

Lara Chauvin

STELLINGS, Caroline
It Must Be The Spaghetti!
Peanut Butter Press, 2017. 32p. Gr. 1-3.
978-1-927735-15-2. Hdbk. \$19.95

A

Steve is good at practically everything. His

brother Eddie, on the other hand, is only good at eating - especially spaghetti, his favourite food! When Steve auditions for the Pirates of Penzance, of course he gets the lead role. Steve works hard at rehearsals, but on opening night, he is suddenly stricken with stage fright. Can Eddie save the show?

The highlight of ***It Must Be The Spaghetti*** is Caroline Stellings' lovely watercolour illustrations, featuring funny and fluffy animal characters. However, the illustrations are sometimes held back by poorly designed page layouts or font choices. The story itself is sweet and unique, if a bit unexpected. One would not expect to read a story that revolves around dogs, spaghetti, and the Pirates of Penzance, but this book is mostly successful at pulling off the slightly disjointed theme. Steve and Eddie are based on Stellings' own Schipperke dogs, which adds a personal touch to this unique and endearing book.

Thematic Links: Dogs; Opera; Brothers

Alice Albarda

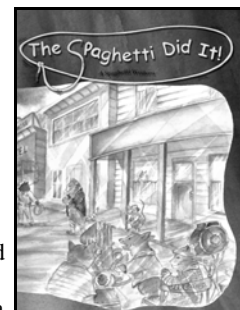
STELLINGS, Caroline
The Spaghetti Did It!
Peanut Butter Press, 2017. 32p. Gr. 1-3.
978-1-927735-16-9. Hdbk. \$19.95

A

The Spaghetti Did It! reintroduces Steve and Eddie, two dog brothers with very different skill sets. Steve is good at everything, while Eddie is only really good at eating spaghetti. This time, the brothers hit the road for Las Vegas, so that Steve can audition for a spaghetti western and Eddie can see Wayne Newton perform. Steve is cast as an extra in the movie, but Eddie's dreams are crushed when Wayne Newton cancels his performance because of stolen shoes. Can Steve and Eddie catch the squirrely thieves?

As in Steve and Eddie's previous adventure, ***It Must Be the Spaghetti***, this book is hindered somewhat by poorly constructed page layouts and design. The story is sweet but unique, combining Stellings' love for her own dogs with the unexpected theme of western movies. Aside from the faults in the design of the book, the story is generally well-crafted and funny.

Thematic Links: Dogs; Westerns;

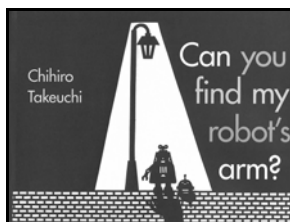


Alice Albarda

TAKEUCHI, Chihiro

Can You Find My Robot's Arm?

Tundra Books, 2016. 32p. Illus. Gr. Preschool - 1. 978-1-101-91903-3. Hdbk. \$21.99

E

The search for a robot's lost arm takes place in a mechanical world of gears and wind-up toys. The black paper cut illustrations show the cone-shaped robot trying on a variety of arms. When he's inside a house, he tries the pencil, the scissors and the umbrella. When he goes outside with his smaller robot friend, he contemplates having a branch and a leaf for an arm. As they venture further into the city, they visit a museum, a factory, a candy store, and a library. In each building, they find substitutes for an arm. But it's not until the two friends return home after their exhaustive search that they find the best new arm (which was mentioned earlier in the book) and the location of the missing arm (in the dog's food bowl).

Children loved this book when I read it during library storytime. By looking at the shape of each new object, they would identify what the new arm was before I said it, and give reasons why it would or wouldn't work as an appendage. The reader wants to help the robot succeed, and they can enjoy the practical solution he settles on at the end of the story. Takeuchi will likely become a best seller with this first picture book.

Thematic Links: Robots; Mechanical Arms; Help; Substitutes

Tanya Boudreau

THOM, Kai Chang

From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea

Illustrated by Wai-Yant Li and Kai Yun Ching. Arsenal Pulp Press, 2017. Unp. Illus. Gr. 2-4. 978-1-55152-709-3. Hdbk. \$18.95

G/E

Miu Lan was born between night and day, between moon and sun, and could not decide what they wanted to be. Boy or girl, bird or fish, cat or rabbit? Miu Lan had the ability and the

desire to be all of them. They lived happily with their mother, who lovingly sang the same song to them every day, filling them with love.

Miu Lan was excited to start school, and for the first day, they grew a peacock feather tail and a tiger-striped coat. All of the other kids immediately noticed their oddities and differences, and questioned them about what exactly they were supposed to be. Miu Lan grew more and more worried as days went by, but continued to try on different identities - boy, turtle, a myriad of animal parts. Regardless, they were judged and questioned by the other students, being told that boys don't play hopscotch and that they need to explain what exactly they are.

Devastated and furious with the other kids' reactions, Miu Lan turn to their loving mother, who has always shown them the utmost love and acceptance. Miu Lan's mother responds with compassion, reassuring them that they can be whatever they want, even if it varies from day to day, and that they must stay true to themselves. Rather than dismiss Miu Lan's concerns, she admits she doesn't know what to do if the other kids refuse to like or accept them, but soothes them with the knowledge that no matter what happens, she will be there for them and love them forever. The beautiful song she sings to Miu Lan every night will be as soothing to readers as it is to Miu Lan. With renewed confidence, Miu Lan returns to school, and soon finds that there are other kids who will give them a chance after all.

Miu Lan's tale is a unique, magical take on differences in gender identity and accepting diversity. The story introduces a subject that many parents and teachers may not know how to comfortably converse about, and will foster discussions about gender diversity in a non-threatening manner. The blend of magical fantasy with realistic, often negative, peer reactions can be appreciated, as it presents an abstract, fantastical way of broaching what is often a difficult subject. Perhaps both adults and children will learn a gentle lesson on acceptance from this offering.

Thematic Links: Identity; Self-Expression; Diversity; Nonbinary Gender Identities; Fitting In; Gender Roles; Transformation; Acceptance

Nicole Rowlinson

TORES, J.

Foiled Again (Chirp Series)

Owlkids Books, 2017. 24p. Gr. Preschool - 2. 978-1-77147-191-6. Pbk. \$6.95

G

Chirp continues his adventures based on the animated TV

series. Adventure abounds when Chirp and his friends play secret agents. Their mission is to circumnavigate terrible traps, defeat the evil robots and shutdown their factory. Using tin foil as their secret weapon they win the day, hence the title!

Humour and ingenuity are the main ingredients in this simple adventure where friends use their imaginations and everyday objects to prevail. The illustrations are from the Chirp animated series episode **Foiled Again**. Preschoolers will enjoy the story and levity.

Thematic Links: Robots; Secret Agents; Adventure; TV Adaptations

Isobel Lang

TORRES, J.

Volcano Escape (Chirp Series)

Owlkids Books, 2017. 24p. Gr. Preschool - 2. 978-1-77147-189-3. Pbk. \$6.95

G

This tale is part of a television series called *Chirp*. Different episodes have been adapted into books. This time Chirp and his two intrepid friends Squawk and Tweet play mountain climbers determined to reach the top.

The mountain proves to be an erupting volcano. As usual, clever Chirp devises an escape plan using springs that happen to be in a backpack. The usual humour and camaraderie are present. The illustrations are from the animated series episode **Volcano Escape**. The story may be simplistic but it is entertaining for preschoolers who will enjoy the adventure and humour.

Thematic Links: Mountain Climbing; Volcanoes; Adventure; TV Adaptations

Isobel Lang

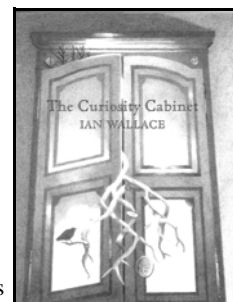
WALLACE, Ian

The Curiosity Cabinet

Groundwood Books, 2017. 36p. Illus. Gr. K-5. 978-1-55498-922-5. Hdbk. \$19.95

E**The Curiosity**

Cabinet is a creative and beautifully illustrated book by one of Canada's most distinguished author-illustrator for children's books. Wallace invites the reader to explore his cabinet of treasures and memories



he has gathered over the years on his travels across Canada. As a tribute to the 150th anniversary of Canada's Confederation, Wallace takes us on a journey from the east coast to the west coast as well as the regions of northern Canada. Over the years, Wallace has been sharing his writings, stories, and drawings with thousands of children in schools and public libraries alike; often his presentations inspire the children to become writers as well, in addition to thinking outside the box in their world. *The Curiosity Cabinet* is certainly a "thinking outside the box" concept for a book. During these adventures across the country, Wallace has been the recipient of many unique and meaningful gifts now found in the cabinet he writes about. In his introduction, he claims he was given his "greatest gift of my life" during a visit to an elementary school in Winnipeg: a teacher-librarian who became his wife. At the end of the book, Wallace includes illustrator's notes to explain the various drawings in the book; this is a necessary addition to the book because there are probably readers, even Canadian readers, who may not grasp the various scenes being depicted, i.e. the "lucky money" falling from the sky in the Saskatchewan illustration. Both the introduction and the illustrator's notes are a crucial component in the book in the understanding of the author's choices for his cabinet shelves. At the end of the introduction, Wallace welcomes you to come and take a look inside!

The illustrations in *The Curiosity Cabinet* are detailed and monochromatic, showcasing light and shadows. Wallace uses graphite illustration throughout, and each double page illustration shows a shelf in the cabinet representing a province or territory. Besides being a distinguished author/writer, Wallace is an acclaimed illustrator as is clearly evident in this book. At the end of the book, Wallace includes a self-portrait to finalize the importance of the cabinet to his world. The monochromatic pencil drawings are elaborate and intricate; but splashes of colour could have been utilized to highlight certain items for each province or territory, offering a subtle affirmation of that item's importance for the place it represents (i.e. red sneakers or the rainbow).

Ian Wallace has created a keepsake book celebrating Canada in all its greatness, honouring his country and the people who live there. Readers may even pause and think about what items could be found in their curiosity cabinet: What would I include? or What's important to me? Each person's cabinet would give insights into that person's identity, interests, personalities, etc. The book is geared to children ages 5 and up, but young children would certainly need guidance from an adult; older children might easily understand the book's meaning and purpose without adult intervention, but the target audience should be for older readers.

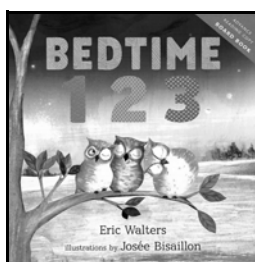
Overall *The Curiosity Cabinet* is an excellent tribute to Canada's 150th anniversary from one of the country's renowned literary figures. It is creative, unusual, and a very personal showcase of an individual's reflection on Canada. It certainly makes you think: what is in my cabinet?

Thematic Links: Cultural Identity; Travel; Mementoes; Biography

Carmelita Cechetto-Shea

WALTERS, Eric
Bedtime 123

Illustrated by Josée Bisailon. Orca Book Publishers, 2017. Unp. Illus. Gr. Preschool. 978-1-459810730. Bdbk. \$9.95



This counting primer board book is a delightful celebration of babies settling down to sleep. The context is a farm, and begins with "When the sun goes down..." and continues with numbers 1 through 10

(1 moon rises, 2 stars come out...). The text is lyrical and soothing. Soft letter sounds are emphasised and there is gentle rhyming and intentional consonant matching sounds throughout. It reads to be reminiscent of a lullaby.

The illustrations are delightfully whimsical and the colour palette used conjures a soothing twilight without being too dark and moody. As the book finishes, we see the baby (human) tucked up for sleep in its bed with the final words "It's time for all babies to sleep".

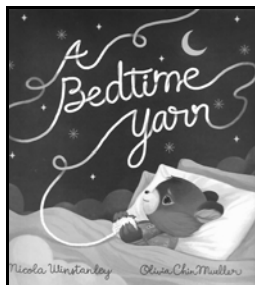
This book would be very soothing as a final bedtime read, as well as a counting/animal recognition book during waking hours. Highly recommended as a resource for young Preschool children.

Thematic Links: Counting Primer; Numeracy; Baby Animals; Bedtime; Farm

Erin Hansen

WINSTANLEY, Nicola
A Bedtime Yarn

Illustrated by Olivia Chin Mueller. Tundra Books, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr.



Preschool - 2. 978-1-101-91808-1. Hdbk. \$21.99

Frankie the bear is afraid to fall asleep, so his mom gives him a ball of yarn to hold while she knits. The ball of yarn connects them, even though

they are in different rooms. His dreams are inspired by the colour of the yarn. When he holds orange, he dreams of tigers, and green makes him dream about the ocean. The digital illustrations are framed by the various colours of yarn, and at the end of the story, they come together in a blanket that covers Frankie at night. The blanket is a surprise, and a motivation; one that Frankie can only receive when he's ready to sleep without any yarn in his hands. (The last roll is an invisible ball of yarn which adds sparkly stars to the blanket).

This story is a beautiful bedtime story told with love and reassurance. The family cat in the story brings comfort to the mother and the son throughout the story too by visiting them at night.

Thematic Links: Fear of Sleep and Darkness; Knitting; Yarn; Mother-Son Relations; Bears; Blanket; Imagination; Dreams

Tanya Boudreau

WINTERS, Kari-Lynn

Best Pirate

Illustrated by Dean Griffiths. Pajama Press, 2017. 32p. Gr. K-3. 978-1-77278-019-2. Hdbk. \$19.95



Augusta Garrick wants to make her father proud and be the best pirate. That means being crafty, nimble, and fearless. When she ruins the crew's plans to pillage some dubloons, she must go to Crossbones Island herself before the feline Tuna Lubbers get there. On the island, Augusta comes face to face with her supposed rival, only to learn that they aren't so different after all.

Kari-Lynn Winters and Dean Griffiths have teamed up for a third pirate book, following *Bad Pirate* and *Good Pirate*. Once again, the story is full of pirate language that begs to be read aloud in your best pirate voice. In his illustrations, Griffiths has managed to create a whole collection of funny, diverse, detailed, and expressive dog and cat characters. Amid the lush setting, detailed characters, and funny language lies an adventure story with a heart-warming message. Even though Augusta is a dog and a pirate, her bravery, kindness, and desire to please her family is something that every kid can relate to and aspire to.

Thematic Links: Pirates; Dogs; Cats; Working Together

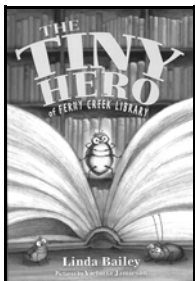
Alice Albarda

Fiction: Grades 3-6

BAILEY, Linda

The Tiny Hero of Ferny Creek Library

Illustrated by Victoria Jamieson. Tundra Books, 2017. 336p. Gr. 5-8. 978-1-101918326. Hdbk. \$19.99



Heroes come in all shapes and sizes. A hero has to show bravery and determination in their adventures, actions and deeds. *The Tiny Hero of Ferny Creek Library* has more bravery than size. Linda Bailey has created an adorable character named Eddie. Eddie is a

small green bug that lives in Ferny Creek Elementary School with his parents, 53 brothers and sisters, and Aunt Min. So many adventures exist in the school for bugs, but Eddie soon goes on an adventure that has some danger: finding his missing Aunt Min and rescuing her from a precarious situation.

Eddie loves books like his Aunt Min who instills in him the importance of courage like some of the hero characters he has read about, namely Stuart and Charlotte in *Charlotte's Web* (E. B. White). As in many hero themed books, there is always a villain, and Eddie must face an unlikely villain in this adventure: a substitute librarian who wants to close the library and discard all of the books forever!

Eddie's adventure has him facing many dangers: Squishers, a falling book, a spider, vacuum cleaners, mops, etc. He doesn't let these dangers prevent him from finding his beloved Aunt Min. So begins the real adventure of Eddie's life. Bailey uses a multitude of references to other literary books and characters: Neverland, Yellow Brick Road, Hogwarts, etc. Eddie sees his adventure as a real *Where the Wild Things Are* (Maurice Sendak). Moments of humor are sprinkled throughout this delightful story: Aunt Min describing the "books with no paper" (tablets), the substitute librarian's name Grischer rhyming with Squisher, etc. Eddie and his Aunt Min create a plan to help save the library, eventually with the help of the students, Eddie's brother Alfie, parents, and a "book loving ghost".

The Tiny Hero of Ferny Creek Library has everything book and library lovers could ever want for a story set in a school library. In addition to the various literary references, the story offers references to library organization, the importance of reading, and other library related topics. Linda Bailey has created a literary gem, highlighting the value of school libraries, using the ability of words paired with accessibility to books to get a subtle message

E

across to her readers. Bailey openly gets another message across to readers: regardless of what size you are, you can accomplish great things, letting the hero in you shine. School Librarians will smile reading this story, on their own, as a read-aloud or sharing it with library lovers; some may even feel tears welling. The book's message is very timely as well in the climate facing school libraries across the country today.

Victoria Jamieson's illustrations are numerous black and white drawings, many of which are full page, complementing the story perfectly. Often the images are from Eddie's perspective. The cover art as well was created by this illustrator. Included at the end of the novel is the "Eddie and Min's Bugliography"; this cute addition lists the various literary references found in *The Tiny Hero of Ferny Creek Library*. Bailey's opening dedication is to teacher-librarians and children's librarians, and will touch the heart of everyone who works in libraries serving children, young or old.

The Tiny Hero of Ferny Creek Library is a book that will entertain you from page one to the end. It is a sweet story that children of all ages will enjoy, adults too! It will make you laugh, make you cheer, and may even inspire you to write as Eddie was inspired to do. As Aunt Min says "a writer's a writer, no matter how small". Linda Bailey has given us an adventure that is cute beyond words. *The Tiny Hero of Ferny Creek Library* is a captivating tale that illuminates the magic of libraries and the joy of reading. Bravo Ms. Bailey and Ms. Jamieson!

Thematic Links: Bravery; Libraries; Insects

Carmelita Cechetto-Shea

BARCLAY, Linwood

Chase - Get Ready to Run

Penguin Random House/Puffin Books, 2017. 231p. Gr. 5 up. 978-0-14-319975-8. Hdbk. \$18.99

E

"...Chipper had not just five finely attuned senses now, but five million."

"...the animal's original instinctive functions were not interfacing satisfactorily with the circuitry, how the software was not successfully overruling some of the dog's natural tendencies, how the dog was unable to reliably commit to mission objectives."

What if a dog was capable of intelligence equivalent to a ten or eleven year



old child and could perform pretty much everything but lacks the ability to verbalize his thoughts? Lindwood Barclay's *Chase* is a suspenseful thriller looking at robot technology that is now weaving itself slowly into our everyday lives. In this particular book, we are introduced to a character named Chipper, a border collie dog that would be regarded as a pet in general but is now part robot. His instincts pull him towards his natural dog impulses yet he is controlled by others through the mechanisms inserted into his mind and body.

"...he is essentially a surveillance system with fur."

"The White Coats knew that while the prisoner had exceptional abilities, he was deeply flawed. Despite their best efforts, this subject was a failure. His natural instincts could not be suppressed by technology. No amount of software could overrule his canine characteristics..."

Chase is presented to us in high contrast. Each chapter alternates from a clinical environment to the a grand chase throughout New York and then the restful lake front scenarios off where Jeff, the main human character, works. This is in part also done with the utilization of contrasting language, extreme speed to tranquility in pace and alternate scenes that run parallel with the dog being part natural and part clinical.

Chipper the dog is surveilled by *The White Coats* and escapes from their prying eyes into New York, weaving himself through the population, streets, traffic and ending up in trains and buses on a mission to escape from their "...undercover work, very few people know, not even the ones you would think would know don't, not even the president....billions of dollars ...channelled to our research don't even show up in the books." Along the way, black suited agents try to follow him on a high strung chase, where Chipper ends up unconscious in a cargo compartment on a bus and is awoken by mouth-to-mouth by the bus driver. Eventually fleeing he ends up hurt on a road, accidentally hit by Jeff, an orphaned teen that is barely old enough to drive but helps his aunt at her lakefront cabin that hates dogs. Jeff and his friend Emily seek out hidden places, and discover an obscure train station with "no tracks, no platform ...no train", just desolation. They set Chipper up in the deserted train station in which they find out Chipper's collar has a computer port and by Emily's clever hacking abilities Chipper is able to speak to them by way of messaging on the screen, and they realize he is in dire need of help.

The story continues at the lakeside with dump trucks, boat chases, hiding, jumping and running and Jeff's aunt being struck out cold

Awards and Announcements

2017 Ann Connor Brimer Award for Children's Literature Winner

Into the Wasteland
by Lesley Choyce
(Red Deer Press)

2017 Lillian Shepherd Award for Excellence in Illustration Winner

Sky Pig
written by Jan L. Coates
illustrated by Suzanne Del Rizzo
(Pajama Press)

2017 Sunburst Awards

YA Fiction Nominees

Sophie Quire and the Last Storyguard
by Jonathan Auxier (Puffin Canada)

The Hill
by Karen Bass (Pajama Press)

Transferral
by Kate Blair (Dancing Cat Books)

Worlds of Ink and Shadow
by Lena Coakley (HarperCollins)

The Inn Between
by Marina Cohen (Roaring Brook Press)

Julia Vanishes
by Catherine Egan (Doubleday Canada)

The Skids
by Ian Donald Keeling (ChiTeen)

Flickers
by Arthur Slade (HarperCollins)

Sheldon Unger vs The Dentures of Doom
by Jeff Szpirglas (Star Crossed Press)

The Road to Ever After
by Moira Young (Doubleday)

2017 Arthur Ellis Award

Best Juvenile/YA Book Winner

Masterminds: Criminal Destiny
by Gordon Korman
(HarperCollins)

Alice Kitts Memorial Award for Excellence in Children's Writing (New Brunswick)

Winner

The Snow Knows
by Jennifer McGrath (Nimbus Publishing)

Other Nominees

My Two Grandmothers
by Diane Carmel Leger (Nimbus Publishing)

Sea Glass Summer
by Heidi Jardine Stoddart (Nimbus Publishing)

2017-2018 First Nation Communities READ's Aboriginal Literature Award

Winner

Bearskin Diary
by Carol Daniels (Nightwood Editions)

Other Nominees

Missing Nimama
by Melanie Florence (Clockwise Press)

Price Paid
by Bev Sellers (Talonbooks)

They Called Me Number One
by Bev Sellers (Talonbooks)

How I Became a Ghost
by Tim Tingle (The Roadrunner Press)

R. Ross Annett Award for Children's Literature (Picture Book Category)

Winner

Cub's Journey Home
by Georgia Graham (Red Deer Press)

Other Nominees

And Then It Rained on Malcolm
by Paige Feurer (Sky Pony Press)

What Matters
by Alison Hughes (Orca Book Publishers)

2017 Vine Awards for Canadian Jewish Literature Children's/Young Adult Shortlist

Feathered
by Deborah Kerbel (Kids Can Press)

Irena's Children: A True Story of Courage
edited by Tilar Mazzeo and Mary Farrell
(Margaret K. McElderry Books)

Seeking Refuge
written by Irene N. Watts, illustrated by
Kathryn E. Shoemaker (Tradewind Books)

Lane Anderson Awards

Young Readers Category Shortlist

*Monster Science: Could Monsters Survive
(and Thrive!) in the Real World?*
written by Helaine Becker, illustrated by Phil
McAndrew (Kids Can Press)

5 Giraffes
by Anne Innis Dagg (Fitzhenry & Whiteside)

*Inside Your Insides: A Guide to the
Microbes That Call You Home*
written by Claire Eamer, illustrated by
Marie-Eve Tremblay (Kids Can Press)

TD Canadian Children's Literature Award Shortlist

Tokyo Digs a Garden
written by Jon-Erik Lappano, illustrated by
Kellen Hatanaka (Groundwood Books)

The Skeleton Tree
by Iain Lawrence (Tundra Books)

A Day of Signs and Wonders
by Kit Pearson (HarperTrophy)

When We Were Alone
written by David Alexander Robertson
illustrated by Julie Flett (HighWater Press)

The Tragic Tale of the Great Auk
by Jan Thornhill (Groundwood)

Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award Shortlist

I Am Not a Number
written by Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy
Kacer, illustrated by Gillian Newland
(Second Story Press)

The Darkest Dark

Awards and Announcements

Newfoundland.

Andrews also collected folklore stories from around the world and released them in the collections *Stories at the Door* (2007) and *Rude Stories* (2010) with Tundra. Among her accomplishments were various

awards including the *Canada Council Children's Literature Prize*, and the *Ruth Schwartz Children's Literature Award*. In December 2016 Andrews received the *Order of Canada* for her writing and storytelling accomplishments.

We offer our sincere condolences to the families and friends of these two icons of children's and young adult literature in Canada. They will be missed!

by the suited agents. Eventually Jeff learns the reason why Chipper the dog came to find him and the connection to his parents, and that their plane crash death was no accident!

Barclay's *Chase* raises the question about morality and ethics in the area of technology. Especially in the last two chapters when the author alludes to a second installment of the book by illustrating Madam Director expanding her experiment from dogs to small children.

Robotics are taking shape and creeping into our everyday lives. Even though this is a fictional story about a dog, the question remains that this is not far off, and there could very well be a real Chipper somewhere, trying to escape, part dog, part robot. Will our natural animal instinct override technology or will technology override us? Would the users or controllers of the technology use their power for bad or good? These are poignant questions that may rouse discussion in the juvenile reader and give our minds a bit of a chase to think about it!

The Chase is not over...

Thematic Links: Technology; Dogs; Humans; Adventure; Mission; Clinics; Secret Service; Ethics; Robotics

Lara Chauvin

BAR-EL, Dan

Dog Night At The Story Zoo

Illustrated by Vicki Nerino. Tundra Books, 2017. 100p. Illus. Gr. 3-6. 978-1-101-91838-8. Hdbk. \$14.99

Dan Bar-El's new graphic novel invites readers into the "secret lives" of pets! The zoo is closed, night has fallen, but instead of being asleep, all the pets have left their homes to attend Dog Night at the Story Zoo.



Penguin introduces the first storyteller, Boomer. He tells his fellow pets and zoo animals about his need to fetch. He explains that he is not a typical dog because he takes "fetching...to a whole new level." (p. 14) He wants a home, but his

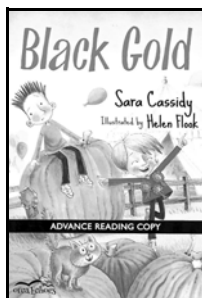
obsession with fetching hurts his relationships with humans. No one wants him as a pet, so he lives a free life fetching wherever and whenever he can. Then he meets a new human who appreciates his talents - and finally finds a new home!

Three other dog stories follow. "*The Storm Before the Calm*" is told by poodle Emma. She admits that she is very "yappy." She goes from one home to another until she saves the life of her elderly human Ellen and wins the affection of her boyfriend Bernie. Emma's yappiness finally came in handy! Walter is a very shy bulldog who tells a story about being, "*Tender Inside*." He reads a poem entitled, "*What Can You Do for a Bulldog?*" which reveals his caring nature. Finally, Wilmette the bloodhound reveals a complicated mystery entitled, "*Hound of Bakersville*," in which he uncovers a dastardly plot by his evil owner Stuart. In the end, Wilmette finds a new home and saves the day!

These well written and highly amusing stories portray sensitive dog storytellers as very intelligent individuals who care about their humans and want to live a full life. They may have flaws such as Boomer's obsession with fetching, but in the end, they want to be part of a family and care for their humans. Their intelligence should also not be underestimated. Wilmette the bloodhound solves a complicated mystery and ferrets out "the most elusive criminal" - his owner. (p. 73) The vibrant illustrations in this graphic novel complement the strong message of pet intelligence and caring. This is a wonderful book which will thrill all readers and pet lovers in particular!

Thematic Links: Storytelling; Pet Care; Humour; Mystery; Relationships; Graphic Novels; Communication

Myra Junyk



CASSIDY, Sara
Black Gold

Illustrated by Helen Flook. Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 96p. Illus. Gr. 2-4. 978-1-4598226. Pbk. \$6.95

The third in the series about Cyrus and Rudy on their family home on

Saanich Peninsula, B.C. While they have a roadside stand selling blackberries and dahlias, they are persuaded to take on selling "red wigglers", which turns out to be a much more lucrative product. The eccentric group of characters who live in the rural environment including a lady who rides a penny farthing bike, and a brother who smocks are entertaining and amusing. While Cyrus is the more outgoing of the brothers, they both help their neighbour, Griffin, to get over his fear of going to school.

This is a happy, light-hearted story of two boys living in the country.

Thematic Links: Growing Up; Overcoming Anxieties

Mavis Holder

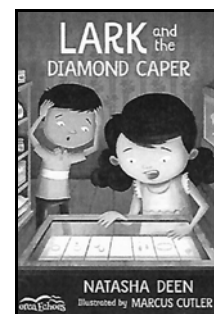
DEEN, Natasha

Lark and the Diamond Caper (Orca Echoes Series)

Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 91p. Illus. Gr. 2-4. 978-1-459814004. Pbk. \$6.95

Lark and Conner Ba are back with a new mystery to solve. After having recovered their librarian's missing key in their last adventure, *Lark Holds the Key*, the twins have developed a reputation of being clever rookie detectives. This time around, Lark and Conner are on the hunt for a pair of diamond earrings. The earrings went missing from Lee's General Store, and the Ba twins just happened to be in the right place at the right time. They eavesdrop on the conversations the adults are having (which are full of clues!) and decide to solve the crime themselves. They do so methodically and logically, but with humour, and eventually are able to crack the case.

As with the previous installment in this series, Natasha Deen provides enough clues to allow readers to solve the mystery on their own. Lark's quirkiness is in good form here, and the target audience will find her quite humorous. In particular, Lark, who has dyslexia and explains it quite well, makes amusing vo-



cabulary mistakes, and kids will be learning from them without even realizing it.

There are illustrations scattered throughout the chapters that are very appealing, and that perfectly enhance the story with descriptive facial expressions on all of the characters. This offering in the *Orca Echoes Series* of beginning chapter books is one that most libraries should see gain the interest of younger grades.

Thematic Links: Detective Stories; Thefts; Twins; Early Chapter Books; Dyslexia

Nicole Rowlinson

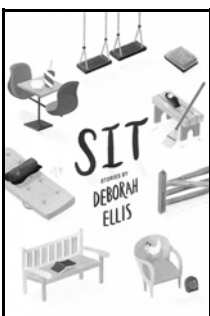
ELLIS, Deborah

Sit

Groundwood Books, 2017. 144p. Gr.

4-8. 978-1-77306-086-6. Hdbk. \$14.95

(Reviewed from Advance Reading Copy)



Sit is the newest book from acclaimed author Deborah Ellis, a very passionate advocate for the disadvantaged in society. Her social justice endeavours earned her a multitude of awards, including the *Governor General's Award*. This novel follows the social justice

theme. *Sit* contains eleven chapters (stories) which draw the reader's attention to the lives of nine children; each child makes a decision and becomes passionate about that choice, often making life changing moments for each child. The common thread weaving the stories together is a child sitting at a chair. Each is a powerful story on its own, but having them all in one book is very compelling.

Ellis doesn't hold anything back in her description of each story, often to the extent that the characters, children and especially the adults, can be painted in imperfect ways. Whether that character is dishonest, condescending, or just outright rude, the author makes the story more realistic as to what could have happened to children in real life, not just characters in a book. The first character is Jafar, a child labourer, whose story begins and finishes the book; Jafar's dream is to attend school and he accomplishes his "decision" in a very distinct manner, showing that choices can be important even in the worst of conditions. The chapter titles for Jafar, "*The Singing Chair*" and "*The Hope Chair*" unite his story in a very meaningful way, his dreams and choices become one. "*The Glowing Chair*" portrays a story of courage, where the child makes a decision, acts on it, instead of just sitting and waiting for "things" to happen. Each story prompts genuine contemplation enabling readers to "think" about what they

would have done.

For me, as a reader, not a reviewer, the story which hit home the most was "*The Question Chair*"; the character Gretchen wonders what she would have done if she lived during the time period of the story, the Holocaust. Not only does she wonder how it would have felt to be Jewish at that time, she also reverses her trend of thought into what would she have done as a German during that time; in addition she wonders and "questions" her parents about what the family may have done during the Holocaust as well. This story was vividly written because Ellis brought me back to Gretchen's cities of Berlin and Krakow, cities I walked through during a March of the Living Educator's Holocaust tour back in 2010. References to the toilets at the Auschwitz Concentration Camp, to the Reichstag, to the Wannsee location and even to the Sachsenhausen camp nearby were as clear to me in 2017 as they were in 2010; Ellis' attention to details enables readers to take those journeys whether for the first time, or a flashback to a lived event. Deborah Ellis has a unique way of bringing even sad periods and situations to life, researching the locations to provide accuracy and authenticity.

Once again Deborah Ellis does not disappoint. *Sit* is an eloquent collection of stories from one of Canada's best storytellers. As with most of her works, Ellis brings the theme of social justice alive in her characters and their difficulties. Her young characters provide juvenile readers with a venue to question: "what if that was me", as her audience can hence relate to others of the same age; children relate to other children. A worthy resource for classrooms (Grades 4-8) looking for material to spark discussions on many aspects of social injustice: Holocaust, child labour, radiation leakage, etc. *Sit* is a must for school and public libraries.

Thematic Links: Cultural Identity; Social Justice; Resilience; Making-a-Difference; Choices

Carmelita Cechetto-Shea

FAGAN, Cary

Mort Ziff Is Not Dead

Puffin Books, 2017. 166p. Gr. 3-7. 978-

01431-9847-5. Hdbk. \$18.99



Norman Fishbein, also called Wormy, is a bright 11-year old kid from an average family living in Toronto in 1965. He has two older brothers, Larry and Marcus, who are the typical annoying older siblings, never passing up a chance to pick on Norman. While at Shoppe Heaven Mall

with his family one day, they pass by a large glass jar standing 10 or 20 feet tall full of Doozy Dots, little candies that fizz and pop in one's mouth. As a part of a sales promotion, there is a contest to guess how many Doozy Dots are in the jar. Each one of the brothers take turns guessing how many Doozy Dots are in the jar, none believing that they would actually win.

A month later, a letter arrives in the mail for Norman, informing him that his guess of 4,243 Doozy Dots was correct accompanied by a cheque of \$1,000. Surprised, the first thing Norman does is deposit it in the bank until he can figure out how he wants to spend it. He mulls it over while his brothers and parents subtly and not-so-subtly provide suggestions on how they think he should spend his money. Reaching the conclusion that his family needs a vacation - a nice one, not one spent camping in tents - he decides to treat his whole family to a vacation in Miami. The entire cheque goes toward airfare and a nice hotel on the beach. A snowstorm threatens to ground the plane in Toronto, but eventually it is able to take off, heading for the warm temperatures of Miami. The family checks into their hotel and while eating in the hotel's restaurant one day, they see aged comedian Mort Ziff (whom Norman's dad had thought long deceased). In exchange for room and board, Mr Ziff does a stand-up comedy show every night. Also while in the restaurant, the Fishbein brothers meet their counterparts: the Horvath sisters. Norman and the youngest Horvath sister, Amy, strike up a secret friendship, seeing how her sisters, Gloria and Danielle, and Norman's brothers loathe one another. Norman and Amy become friends with Mr Ziff after he is fired from his job at the hotel to make room for a Beatles cover band, The Centipedes. As they try to find another job for Mr Ziff, Norman discovers the meaning of friendship, that his brothers aren't so bad, and that he has a few great qualities of his own.

Thematic Links: Sibling Rivalry; Winter Vacation; Family; Contests; 1960s; Miami

Catherine Bellamy

GAY, Marie-Louise

Princess Pistachio and Maurice the Magnificent (Princess Pistachio Series)

Pajama Press, 2017. 52p.

Illus. Gr. 1 - 4. 978-1-772780215. Hdbk. \$12.95

This is the third installment in the *Princess Pistachio Series*, written and illustrated by the award-winning and prolific author, Marie-Louise Gay.



Princess Pistachio has gotten it into her head that her dog's life is far too drab, and if she doesn't do something about it, and fast, he's likely to die of boredom. She decides school is the answer for Dog, and packs him up in her backpack the next day. She has forgotten it is show-and-tell day however, and has no choice but to use Dog for her presentation. Delighted, Pistachio's classmates think Dog is hilarious and he is very clearly a natural ham. Mr. Grumblebrain is not amused.

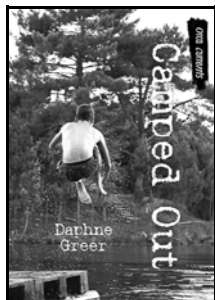
Later in the week, Pistachio sees an advertisement for a talented dog to play a role at the local theatre, and she immediately knows the role was meant for Dog. Her friend Madeline disagrees, thinking Dog could never pull it off. Naturally, this only makes Pistachio more determined to get Dog that role, and she vows to get him to co-operate. Luckily, the role turns out to be perfect for Pistachio's lazy, tired mutt. As a newly anointed theatre star, Pistachio changes Dog's name to Maurice the Magnificent, sure that this is the beginning of an amazing career, despite everything Madeline says against it.

After six months of a successful run, with Pistachio being completely preoccupied with her dog's newfound stardom, Maurice the Magnificent suddenly goes missing. A ransom note confirms Pistachio's suspicions - Maurice has been kidnapped! Pistachio seeks Madeline's advice, but Madeline has been feeling neglected and left out and sadly turns her away. Pistachio is on her own to figure out who has stolen her dog and how to get him back.

For the primary crowd, this story would likely work best as a read-aloud, as there are many words that beginning readers would stumble on. Alternatively, it would be a good fit for slightly more developed readers transitioning to chapters. The text is quite humorous, and the silliness in the character's names and antics will delight the young crowd. Whimsical drawings in Gay's signature style are on each page, and the layout of text and illustrations will be very appealing for the targeted age.

Thematic Links: Dogs; Friendship; Theatre; Early Chapter Books; Loyalty; Conflicts

Nicole Rowlinson



GREER, Daphne
Camped Out
(Orca Currents)
Orca Book
Publishers, 2017. 129p.
Gr. 4-8. 978-1-459-81541-4. Pbk. \$9.95



After the death of his dad, Max struggles to accept his mom's new

boyfriend and wants to escape by attending camp with his friend. Max has a minor freak out, however, when he discovers that the only way his mom can afford to send him to camp is if he accompanies brother Duncan. Duncan has special needs but his diagnosis is never explicitly stated in the book. Despite a couple of small hiccups, Duncan appears to adjust well at the camp while Max struggles to balance his responsibilities to his brother with his desire to hang out with his friends. Max also has some difficulty accepting the other campers with special needs, and the book teaches useful lessons about tolerance without being preachy.

Unfortunately, however, I had a hard time rooting for Max. Even though it's true that Max is coping with some very difficult stuff and I can understand why he occasionally lashes out, I feel like the book was a bit too quick to let him off the hook for his actions. When Max says some very hurtful things about his fellow campers, not only do they quickly forgive him, but he also succeeds in attracting the attention of a cute girl and gets a job opportunity. While the book's message of tolerance should extend to Max, I would have also liked to see him take a bit more responsibility for his actions. Ultimately, Max does realize: "it's so much easier for me to be in Duncan's world than for him to be in mine" (p. 120), learning the importance of stepping into another person's shoes and seeing a situation from their perspective. With this realization, Greer has crafted a useful book to promote the power of empathy, and hopefully Max's newfound understanding will carry over to her readers.

Thematic Links: Empathy; Tolerance; Camp; Youth with Disabilities; Death; Single-Parent Families

Natalie Colaiacovo

HORVATH, Polly
The Night Garden
Puffin Canada, 2017. 292p. Gr. 4-7.
978-0-14319864-2. Hdbk. \$21.99



Franny lives on a farm with her adoptive parents Old Tom and Sina during the last days of World War Two. One day their neighbour "Crying" Alice Madden asks Sina to watch her children for a day or two while Alice goes north to prevent her husband from doing "something stupid." Crying Alice's children - Winnifred, Wilfred, and Zebediah - arrive and Franny's orderly life is overturned. She is quickly drawn into the intrigue: what is Mr. Madden planning? How is the radio involved? And will their new cook

ever serve something that isn't burned?

Set in 1945 at Vancouver Island's East Sooke Farm, **The Night Garden** is a light-hearted novel with a madcap, magical realism plot. Twelve-year-old Franny, a student and a writer, is a keen observer of human behaviour who makes sense of the world by telling stories. What she discovers through Sina, Old Tom, and the Madden children is how stories - ghost stories, legends, tall tales, tales of flying saucers, news reportage, and even hearsay - envelop people and become woven through our lives. She also learns important lessons about appearance versus reality and about the power of belief.

Ultimately, this is a novel about a writer's imagination. Franny's sly narration and elevated vocabulary will challenge some readers and delight others, and the book will reward readers differently depending on their level of sophistication and experience. I would recommend it for stronger readers who enjoy historical fiction and are willing to accept a little fantasy in an otherwise realistic telling.

Thematic Links: Families; Vancouver Island; World War II; Ghost Stories; Airplanes; Gardens

Leslie Vermeer

KERRIN, Jessica Scott
The Things Owen Wrote
Groundwood Books, 2017. 176p.
Illus. Gr. 5-7. 97-1-77306-029-3. Hdbk.
\$14.95



While Owen's parents are away on vacation, Owen is staying with his beloved granddad Neville, who recently lost his wife. Neville is also grieving the loss of his friend Gunnar, who had received the Order of the Falcon, a prestigious literary award, for his work in translating the poetry of Icelandic Stephan G. Stephansson. While going through Gunnar's notebooks and boxes, given to him by Gunnar's widow, Neville finds the medal and some important notes that would be beneficial to the Icelandic government. Neville and Owen decide to take a spur of the moment trip to Iceland to return the medal to its rightful home. Owen has an ulterior motive though, since he had accidentally mailed his own notebook to Iceland along with some of Gunnar's, and he is desperate to get it back before anyone can read what he had written in it.

This unique story is quite well-written, with a great deal of detail about its Alberta setting, as well as about Iceland. An emotional thread



running through the novel is Neville's increased confusion, possibly dementia, and how difficult and puzzling it is for Owen to deal with. Readers will be concerned for Owen's well-being in the care of his struggling granddad, and the realism of their situation will definitely evoke compassion. Owen's own self-discovery is explored in a gentle and believable way, and his loving relationship with his grieving granddad is authentically nuanced.

Owen's notebook contents remain a mystery until the novel's conclusion, which intertwines all of the themes of love and loss.

Stephan G. Stephansson is a real figure who had homesteaded in Alberta after leaving his native Iceland. He remains one of Iceland's most popular poets, and an author's note at the end of the book provides more information about his life and work.

Thematic Links: Grandparents; Iceland; Grieving; Dementia; Writing; Self-Discovery; Stephan G. Stephansson; Poetry

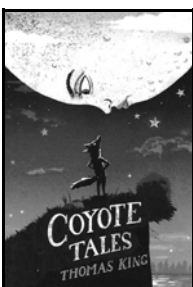
Nicole Rowlinson

KING, Thomas
Coyote Tales

Illustrated by Byron Eggenschwiler.

Groundwood Books, 2017. 60p. Illus.

Gr. K-4. 978-1-55498-833-4. Hdbk. \$16.95



Both of these stories have been published by Thomas King before, but this version is ideal for younger readers. The setting of a long time ago, "when humans and animals still talked to each other" gives a timeless dimension to the stories, which encourages children

to enter this magical world. The first story of *Why coyote sings to the moon* is like a pourquoi of why coyotes sing at night, while the second, *Coyote's new suit* suggests that wanting more than we need brings problems.

The humour that is so recognisable as King's style is evident and I think children will love to hear these stories again and again.

Thematic Links: Pourquoi Tales; Animal Stories; First Nations' Tales

Mavis Holder

KING, Wesley

Laura Monster Crusher

Puffin Books Canada, 2017. 304p. Gr.

5-8. 978-0-670-07002-2. Hdbk. \$21.99

Wesley King has created a lively middle school read with a particularly appealing thirteen-year-old protagonist. Despite being born



of her brother.

However, the parents decide to move when the taunts about Laura's size become a daily personal obstacle. They move to another nearby town and Laura and Tom settle into the local school. There, Laura becomes aware of something watching her new home. In the house that Stache (Laura's dad) is renovating, Laura discovers an elevator to another subterranean world - and that she alone is an unlikely designated Monster Crusher who is charged with saving her community from a variety of monstrous creatures - that is, after she receives practical field training. Now occupying two worlds - regular 8th grader by day and trainee Monster Crusher by night - Laura encounters many surprises.

The book's strength is Laura's eighth grade world where she finally finds friends, digs into her innate self-esteem to deal with the taunts about her weight, experiences her first crush and finds her interest being reciprocated. She's a strong person with a great sense of humour, and the reader cheers for her.

The fantasy aspect of this novel doesn't work anywhere near as well - it's a stretch in many ways to find it believable enough, and at times it feels like the author is making it all up as he goes along. Even though there is a climactic final scene where Laura literally slays the monster, there is little lead-up tension to the event.

King writes with a light touch. His characters are appealing and convey a positive vibe. But the fantasy is pretty forced, and some of the descriptions repetitious. This would have been a much stronger book if Laura could have found her place in the world through her own intelligence and creativity, rather than through brute strength.

Though, she made it look good!

Thematic Links: Body Image; Fantasy

Anne Letain

KORMAN, Gordon

Restart

Scholastic Press, 2017. 243p. Gr. 4-8.

978-1338-05377-7. Hdbk. \$21.99

Chase Ambrose is a jerk. He's mean, aggressive, arrogant, uncaring, and a bully. He's

larger than average, Laura Ledwick is actually one of the more well-rounded teenagers you'll encounter in YA fiction. This is because she's surrounded by supportive parents and a loving brother, a precocious nine-year old who happens to be blind. Laura is very protective

also a sports superstar at the middle school he attends (as was his father before him), which means he mostly goes unpunished by the school's administration for bullying his fellow classmates.

That is until he got amnesia.

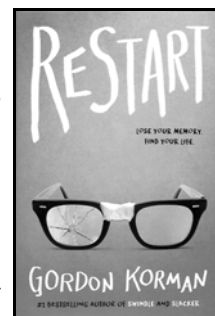
Chase wakes up in hospital sore with a concussion not knowing how he got there. He doesn't recognize any of the people surrounding his bed and when he is presented with a mirror, he doesn't even recognize himself! His memory loss allows him an opportunity rarely afforded to anyone else: a chance to start his life over from scratch.

As he tries to piece together his life before waking up in hospital, he encounters several unsettling incidents. A classmate named Shoshanna angrily dumps a bowl of ice cream over his head one evening at an ice cream bar; his four-year old half-sister is terrified of him and screams when he comes near her; his step-mother is uneasy in his presence; some of his classmates cower when he addresses them. As he learns more and more about himself before the accident from his parents, his two best friends Aaron and Bear, and his classmates, he's startled to discover that he's a hero to some, but a bully to others.

On top of all of this, he keeps seeing an image of a girl in a dress. What could it mean? Throughout the course of the book, random images come to his mind triggering his memory. At the same time he's busy trying to remember his former life, he's making friends with the classmates he formerly bullied, including the twin sister of a boy he bullied so badly that he had to be sent to boarding school. He can't play football due to an injury sustained in the accident, so he joins the video club, unaware that it's full of folks he tormented on a daily basis. At first wary of Chase, they gradually begin to warm to him as he helps them with a project and protects them from fellow bullies: his friends Aaron and Bear.

Chase's new life isn't without its bumps in the road: he is doing community service at a nursing home as punishment stemming from a bullying incident that led to destruction of school property and witnesses Aaron and Bear stealing from an older lady with memory problems. A war medal of one of the residents goes missing, and when Chase sets out to find it, he discovers that he was the thief. Can a bully really change?

Each chapter of *Restart* is told from the perspective of different characters in the book: Chase, the main character, Shoshanna Weber, the twin sister of the boy tormented so badly he was sent away to boarding school for his own safety, Brendan Espinoza, nerd and member of



the video club, and Aaron Hakimian, brutish friend, bully, and fellow member of the football team. This is a great book for those aged 9 to 13 and provides insight into the bullies and those that are bullied. The plot is very realistic, thoughtful, and a great conversation starter on the topic of bullying. This would be a great addition to the bookshelves of the classroom and library.

Thematic Links: Bullying; Amnesia; Middle Grades; Sports; Getting Along; Divorced Parents; Stepfamily; Fighting; Stealing

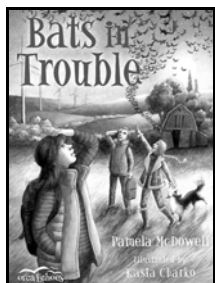
Catherine Bellamy

MCDOWELL, Pamela

Bats in Trouble (Orca Echoes Series)

Illustrated by Kasia Charko. Orca Book Publishers. 2017. 96p. Illus. Gr. 2-4. 978-1-459814035. Pbk. \$6.95 (Reviewed from Advance Reading Copy)

G



Bats in Trouble is the third adventure of animal-rights activist Cricket McKay. Cricket, her brother Tyler, and her best friend Shilo are visiting Grandma and Grandpa McKay at their farm near Pincher Creek, Alberta. The children are enjoying the end of summer holidays exploring the area beneath newly installed wind turbines where they discover a number of dead bats. This is a mystery that they eventually solve through observation and research. The migrating Hoary Bats are adversely affected by the wind turbines. Bats do not like to fly in the wind and so the children conclude that if the turbines are turned off when there is low wind during bat migration time the bats will be saved. The next challenge for the concerned activists is how to bring enough attention to the plight of the bats to facilitate change. With ingenuity the children use the annual parade to successfully promote the plight of the bats.

Pauline effectively uses a work of fiction to impart many facts about bats and wind turbines. Throughout the book she uses situations to dispel myths about bats and to educate the reader about the importance of the bats' consumption of insects to both nature and agriculture.

The children's discussions with each other and Ms. Lee, the 'turbine lady', reveal facts about wind turbines. Tyler explains to the girls that the turbine is "... the opposite to a fan. A fan uses energy to make wind, but a turbine uses wind to make energy." How succinct!

The black and white illustrations by Kasia Charko are quite pleasing. The picture of Grandma, Grandpa, Cricket and Shilo in the

kitchen conveys a feeling of family togetherness and harmony. The depiction of the 'local' brown bats leaving an old shed on a moonlit night portrays the awesome immensity of nature.

Bats in Trouble is recommended for both school and public libraries. It meets Orca Book Publishers' mandate of offering a good quality short chapter book that promotes social responsibility and can be used in character building programs and for independent reading.

Thematic Links: Bats; Bat Migration; Wind Turbines; Pincher Creek; Alberta; Animal Activism

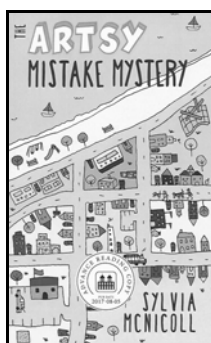
Laura Reilly

MCNICOLL, Sylvia

The Artsy Mistake Mystery (Great Mistake Mysteries Series)

Dundurn Press, 2017. 202p. Gr. 3-6. 978-1-459738805. Pbk. \$8.99

G



During their dog walking rounds, Stephen Nobel and his partner in crime Renée learn about the disappearance of works of art all around town. The thefts include a display of model fish at the school, which Renée's brother Atilla has been accused of! With the town art competition approaching, Stephen and Renée need to get to the bottom of these crimes and clear Atilla's name, all while protecting Stephen's dog walking clients from a very suspicious character.

The Artsy Mistake Mystery is the second installation in the *Great Mistake Mysteries Series*, and it follows much the same formula as the first book. Again, Renée's brother has been accused of the crime and again, the dogs' lives are put at risk. While the plot is fairly formulaic, the theme of art that runs through the story helps flesh out the many colourful characters who live in Stephen's town. **The Artsy Mistake Mystery** takes the element of complex mystery from *The Great Mistake Mystery*, and overlays it with the theme of art, which makes for a mystery that readers will enjoy solving.

Thematic Links: Mystery; Art; Dogs

Alice Albarda

O'DONNELL, Liam

Tank and Fizz: The Case of the Missing Mage

Illustrated by Mike Deas. Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 125p. Illus. Gr. 2-5. 978-1-459812604. Pbk. \$9.95

G

Tank and Fizz are asked by their friend, wizard-in-training, Aleetha to help her find her teacher. They use their talents in detection and technology to save Slick City and the Shadow Tower from the evil powers of darkness.

The pace is fast and the tension builds through the story to a climax, when it looks as if all is lost. However, cooperation saves the city and the forces of evil are eventually overcome.

The story is not without humour and Ned, the young library assistant works where the furniture floats, the books wander and the stairs are grumpy.

Thematic Links: Magic; Good and Evil; Fantasy Worlds; Detective Stories



Mavis Holder

SCHULTZ NICHOLSON, Lorna
Superhero Ninja Wrestling Star
James Lorimer & Co., 2017. 151p. Illus. Gr. 5-7. 978-1-4594-1196-8. Pbk. \$12.95

G

Archie couldn't believe how tall his best friend Shamini had grown over the summer, and she really looked and acted more like a girl! Alfie, his other best friend, had grown both up and out as well. As the three friends headed to school for the start of grade six Archie was nervous.

What if everyone was bigger than him?! He had to do something about his size!

Alfie decides to become Archie's trainer, choosing at first to make Archie more like their TV superhero, Surge, who was skinny but a super fast runner. After one disastrous run, however, the boys decide to practice the Ninja crawl instead. One hilarious event follows another as Archie desperately attempts to build both muscle and confidence. Finally, he is rescued by joining a school wrestling program in which he becomes both skilled and competent.

This amusing and appealing story focuses mainly on a common problem as young children grow and develop physically at various stages from one another. Just as Archie is the only kid in his grade 6 class who has not grown bigger over the summer, many readers will undoubtedly relate to his problem. The humorous antics associated with Archie's quest should help young readers both laugh and cope with their own struggles. The novel



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is fast-paced and when read aloud should promote discussion regarding bullying, friendship and acceptance. It should be a popular addition to a school or classroom library collection.

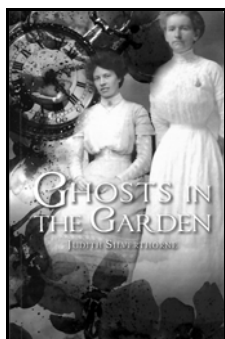
Thematic Links: Humour; Heroes; Friendship; Bullying; Acceptance; Childhood Development

Carolyn Cutt

SILVERTHORNE, Judith

Ghosts in the Garden

Coteau Books, 2017. 168p. Gr. 4-7. 978-1550509052. Pbk. \$10.95



Ghosts in the Garden is a paranormal mystery featuring two young protagonists, J.J. and Sam, who like history and have their own ghost detective agency. The girls are on a field trip to Government House in Regina, Saskatchewan, when one of the girls needs to get a drink of water from the water

fountain in the basement of the building. Along the way, they pass a figure of a woman that seems to glide past them. They happen upon another figure who winds up being George Watt, a gardener from the early 20th century! As soon as they say his name, they are transported through time to the early 1900s. The girls have read about George Watt and know exactly who he is, but they are faced with bigger questions: did they time travel? How did they time travel? And why is this happening?

They manage to find their way back to the present and rejoin their class. Curious from their recent time travelling experience, they ask their tour guide all sorts of questions, much to the chagrin of their teacher and classmates who just want to break for lunch. The tour guide tells them about Alice Goudy, an elderly woman and former housekeeper who worked on the grounds for fifty or sixty years, who knows quite a bit of the history of the Government House and the surrounding area. The girls keep seeing the mysterious ghostly lady in the blue dress who keeps silently mouthing a word that looks like “watch”. This creates even more questions for the girls. The more they visit Alice, the more they learn about the former employees, like George Watt, and they even learn the identity of the ghostly lady. But what does she want? Why do the girls travel back in time every time they say George Watt’s name? There seems to be a new mystery with each chapter.

Ghosts in the Garden deceptively features a history lesson in the form of a paranormal mystery. All the historical characters happen to be real people connected with Regina’s Government House. Author Judith Silverthorne has

done excellent research; in the forward to the book written by Lieutenant Governor Vaughn Solomon Schofield, Silverthorne is praised for her attention to detail. Saskatchewan’s Lieutenant Governor admitted to learning something new when it came to these historical figures and events that Silverthorne included in the story. The book includes a “discovery map” at the beginning of the book to help the reader navigate the different places contained within Government House. This is a fun read and teaches the reader a bit of Saskatchewan history packaged in a paranormal mystery. It would be an excellent read for around Halloween time, as the story takes place in October and features ghosts. While some parts are mildly spooky, it isn’t at all scary.

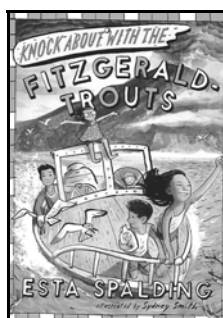
Thematic Links: History; Mystery; Suspense; Ghosts; Regina, Saskatchewan; Government House; Time Travel; Ghost Hunting; Autumn

Catherine Bellamy

SPALDING, Esta

Knock About with the Fitzgerald-Trouts

Illustrated by Sydney Smith. Tundra Books, 2017. 298p. Illus. Gr. 3-5. 978-1-77049-878-5. Hdbk. \$19.99



The Fitzgerald-Trouts are Kim, Kimo, Pippa, Toby, and Penny, a family of children who live in a car on a tropical island. In this, their second outing, the Fitzgerald-Trouts are on summer break when they meet an unusual person who calls herself Leaf. Leaf

points out all the changes the island is undergoing: a dormant volcano has awakened, rain is causing floods, earthquakes (the “knock abouts” of the title) are occurring frequently, and there are brizzill bugs everywhere. She reminds the children that they’re islanders, whispers that they need to be ready to help, and then melts into the night. So begins their new adventure, in which they win and lose a boat, attempt to fix a broken romance, and discover the secret to the island’s distress.

Knock About with the Fitzgerald-Trouts, the sequel to 2016’s *Look Out for the Fitzgerald-Trouts*, has a rollicking plot underpinned by a gentle lesson about environmentalism and localism. It’s also one of those fantastic books in which the kids live far from their terrible parents and other interfering adults. Adults are generally a negative force for the Fitzgerald-Trouts. They’re obstructive, they don’t listen, they think their job is to teach and correct, and worst of all, they’re unimaginably self-centred.

Most of the parents remain off-stage this time, with the exception of Johnny Trout, Kimo’s father, who proves to be truly terrible. In our era of hands-on parenting, the lives of the Fitzgerald-Trouts may seem dazzlingly strange to many readers, but the cooperation, compassion, ingenuity, and self-reliance the siblings display are admirable.

Knock About with the Fitzgerald-Trouts should prove tremendous fun for middle-grade readers, although critical readers may have a tough time suspending their disbelief in the children’s situation. The book is sweetly illustrated by Sydney Smith and is beautifully designed. The author’s attention to rhythm and patterns makes the text an appealing read-aloud choice in the classroom. It’s also a strong “summer reading” choice for both boys’ and girls’ home libraries.

Thematic Links: Families; Siblings; Home; Ecosystems; Summer Vacation

Leslie Vermeer

STELLINGS, Caroline

Ben and the Colonel

Peanut Butter Press, 2017. 64p. Illus. Gr. 3-6. 978-1-927735-11-4. Hdbk. \$19.95



Ben was tired of his work in the Widget factory and sick of the dreary city with its noise, pollution and traffic. Packing his few belongings in a knapsack, he quit his job and headed for the railroad, hoping to board a train and leave town. But luckily or not for Ben, all the passenger trains had been rerouted due to repair work and only freight trains sped by. As dusk approached he spotted an empty caboose with the door open and decided to wait inside. Suddenly he heard a loud roaring sound and looked out to see a gigantic balloon and basket floating down to land along the track. Hearing a call for help, Ben leapt over and tried to push on the overturned basket. Ben was a small dog, but finally by rocking and pulling he got the basket onto its side. Out scrambled a large, orange cat who introduced himself as Colonel Dewey, and so their story began.

This delightful tale traces Ben’s adventures with Colonel Dewey, who appears to be quite a con artist with a wild imagination. Once Ben is cajoled into working for the Colonel, helping hold the lines to launch the hot-air balloon, he begins to meet a host of the Colonel’s friends who regularly appear for rides, though always for free. Discouraged over this busi-

ness venture, Ben once again decides to leave town, until the Colonel's sudden misadventure brings him rushing back!

Written in picture-book format, this short, adventure novel is composed of ten brief chapters. Each page is colourfully illustrated with detailed, appealing pen and ink drawings. Many of the illustrations almost fill the page, adding interest and information for the reader. As the story unfolds, the reader should soon recognize the main themes of friendship and helping others, though the Colonel's character is at first cleverly disguised. This should prove an interesting topic for discussion. The novel is recommended for an elementary school library or classroom collection.

Thematic Links: Adventure; Friendship; Loyalty

Carolyn Cutt



WALDMAN, Debby

Miriam's Secret

Orca Book Publishers, 2017.
208p. Gr. 4-7. 978-1459814257. Pbk. \$10.95

Miriam's Secret is about a nine-year old girl from Brooklyn who goes to stay

with her Bubby and Zayde (grandmother and grandfather) on their farm in rural New York. The year is 1930 and the Great Depression has hit the United States; Miriam's parents have travelled to the Soviet Union to bring her recently widowed uncle, Avram, and his twin sons to America. Because they are travelling by ship, Miriam is staying with her grandparents for a couple of months. Living on the farm is lonely. She is used to having her cousins and friends to play with in the city; on the farm, she only has the animals, including several kittens that were born a few weeks prior to her arrival. To have something to do, she helped her grandfather with the animals and she helped her grandmother in the kitchen, but she was still homesick and missed her parents dearly.

The Great Depression affected many people in the United States; people were struggling to pay bills and put food on the table. To find work, folks would catch a ride on freight trains and go from town to town looking for work; they were called hobos. Poor, hungry men would arrive in town and Miriam's Zayde would put them to work, feeding them and paying them, even if he didn't have a lot of work for them to do. They lived on the farm and ate with the family. One of the men, Joe, is caught by Miriam taking extra food. Her curiosity leads her to explore the barn, and one day, she happens upon a terrified brown-eyed girl named Cissy. At first unpleasant, Cissy grows to trust Miriam with her secret: Joe is her brother and they've run away from an abusive uncle and aunt in Mississippi. Joe has told

her that if anyone finds out about them, she'll be sent straight to an orphanage. Miriam struggles between keeping Cissy's secret and telling her grandparents because she knows they'll know what to do.

The story takes place in the days leading up to the Jewish holiday of Passover, marking the triumphant exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, where they lived as slaves, making their way to the Promised Land. Joe and Cissy are having their own sort of exodus, leaving behind an unhappy home life in search of something better. At Bubby and Zayde's farm, they find safety. The book is a nice read that includes a sort of comparison of lifestyles: rural versus urban, Northern United States versus Southern United States, and immigrant versus native-born. It also gives readers a nice peek into Jewish culture and traditions, from the Yiddish monikers for grandma and grandpa to the holidays of Purim and Passover to foods like Hamantaschen. The story provides the opportunity to teach children about secrets: knowing when it's ok to keep a secret and knowing when they need to tell a trusted adult.

Thematic Links: Jewish Customs and Traditions; Purim; Passover; Rural Life; Farm; Immigrants; Emigrant; Homesickness; Loneliness; Orphans; Animals; Secrets; The Great Depression; The 1930s; Grandparents; Family

Catherine Bellamy

Resource Links

Published 5 times a year,

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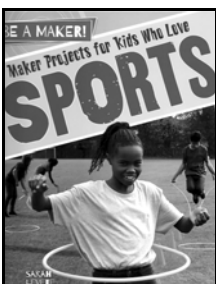
Educators, librarians and writers working with young people across the nation. Our reviewers span the country from British Columbia to Newfoundland.

Non-Fiction: Grades K-6

Be a Maker! Series: LEVETE, Sarah. **Maker Projects for Kids Who Love Sports** (978-0-7787-2877-1) KOPP, Megan. **Maker Projects for Kids Who Love Designing Communities** (978-0-7787-2879-5); **Maker Projects for Kids Who Love Greening Up Spaces** (978-0-7787-2881-8) GALAT, Joan Marie. **Maker Projects for Kids Who Love Printmaking** (978-0-7787-2889-4) Crabtree Publishing, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. 5-8. Hdbk. \$21.56 ea.

G

This extension of the *Be a Maker! Series* encourages students, hobbyists, and amateurs to collaborate in making items related to various interests. Each title introduces readers to the idea of being a maker, provides background in one particular area, identifies three or four relevant Makers and Shakers from around the world - many of them teenagers, and gives complete instructions for three simple projects.



Active kids will be particularly interested in **Maker Projects for Kids Who Love Sports**. This title discusses the history of sports and why it's important to be fit. It provides instructions for making a crisscross boomerang, a rule book, and an obstacle-course.

Hockey players will be particularly interested in the story behind Jacques Plante's hockey mask.

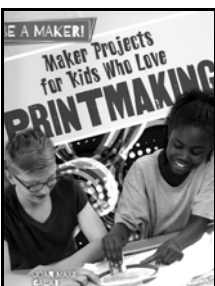
The content of **Maker Projects for Kids Who Love Designing Communities** integrates into many subject areas, including geography, science, mathematics, language arts, and art. It talks about how communities are designed, including how Jane Jacobs changed the way developers think about communities. The title includes instructions for making a zone map, model park, and mobile library.



Maker Projects for Kids Who Love Greening Up Spaces discusses how landscaping can change a space. Interesting landscapes include zen gardens made from raked sand and stones, as well as boreal gardens, such as that developed by On-



tario's North Caribou Lake First Nation community. Projects include making a vertical garden, a rain chain, and a butterfly garden.



Maker Projects for Kids Who Love Printmaking gives some background into the long history of printmaking and then discusses different forms of printmaking. Projects include making a gelatin plate print, a leaf relief, and a screen print T-shirt.

Thematic Links: Creativity; Sports, Community Planning; Transportation Systems; Public Spaces; Livable Neighbourhoods; Landscaping; Gardening; Printmaking

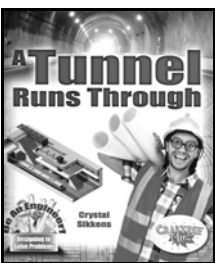
Helen Mason

Be An Engineer! Series: Designing to Solve Problems Series: SIK-KENS, Crystal. **A Tunnel Runs Through** (978-0-7787-2903-7); **A Dam Holds Back** (978-0-7787-2905-1); BURNS, Kylie. **A Skyscraper Reaches Up** (978-0-7787-2904-4); **A Bridge Goes Over** (978-0-7787-2907-5) Crabtree Publishing, 2017. 24p. Illus. Gr. 2-5. Hdbk. \$22.95 ea.

G/E

This new Crabtree series supports the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) by focusing on engineering problems and outlining the steps for solving such problems. The books include examples from around the world of what happens when engineers skip one of the steps - and suggest how to avoid or fix such issues.

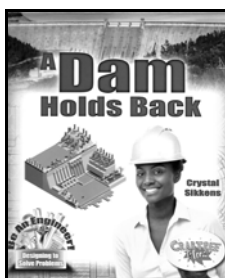
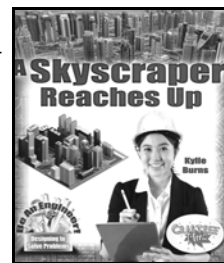
Each title ends with a Try it Out! activity related to engineering design, a Learning More section, plus a brief glossary and index. A code on page 23 directs readers to a web site with related videos, interactive games, and activities, plus teacher resources.



In **A Tunnel Runs Through**, the highway bridge Tyler and his family need to cross is frequently closed. What solutions are there to their problem? The text outlines how engineers might plan, test, and build a tunnel. Text and pictures show what happened in São Paulo, Brazil when the steps were not fully followed.

In **A Skyscraper Reaches Up**, Jordan is concerned when the park near his home is going to

be replaced by a high rise. Can engineers construct a building that includes a park? Pictures show various skyscrapers around the world, including the first steel-framed skyscraper built in Chicago in 1871 and the world's tallest skyscraper, which is in Dubai.

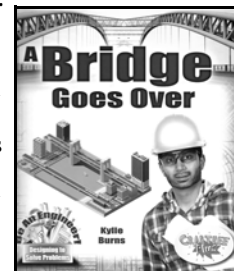


A Dam Holds Back follows the same pattern. This time, Chelsea is concerned about floodwaters near her home. Photos include shots of various types of dams and include China's Three Gorges Dam, the largest in the world. The text dis-

cusses what happened in California when the foundation of a dam built in the 1920s gave way - and how building and testing models eliminates such disasters.

A Bridge Goes Over focuses on Keisha and how much easier it would be for her to get to her grandparents' if they could drive across a lake rather than around it. Photos show different types of bridges, including a model of Japan's Akashi Kaikyō Bridge, the world's longest suspension bridge. Readers are challenged to consider how the steps of the design process might have prevented the collapse of Washington's Tacoma Narrows Bridge in 1940.

The books would make useful additions to the science section of any school or classroom library. The activities directly relate to science and technology learning and could be developed into useful science projects.



Thematic Links: Engineers; Engineering; Problem Solving; Tunnels; Skyscrapers; Dams; Bridges

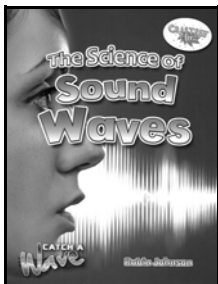
Helen Mason

Catch A Wave Series: JOHNSON, Robin. **The Science of Sound Waves** (978-0-7787-2941-9); **The Science of Light Waves** (978-0-7787-2944-0); HUDAK, Heather: **Waves and Information Transfer** (978-0-7787-2962-4); **What Are Waves?** (978-0-7787-2964-8) Crabtree Publishing, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. 3-6.

G/E

Hdbk. \$26.95 ea.

Each title in this new Crabtree series focuses on the properties and uses of waves in our world and supports the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Each book ends with an extended activity related to the type of waves being discussed. All books have a Learning More section, a brief glossary, and an index. This series is part of the new Crabtree Plus offerings. Readers can use a code provided on page 23 to access a web site with related videos, interactive games, and activities, plus lesson plans.



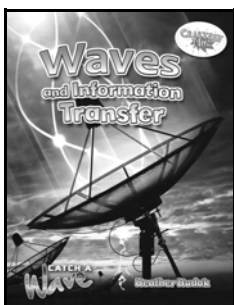
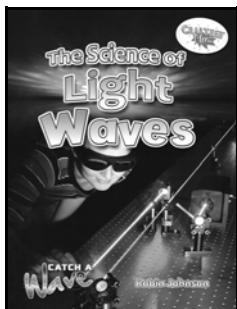
The Science of Sound

Waves explains how sounds are produced and transmitted. Student-friendly photos and visuals illustrate how waves move out from the source and how the ear collects these vibrations and transmits signals to the brain for deciphering.

Various spreads discuss pitch, volume, sound transfer, and how to manipulate sound waves.

The Science of Light

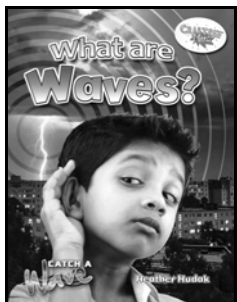
Waves explains what light is, how it travels, and how the human eye uses it to see. Various spreads discuss how light waves produce colour, how light reflects differently from various surfaces, and how to manipulate light waves. Some students will need assistance with the directions for making a periscope.



Many students will particularly enjoy *Waves and Information Transfer*. Eye-catching visuals show different types of waves and a variety of people using them. There are spreads on information waves, the historic use of sound and light waves to communicate,

how radio waves work, how waves are digitized, and wireless waves. Students experiment with creating their own codes and then using them to communicate.

What Are Waves details the different types of waves and what they have in common. It discusses amplitude, frequency,



force, changing waves, and waves in nature.

The activity has students use a toy boat to check how waves move energy. The visual shows a boat with a sail. You might have students do this activity both with a sailboat and with a boat without a sail - and discuss the difference. Which vehicle best exemplifies the point of the activity?

These titles would make useful additions to the science section of any school or classroom library. The activities could complement science learning and provide ideas for science fair projects.

Thematic Links: Waves; Sound Waves; Light Waves; Information Technology; Information Waves; Smoke Signals; Morse Code; Wave Technology; Digitizing Data; Wireless Waves

Helen Mason

ELTON, Sarah

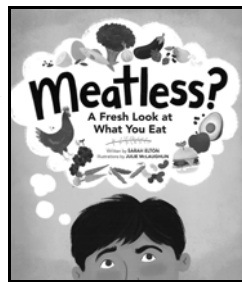
Meatless? A Fresh Look at What You Eat

Illustrated by Julie McLaughlin. Owlkids Books, 2017. 48p. Illus. Gr. 3-6. 978-1-926818-43-6. Hdbk. \$18.95



As an introduction to the topic, the author begins by describing her farm visit where she assisted in slaughtering a chicken. This experience made her realize how long humans have debated the idea of eating another living being, and how complicated and interesting the question is. The introduction continues with a brief discussion of meats eaten by various cultures, some of which are very dependent on meat and fish alone because of their location; for example, the Inuit in Canada's Arctic. This is followed, in contrast, by a definition of vegetarianism.

The main text is divided into four parts, beginning with a history of meat-eating. Interestingly, anthropologists believe that meat has played a major part in human evolution! Religious rules regarding how and what people eat are also discussed. Part two poses the question: "Why go Vegetarian?" Topics such as animal welfare, meat costs and availability and greenhouse gases are included. Alternatives to meat are presented in part three, showing a wide variety of food options, including an interesting table listing nutrients and where to find them in various foods. Part four presents the reader with various healthy menu choices when choosing to become vegetarian. The text concludes by stressing the importance of respecting everyone's decision as to what they choose to eat and their personal reasons.



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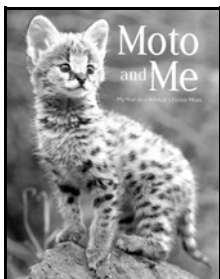
This text is interesting and thought provoking, presenting many points of view. It should certainly lead to lively discussion. Each page is colourfully illustrated with informative drawings, menu suggestions in table format and coloured boxes highlighting important information. The text is written mainly in lyrical style, though some tips are listed in point form. A comprehensive glossary is included, plus a table of contents, index, bibliography and further reading suggestions. There is also a list of recommended vegetarian cookbooks and on the final page, some very interesting quotes – “Food for Thought”. This book should prove to be a useful reference text for an elementary school library collection.

Thematic Links: Food; Meat; Vegetarianism; Nutrients; Menus

Carolyn Cutt

ESZTERHAS, Suzi
Moto and Me. My Year as a Wildcat's Foster Mom

Owlkids Books, 2017. 39p. Illus. Gr. 2-6. 978-1-77147-242-5. Hdbk. \$18.95



Moto, a *Several*, which is a small, spotted wildcat, was only two weeks old when he was separated from his mother. Born on the Masai Mara's savanna in Kenya, Moto's story begins when he is picked up on the road by tourists on safari.

Not realizing that they had startled Moto's mother who was rescuing her kittens from a grass fire, they drove the kitten to the ranger station, many hours away. Unable to be reunited with his mother, Moto is left in the care of author and wildlife photographer, Suzi Eszterhas, who agrees to teach him how to survive in the wild on his own. And so her challenging and fascinating story begins!

The first challenge was how and what to feed this baby wildcat, then how to keep him clean and healthy. Moto soon became curious about the world around him and was eager to explore. As he began to grow and mature, Moto learned to hunt small prey, mice, lizards, etc., as he roamed freely in the bush around the author's camp. Instinctively, he also learned to protect himself, lying in the tall grass where his spotted coat blended with the surroundings. As Moto progresses towards independence and his return to the wild, the reader learns many fascinating details about *severals*, small wildcats, found on the savanna in Africa.

Lyrically written, the author shares her story and attachment to the baby several kitten with

whom she became foster mother. The text includes a wealth of information about the wildcat's characteristics, habitat and environment. Engaging photographs enhance each page, depicting both the emotional and bonding relationship between Moto and his foster mother, and adding further information for the reader. The final two-page spread contains factual information about *Severals* and a beautiful, full-page photograph. This fascinating book should capture readers of all ages and promote valuable discussion regarding wildlife rescue. It is highly recommended for school library collections.

Thematic Links: Severals (Wildcats); Wildlife Rescue; Kenya; Conservation; Foster Care of Animals; Wildlife Rehabilitation

Carolyn Cutt

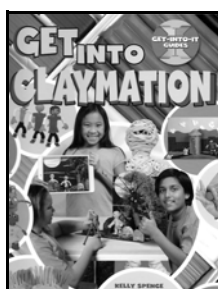
Get-Into-It-Guides: SPENCE, Kelly.

Get Into Claymation (978-0-7787-3400-0); KOVACS, Vic. ***Get Into Magic***

(978-0-7787-3401-7); DYER, Janice.

Get Into Mixed Media (978-0-7787-3402-4); WINTERS, Jaime. ***Get Into Smoothies*** (978-0-7787-3403-1)

Crabtree Publishing, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. 3-5. Hdbk. \$26.95 ea.



These books shout “Crabtree” with the expected quality and style of pictures and design. After each title page is a page of headings, 13 double page spreads, an additional bibliography, a glossary and an index, The illustrations are full colour photographs.

My remarks on these titles are very similar to those I made on reviewing the earlier six titles. Clear and concise instructions in each of these books with sequenced pictures will enable young readers to complete various projects. The groups of children performing the different pastimes are recognizable in all the books and represent a good mix of various ethnic



groups and both sexes.

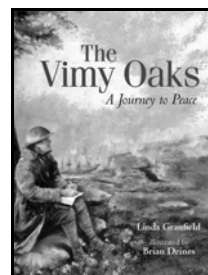
These books are primarily designed for the U.S. market with measurements in imperial and metric equivalents bracketed.

I wonder if people these days do not turn to the Web, rather than books to find recipes or

ideas for creative projects. So, however attractive these books are, they could be of limited use.

Thematic Links: Pastimes; Arts and Crafts; Magic Tricks; Recipes

Mavis Holder



GRANFIELD, Linda
The Vimy Oaks: A Journey to Peace

Illustrated by Brian Deines. North Winds Press, 2017. 36p. Illus. Gr. 2-6. 978-1-4431-4850-4. Hdbk. \$19.99

For review in French see p. 54.

HUGHES, Susan
UP! How Families Around the World Carry Their Little Ones

Illustrated by Ashley Barron. Owlkids Books, 2017. 22p. Illus. Gr. K-3. 978-1-77147-176-3. Hdbk. \$17.95



This informative picture book demonstrates and briefly discusses the various ways in which families around the world carry their babies. Each two-page spread represents a different country and culture. The detailed illustrations, artistically rendered in cut-paper collage, are large, accurate, appealing and brightly coloured. Each drawing tells a story, how babies are cuddled, wrapped and transported while close to a parent.

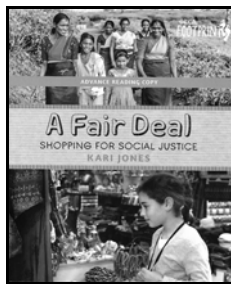
Every illustration, containing many details of the surrounding countryside, clothing worn in that particular country, plants and animals on the land, food in the market, etc., depicts a wealth of information and should promote valuable discussion. Much of the text, however, seems unrelated and unnecessary as the artwork is sufficient.

Thematic Links: Families; Culture; Art; Cut-Paper Collage

Carolyn Cutt

JONES, Kari
A Fair Deal: Shopping for Social Justice (Orca Footprints Series)
Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 48p. Illus. Gr. 3-6. 978-1-4598-1043-8. Hdbk. \$19.95

G/E



Ever wondered where your t-shirt comes from? Who made it and how it got to you? These are the questions that Jones tackles in *A Fair Deal*. Ethical questions about fairness in trade are just the beginning. In *A Fair Deal* Kari

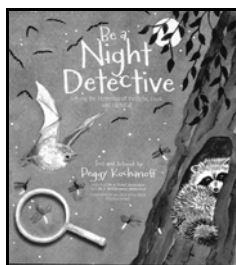
Jones takes readers on a journey of real world economics by describing her own experiences with fair trade. Historical facts and modern examples punctuate Jones' text and add credibility while maintaining interest. Jones shines light on social-economic issues while explaining their root causes and development into modern trade. She educates readers on the disparities in our world while providing examples in how we can curb the problem. Jones tackles this task with simple vocabulary, concise explanations, real world analogies and questions that make learning about fair trade and economics fun.

Jones' humour is sure to encourage young readers to think globally and become more aware of how one small change can have a huge impact.

Thematic Links: Economics; Globalization; Fair Trade; Supply Chains; Factories; Activism; Markets; Barter; Currency

Ana Malespin

KOCHANOFF, Peggy
Be a Night Detective
Nimbus Publishing, 2017. 56p. Illus.
Gr. 2-4. 978-1-77108-464-2. Pbk.
\$14.95



Be a Night Detective explores mysteries you encounter in the natural world at night. Full of interesting facts and useful illustrations, many children will enjoy learning about the natural wonders that surround

them. The lack of navigational tools and the somewhat misleading title may turn some readers off.

This is a book of questions and answers, with each section following an identical format. The sections begin with a question, such as "Hmmm... Do flying squirrels really fly? Let's look closely and find out" and conclude with "Mystery solved!". What lies between is a detailed, but age appropriate, answer to the question at hand. These explanations at times digress from the original inquiry (for example, a large paragraph is dedicated to humans' un-

successful attempts to eradicate coyotes in the chapter titled "Why do coyotes howl?"), but the content is always interesting. Children will undoubtedly put this book down mid-read to share newly discovered facts with those around them. The colourful, detailed illustrations do a good job of supporting the text. The inclusion of a glossary and suggested resources aid comprehension and encourage further reading.

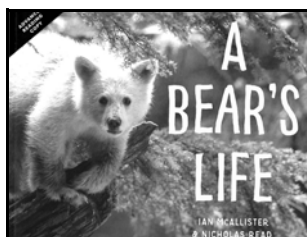
While the content of *Be a Night Detective* is good overall, there are a number of factors that keep it from being excellent. The book itself is misleading in terms of what the reader can expect. Despite the title and the magnifying glass on the cover there are no activities, be they suggested real-world projects or in-book puzzles or challenges. This makes the "Mystery solved!" at the end of each section seem silly as the reader has had no part whatsoever in solving the mystery. In addition, no navigation aids (table of contents, index) are provided. This seems like a particularly glaring oversight in a non-fiction title. Finally, the beginning of the book is just plain odd. The dedication page includes an explanation of light pollution and the introduction is almost entirely dedicated to explaining the roles that cones and rods play in night vision. This space would have been better spent introducing the reader to the format of the book and building excitement about the content to come.

Despite its shortcomings, this informative book will peak the interest of young scientists and encourage them to learn more about the fascinating natural world that surrounds us.

Thematic Links: Biology; Nature; Science; Facts; Animals; Astronomy; Night Time

Sadie Tucker

MCALLISTER, Ian and Nicholas Read
A Bear's Life (My Great Bear Rainforest Series)
Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 32p. Illus.
Gr. K-3. 978-1-459812703. Hdbk. \$19.95
(Reviewed from Advance Reading Copy)



A Bear's Life is the second book in the brilliant non-fiction series about wildlife in the Great Bear Rainforest. The successful col-

laboration of Ian McAllister and Nicholas Read has expanded to include young readers.

The book follows the seasons in the rainforest beginning with late winter and ending at the start of the following winter. With jaunty text and accompanying photographs (each a work of art) the reader learns about the daily habits of bears including family life, seasonal eating

choices, habits, and habitat. Although the title of the book is singular, the writing and pictures cleverly incorporate common facts about black bears and grizzly bears as well as facts different for each species. With ease the text moves from the fact that "Cubs learn lessons from their mothers all the time" to "After male grizzlies leave their mothers, they live their whole lives alone."

The spirit bear, which graces the cover, is introduced with photographs and references to indigenous mythology. How mystifying that in all the world the Spirit bear exists only in the Great Rainforest.

The beauty of a good children's non-fiction book is that each word is chosen carefully and each sentence is crafted with precision. "Fall is salmon season, when five different kinds of salmon return to the rainforest streams and rivers to mate, lay eggs and die." This is a lot of information and the book illustrates the intricacies of the lives of the animals in the forest. Another appeal of *A Bear's Life* is the delivery of factual information in an appealing manner. Any reader of this book will remember that bears eat so much, in preparation for hibernation, their stomachs "...drag on the ground like sacks of grain. They have to dig holes in the ground to fit their huge stomachs." Think of the fun of presenting this book during story time and encouraging the audience to participate by mimicking bears!

A Bear's Life is highly recommended for school and public libraries for study units and for story times. This book would enhance study units on bears, ecological systems, rainforests, indigenous mythology, the Raven, and photography. Both books in *My Great Bear Rainforest Series* further understanding of the beauty and importance of the Great Bear Rainforest and by extension all forests and their inhabitants.

Thematic Links: Bears (Grizzly, Black, Spirit); Great Bear Rainforest; Salmon; Pacific Ocean; The Raven; Indigenous Mythology; Ecological Systems

Laura Reilly

MCCARNEY, Rosemary
Where Will I Live?
Second Story Press, 2017. 24p. Illus.
Gr. K up. 978-1-77260-028-5. Hdbk.
\$19.95



This is a very moving book which could be used at any level to promote compassion and action on behalf of the



many refugee children who are displaced and wandering the globe. Each photograph is labelled with the country in which it was taken, which adds to the understanding of the size and severity of the problem. The text is simple and is a series of questions, such as “will I find a special buddy?” or “will my new bed be just for me?” which any child can understand.

The author is well known in humanitarian circles in Canada, both for her support of girls’ rights while CEO of Plan International and for her work at the United Nations. Her *Rosie Series* and *Every Day is Malala Day* add to the credibility of this book and it will have use in every school and community that provides a welcome to refugees.

Also available in French. See p. 57.

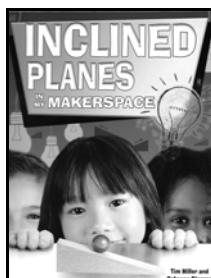
Thematic Links: Home; Refugees; Basic Needs

Mavis Holder

MILLER, Tim and Rebecca Sjonger **Simple Machines in My Maker Space:** **Inclined Planes in My Makerspace** (978-0-7787-3370-6); **Levers in My Makerspace** (978-0-7787-3371-3); **Pulleys in My Makerspace** (978-0-7787-3372-0); **Screws in My Makerspace** (978-0-7787-3373-7); **Wedges in My Makerspace** (978-0-7787-3374-4); **Wheels and Axles in My Makerspace** (978-0-7787-3375-1) Crabtree Publishing, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. 2-6. Hdbk. \$26.95 ea.

This new Crabtree series provides an excellent introduction to the STEM curriculum. Running text introduces readers both to teamwork and to a specific simple machine. The first activity walks readers through making the main machine being discussed. Four follow-up projects encourage them to make simple machines that perform specific tasks.

Instead of step-by-step instructions, a Think About It section coaches students in what to consider as they design and modify their own creations. An Endless Ideas page towards the end asks open-ended questions to help innovators improve their machines. Each title ends with a Learning More section, plus a brief glossary and index.



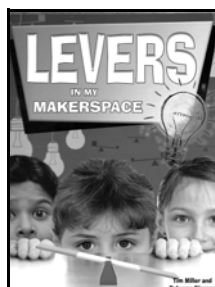
coaster.

Scissors, hammers, and teeter-totters are examples of levers. **Levers in My Makerspace** uses these tools to identify the parts of a lever and explain how one works. Readers make a lever to lift a weight, one to roll marbles, a catapult, and a balance.



Screws in My Makerspace has interesting opening activities to

Readers have likely used inclined planes since they were toddlers. **Inclined Planes in My Makerspace** gets them thinking about how to use these planes to simplify work and to have fun. Projects include making a ramp, a slide, a runaway ramp, and a marble roller



Once readers understand how pulleys work, **Pulleys in My Makerspace** has them make a mini flag and flagpole, a zipline for a teddy bear, a set of pulleys to lift a 2-lb load, and a pulley with two wheels that does work.

help readers experiment with the difference between screw threads. Projects include building a shelf, a vegetable press, a spiral, and a screw pump.

Wedges include airplanes and axes. In **Wedges in My Makerspace**,



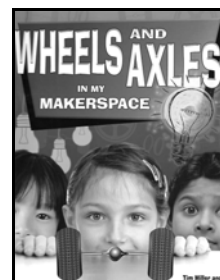
readers experiment with making wheel chocks, a wedge that can split or pull apart, a wedge that lifts, and a boat with a wedge-shaped bow.

In **Wheels and Axles in My Makerspace**,

readers experiment with using a wheel and axle to move a load, make a rolling pin with one wheel and one axle, make a machine to lift a load, and creating a windmill.

The books would make useful additions to the science section of any school or classroom library.

Thematic Links: Science; Technology; Engineering; Mathematics; Simple Machines; Complex Machines; Wheels; Axles; Wedges; Screws; Pulleys; Levers; Planes; Inclined Planes



Helen Mason

Tour Roster Announced for

TD Canadian Children's Book Week 2018

The Canadian Children's Book Centre is excited to announce the authors, illustrators and storytellers who will be touring for TD Canadian Children's Book Week May 5-12, 2018

Visit www.bookweek.ca later this fall to find out where these creators will be touring and how you can participate!

JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY

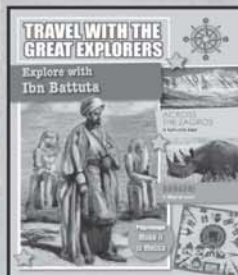
with these

NEW CRABTREE TITLES!

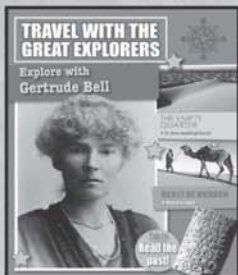


Six new explorers have been added to **Travel with the Great Explorers**, a series that uses a modern tabloid-magazine style of reporting, gossip, and humor to introduce readers to the achievements of some of history's most famous explorers. The lively style presents not just the where and why of groundbreaking expeditions, but also how explorers found their way, how they traveled, and how they treated the people they met. The books also reveal the landscapes through which travelers passed.

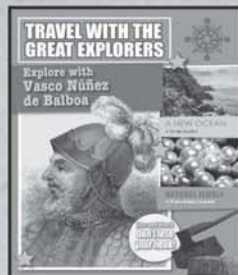
Specifications:
 Reading Level: Grades 4-5
 Interest Level: Grades 3-6
 32 pages, 8½ x 10¾", full colour
\$21.56 RLB • \$10.95 PAP



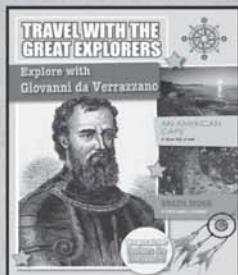
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 978-0-7787-3924-1 PB
 978-1-4271-7808-4 EBOOK



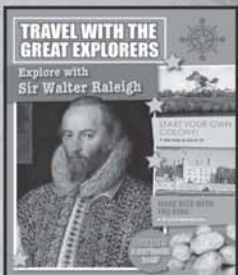
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 978-0-7787-3938-8 PB
 978-1-4271-7813-8 EBOOK

Meet the Boss

Mary Kingsley was born in England in 1862. She had a lonely childhood, but when she was 30 years old she was able to follow her dream of traveling to West Africa.

Did you know?

Mary's father George was a doctor who accompanied explorers on their missions to Africa. He also wrote about his travels.

SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN

No school for girls
Boys are best!

In Victorian England boys were often sent to school to be educated (right). Girls were taught at home by a governess. Mary taught herself from books such as George Craik's *Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties* (1842). When Mary's brother, Charles, went to study at Cambridge University, the Kingsleys moved to Cambridge, where Mary looked after the housework.

Cambridge

When Mary moved to Cambridge, the university there had four female students. The first colleges for women had only just been opened.

INHERITANCE!

Mary inherits money
Is free to travel

When their parents died in 1882, Mary and Charles both inherited money from their father. Mary received an income of £500 a year (equivalent to around \$55,000 today). She no longer had to worry about the future, and did not need to work for a living. She could now afford to travel.

FAMOUS UNCLE

Bestselling Author

Mary's uncle, her father's older brother, Charles Kingsley, was a pastor and social reformer as well as a famous Victorian novelist. *The Water-Babies* (1863) was one of the most popular books of the time. It told the story of Tom, a chimney sweep, who dreams and becomes a "water-baby" (elf). Charles Kingsley wrote the book as part of a campaign against children being forced to work.

ARMCHAIR EXPLORER

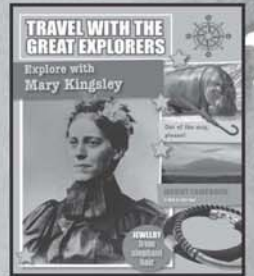
Follows her father's travels
Books about explorers

Mary's father, Dr. George Kingsley, spent much of Mary's childhood traveling to faraway places, including Africa. Mary longed to follow in his footsteps. She read everything she could find in books in her father's library. She read newspaper accounts about Henry Stanley's search for

A YOUNG NURSE

Mother is an invalid
Father gets sick, too

In 1888, Mary's mother had a stroke. Although Mary had no nursing training, she took care of her mother 24 hours a day. When her father's heart grew weak, she took care of him, too. Her father died in 1892. Her



978-0-7787-3920-3 RLB
 978-0-7787-3926-5 PB
 978-1-4271-7810-7 EBOOK

◀ from
 Explore with
 Mary Kingsley

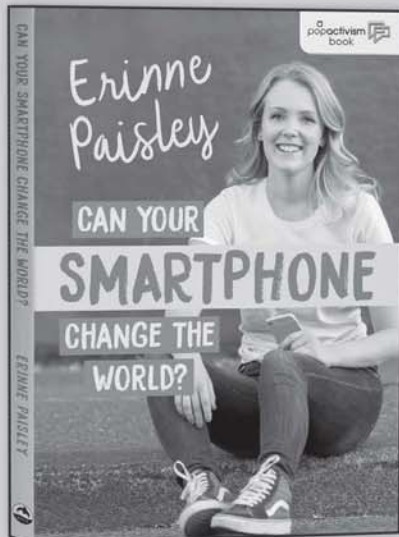
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INSPIRATION HERE."**
—KIRKUS

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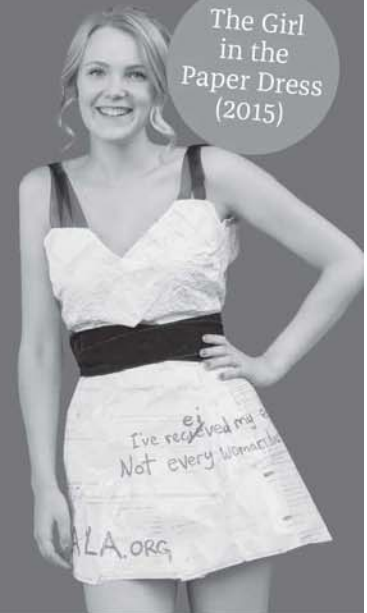


"Both a how-to for getting your socially conscious voice heard online, and a love letter to others who have proven it can be done." —Quill & Quire online



**"THERE IS
SOMETHING FOR
EVERYONE IN
THIS SMALL BUT
MIGHTY BOOK."**
—SCHOOL LIBRARY CONNECTION

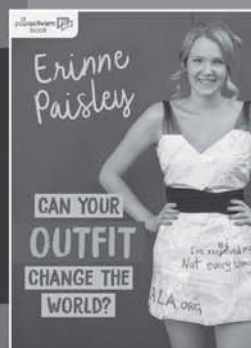
**"FUN, CREATIVE,
AND EFFECTIVE."**
—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY



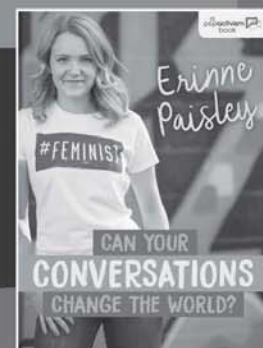
"This DIY activism series will find a wide audience with digital media fanatics in search of a raison d'être. These stories about kids who used art, fashion, music, and media to spread a political message of empathy and altruism will inspire readers to use that powerful device stored in their pockets for good. A fabulous addition to nonfiction collections."

—School Library Journal

COMING SPRING AND FALL 2018

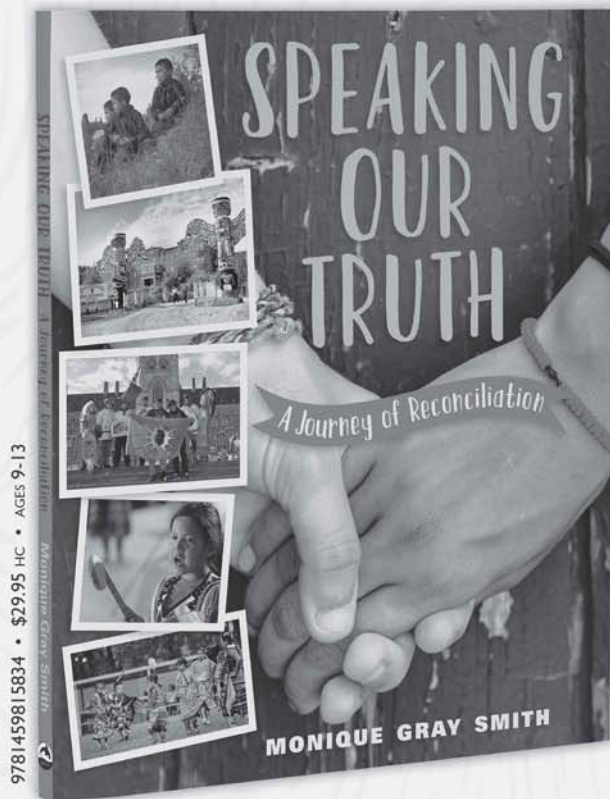


9781459813069 • PB • \$14.95



9781459813090 • PB • \$14.95

★ “Absolutely necessary.”
—Kirkus, starred review



★ “The tool many
Canadians have
been waiting for...”

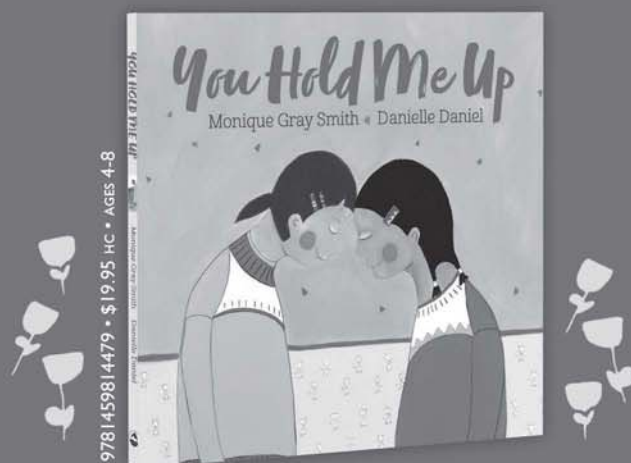
Monique Gray Smith tackles a difficult
topic with sensitivity and style...
A perfect framework for exploring
Indigenous history and current issues.”

—Quill & Quire, starred review

★ “Smith thoroughly and
compassionately examines the
history and traumatic aftereffects
of Canada’s residential schools.”

—Publisher’s Weekly, starred review

ALSO COMING THIS FALL
BY MONIQUE GRAY SMITH



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illustrations reflect Native
people in the present day.”

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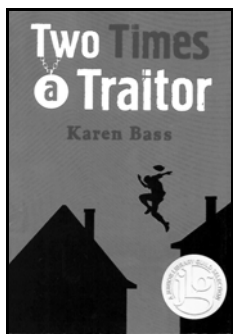
www.speakingourtruth.ca

Fiction: Grades 7 - 12

BASS, Karen

Two Times a Traitor

Pajama Press, 2017. 288p. Gr. 7 up.
978-1-77278-024-6. Pbk. \$12.95



Laz Berenger is a boy of thirteen, and at the beginning of *Two Times a Traitor* we come to understand him as a typical modern teenager, for he is someone who is seemingly consumed by his electronic gadgets and engages in insignificant quarrels with his family. When one of

these quarrels with his father escalates to a troubling point, Laz is compelled to escape to a lone part of an historical fort called the Citadel and gather his thoughts. What happens next will encompass the remainder of the book as Laz is taken back in time to 1745, to a period directly preceding the infamous siege of Louisbourg. Laz is at first captured by English colonists and eventually commissioned to spy on the French. His heritage as an Acadian gives Laz the tools to speak both French and English and thus move relatively seamlessly between the two opponents of this battle.

To utilize a thirteen year old and place him directly in harm's way proves to be quite a zany approach to tackling historical fiction, and a young reader will certainly relate to the main character who is conflicted by the comforts of modern convenience yet curious about the new world in which he must now navigate. At the beginning of his other-worldly experience, Laz will try to conceptualize it through electronic texts he wants to send to a friend, but eventually those texts are dismissed for a more genuine attachment to the past, one where Laz will befriend the French defenders in Louisbourg and feel himself conflicted by his initial promise to betray them.

Two Times a Traitor is well researched and although Bass does shift some of the events around to further her plot she does the honourable thing to mention those inconsistencies in an historical note at the end of the book. The book at times does have a tendency to glamorize the past, and then further projecting that glamorization onto the main character, who despite incredible hardship and heroism remains conflicted in his decision to remain in modern times and be among his real family. Bass explores a serious conflict between the boy and his father, complicating the issue in 1745 as an issue of transference, for Laz not only befriends Commander Pierre Morpain but begins to appreciate him as a father figure.

G

Upon return to modern times the reader is left with a young boy still utterly conflicted by this predicament and unable to redress its consequences. The reader will be forced to seriously consider that Laz would choose war, dysentery, knife wounds and beatings over a modern loving family backed by a life of convenience. If Bass wanted to suggest that the relationship between Laz and his father was so distraught that Laz would make this consideration then it could have been explained more. But regardless, perhaps the real worth in this book is in its attention to historical detail and for that it should be regarded as an excellent educational resource.

Thematic Links: Canadian History; Battle of Louisbourg

Zachary Chauvin

BRITT, Fanny

Louis Undercover

Illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault.
Translated by Christelle Morelli and Susan Ouriou. Groundwood Books, 2017. 160p. Gr. 6-10. 978-1-55498-859-4. Hdbk. \$19.95



Louis Undercover is a compelling new graphic novel from Fanny Britt and illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault. In this novel the reader meets Louis, a young boy who is struggling with his parent's separation as well as other problems faced during adolescence.

Louis, like many children of separated / divorced parents, is shuffled back and forth between his parents; his father (who lives in a country home) who is an alcoholic and his mom (who lives in a city apartment) who is constantly worried about everything. Luckily Louis has a best friend Boris who helps him deal with the pain of his broken family and especially helps Louis summon the courage to speak to the girl he considers the love of his life Billie. Louis also has a wonderful confidante in his little brother Truffle, who often is a questioning sounding board to Louis thoughts, fears and decisions. The opening line "*My Dad cries*" tugs at the readers' heartstrings immediately.

Louis then proceeds to tell the readers why his father cries, often brought on by drinking. The flashback to Louis' prior family life provides great insight into the situation this young lad is facing. The father plays James Brown songs on the piano that Truffle truly enjoys, often melancholy and reflective. The novel is

presented in 7 parts (chapters) with the beginning part untitled; the other titles are: The Tree House, Four Days Before School Is Out, Last Day of School, Truffle's Accident, End of the Road, and First Day of School. The untitled beginning seems to be "unnamed" on purpose, because it is the part of the book that introduces the reader to Louis' world, family, and explanations for why Louis world is as it is. The Tree House is really the mom's apartment in the city; this is a reference to happy and earlier times when Louis knows if he asked his father to build a tree house he would. There are other subtle references to the past life as a family in this section, i.e. the garden. It is in this section that the reader is introduced to Billie, Louis' dream girl. Out of genuine curiosity, Louis wishes he could follow her home to see where she lives but he can't because of his mother worrying about the dangers of the streets. It is this moment in the novel where we learn that Louis has a big question on his mind: Can you love someone that you are not happy with; his love for Billie makes Louis think about his love for his father, and the realization that love sometimes ends badly. Four Days Before School Ends describes an incident while shopping which would have given Louis a chance to be brave as his father wants him to be and ends with a sad reunion of the parents during the night and Louis having to provide a white lie to his mom, knowing she probably knows the truth. The Last Day of School shows another example of Louis not exerting bravery; it also tells us about his upcoming visit with his dad which initially proves exciting at the discovery of a baby raccoon. Truffle's Accident displays a father's anguish over an accident Truffle has which lands him in the hospital; ironically this accident creates some positive family bonding and a family vacation, but the positivity is short lived. End of the Road shows the family returning home, and the father's departure to get better. Boris and Louis get together and the boys decide to be runners. First Day of School brings an end to the summer highs and lows, as well as seeing Louis displaying the bravery he always knew he had. But the story does end with a feeling of hope!

This beautifully written and illustrated story brings to life the reality that many face in regards to family dynamics, addiction, and relationships. Seeing this world through Louis' eyes will resonate in many readers, both in the text and the drawing. Isabelle Arsenault uses minimal colouring and sketchy drawings to bring the text to life. Her sparse lines tell a sad story, even without text. At times the novel reads like a diary. The use of the sparse colour was perfectly incorporated at the right times especially the two-page spread of Billie with

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the brightness surrounding her. The use of colour (mostly seafoam green and yellow) exudes feelings of happiness, contentment, positivity, and enhances good parts of the story. The colour red is seen in the drawings prefacing each section and sparingly during the family vacation near the end. The pencil and ink drawings intensify this heartbreaking story many readers can also relate to. So much is conveyed in the story with very little words, creating a meditative and reflective quality, attributed immensely to the subtle but amazing artwork.

The publisher's site states that this novel is for Grades 5-9, this reviewer chose to have a recommendation for a grade level of 6-10; a few subtle innuendos exist as well as a reference to balls which may be too sensitive for younger children. The oversize format lends well to the 160-page content, enabling the story to be very detailed and cover more aspects of families dealing with separation, addiction, etc. than a smaller format, both in size and pages.

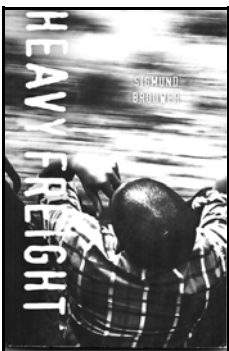
Overall, *Louis Undercover* is a perfect book for readers dealing with difficulties in a personal and dynamic family situation. It provides a multitude of messages in a subtle and caring manner. There is no preaching or hidden agenda from either the author or the illustrator, but both the author and the illustrator use their skills to get their story told. The tones and themes are presented through the eyes of a sensitive young boy, evoking many emotions from readers. The end gives readers a sense of hope, of wonder, and of possibilities, the greater of which is hope! *Louis Undercover* is a superb book that belongs in every school and public library. Actually, it's a remarkable book for readers of any age, including adults.

Thematic Links: Bullies; Families; Separation; Alcoholism; Drugs; Bravery

Carmelita Cechetto-Shea

BROUWER, Sigmund
Heavy Freight (Orca Soundings Series)

Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 163p. Gr. 7-9. 978-1-459814752. Pbk. \$9.95



15-year-old Maxwell Stone whose mother is a drug addict, does what he has to do to survive, from theft to peddling ADHD prescription drugs in his grotty East Hastings, Vancouver neighbourhood. A top student at school, he writes other students' essays for payment.

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One day as he escapes the police and some vicious gang members, he ends up on a rail car heading east, in the company of a badly disfigured man named Joseph. Joseph, a veteran rail car rider, agrees to help Stone find his father in Winnipeg. Along the way, his steady influence persuades Stone to forgo stealing and tell the truth. Stone recruits Violet, for whom he has written essays, to look in on his mother. In Winnipeg, Stone meets up with his dysfunctional, greedy, nasty father and realizes he is and always was better off without him. Stone and Joseph continue on to the east coast together and plan to return to Vancouver in time for school.

Stone is a rough, tough character, a very talented con artist who revels in his knowledge of his neighbourhood and his ability to confound the police. As the country's stunning scenery rolls by him, Stone is astounded and touched by Canada's beauty. As the generous, quiet Joseph will allow him only one question per day, Stone gradually begins to savour the silence and Joseph's support and compassion. He struggles with his need for material things and the morality of doing the right thing and not hurting others, with his character gradually becoming more honest.

Joseph lives in the darkness in black clothes to avoid the stares and pity of others, but still manages to look out for others, especially young people, who need help. The contrast between Joseph and Stone's father is absolutely shocking.

The East Hastings neighbourhood and the rolling geography of Canada are outstanding settings, so well done despite the short length of this novel for struggling readers.

Dialogue is casual and colloquial, easily understood by the intended reader. Themes of survival, poverty and honesty will appeal to all middle school readers.

Thematic Links: Drug Dealing; Police; City vs Countryside; Trust; Poverty; Parenting

Joan Marshall

BURTINSHAW, Julie
Saying Good-bye to London

Second Story Press, 2017. 262p. Gr. 8-10. 978-1-77260-029-2. Pbk. \$12.95



Saying Good-bye to London is a hard-hitting yet sensitively written novel about teen pregnancy, told primarily from the perspective of fifteen-year-old Francis, a quiet boy whose first romance leads to a baby, an adoption, and a rapid transition to the responsibilities of adult life.

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The novel spans a little more than a year. Francis meets Sawyer, their relationship blooms, and within a few months they've broken up over the news of Sawyer's pregnancy. When Francis first learns that Sawyer is pregnant, he reacts very, very badly. It is only through the persistent direction of his friends that he starts to change his attitude. As such, readers are invited to grow with Francis - and with Sawyer. Although most of the time readers experience the story through Francis's eyes, now and then the author lets readers slip into Sawyer's point of view, as well as that of various other characters, lending a much broader view to the unfolding events. The plot never drags; the narration is direct and matter of fact, and it communicates without becoming preachy, a tone books about teen pregnancy sometimes adopt.

At its core, however, *Saying Good-bye to London* is a novel about fathers. Sawyer's best friend, Jack, is homeless because his abusive father has thrown him out for being gay. At the same time, Francis's best friend, Kevin, is living through the death of his father, who has been an important figure in Francis's life. Francis and Sawyer both have complex relationships with their own fathers. Though boys may be reluctant to read a book apparently about pregnancy, this one offers some deep thinking about what it means to be a good man, what it means to be a father (rather than just a "sperm donor," as Sawyer crisply comments), what it means to be a good partner.

This novel is likely to evoke strong responses. It would make an excellent selection for a teen reading group or as an independent novel study in grade nine or ten. Readers are sure to have opinions about Sawyer's choice to have the baby, the process of private adoption, the couple selected to adopt baby London, and Francis's treatment of Sawyer. Layers of complexity in the text will encourage conversation and reflection, and there are numerous themes readers can evaluate against their own morals and ethics. *Saying Good-bye to London* is a rewarding book on many levels.

Thematic Links: Pregnancy; Adoption; Families; Fathers; Vancouver

Leslie Vermeer



CHOYCE, Lesley
Plank's Law
Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 192p. Gr. 7-12. 978-1-45982499. Pbk. \$14.95

Sixteen-year-old Trevor has Huntington's disease and he is part of the 6% of those afflicted

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who can be expected to die within a year of the onset of definable symptoms. His story begins with him standing on the edge of a cliff contemplating suicide, although he is loath to admit it. He is called away from the edge by a cranky old man who uses reverse psychology to convince him to come back to his house for a beer.

The title of the book is taken from a piece of advice the old man gives Trevor; Plank's Law: "Don't waste time trying to make sense of things and bloody well live your life. Really live it." Trevor takes Plank at his word and pursues a girl who smiled at him while he was getting his blood tested at the local hospital. Trevor discovers she has cancer and is receiving treatments so he hangs around the hospital until he finally runs into her. What follows is an engaging story about two people living on what could be borrowed time and how they manage to make the most of it while maintaining a realistic (as opposed to nihilistic) view on their world.

The maintenance of perspective here is what gives this book its strength. Trevor accompanies Sara on her chemo treatments and Sara convinces Trevor to reconnect with a wild and crazy genius friend from middle school. The friend from middle school is not big on perspective but because he has made big money at a young age he is ultimately generous to Trevor and envies him his budding relationship with Sara.

Another subplot in this story is that of Trevor's grandfather who has been serving the maximum jail term for manslaughter. He regrets not having been able to spend time with Trevor while he was growing up, so he pleads early release because of Trevor's impending death. Using the opportunistic nature of his grandson's imminent death is realistically portrayed but the grandfather's comments on the violent nature of his offence do not ring true. I find they have too much author and not enough character.

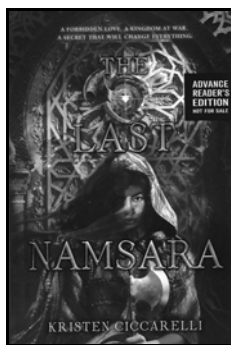
In addition to the admirable restraint of its characters, the overall tone of this latest novel from Lesley Choyce is really quite uplifting and for a story about a dying teenager, that is no mean accomplishment.

Thematic Links: Terminal Disease; Hospital Treatment; Suicide; Aging; Romantic Love

Lesley Little

CICCARELLI, Kristen
The Last Namsara
Harper Teen/HarperCollinsCanada,
2017. 418p. Gr. 8-12. 978-0-06-
256798-7. Hdbk. \$17.99

Asha is a dragon hunter in a harsh, unforgiving society. Her quest is a simple one: to slay Kozu, the last and oldest dragon. But



attempt to right an ancient wrong, Asha was betrothed to the king's commandant as a child. But from the outset of the novel it's clear that Jarek, her betrothed, is a villain. The puzzle of how Asha can both fulfill her role and evade her fate will keep readers guessing. It's an exciting, suspenseful plot that many teens will devour.

The narrative of *The Last Namsara* leans on familiar tropes - a dead mother, a guilt-ridden daughter, an outcast relative yearning for revenge, palace intrigue, magic - and combines them with invented lore to create a fascinating, and sometimes frightening, world. Jarek is a truly scary character who repeatedly threatens to rape Asha and who violently attacks people close to her in order to control her. Asha's brutally hierarchical society is organized around slavery and oppression, and her complicity with this regime makes a point of character growth worthy of discussion long after the story ends.

This strong debut novel would make an excellent pick for teens who enjoy traditional "good versus evil" fantasy. It's also a nice addition to a genre that increasingly features capable, self-reliant female protagonists. *The Last Namsara* is promoted as the first volume in a series, so fans can start looking forward to Asha's next challenge soon. I know I will!

Thematic Links: Fantasy; Dragons; Slavery; Daughters

Leslie Vermeer

COTTER, Charis
The Painting
Tundra Books, 2017. 271p. Gr. 6-10.
978-1-101-91887-6. Hdbk. \$21.99

The Painting by Charis Cotter is a book where the plot is filled with so many twists and turns it may leave your head spinning. The book follows two young girls, one named Annie and the other Claire, who are both experiencing some form of family trauma. Annie is coming to terms with her



when a slave touches Asha - an act absolutely forbidden in Asha's suspicious, superstitious community - his action adds a huge complication to Asha's goal.

As the Iskari - a ritual dragon slayer - Asha is charged with protecting the kingdom from both dragons and the stories the dragons love. In an

mother having been involved in a serious car accident which has left her physically damaged and in a coma. Claire on the other hand has lost her four year old sister in a similar manner, but this time being hit by a car. While Annie is disturbed by whether or not her mother will live, she finds a strange fondness for a painting with a lighthouse on a rocky plain in Newfoundland. Entering a dreamlike state after hearing her name being called, Annie manages to enter the painting and subsequently encounters Claire, who calls for Annie, believing her to be an older version of her four year old sister. Even though Annie cannot believe it, Claire continues the claim that she is Annie's sister and the two will begin to unravel an intricate web of mystery with regards to their extended family.

Cotter structures the book by splitting each short chapter between the first person narration of either Annie or Claire. This style can become very confusing at times, especially when the two characters are sharing the same setting or scene. The book does manage however to keep the reader's interest by only revealing sections of the mystery, one small part at a time. There is no doubt that this manages to create a great element of suspense, sure to captivate the reader into reading on. The suspense is also heightened by important facts exposed by an investigation that Annie becomes involved in. And as Annie researches the background of her family we find that the sisters are something entirely different and very soon a series of revelations alter the fabric of their strange family.

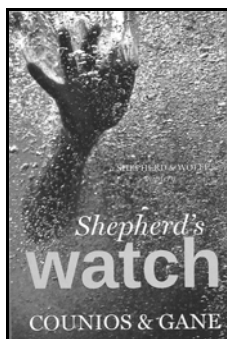
The concept for *The Painting* is excellent, positing artwork as central to the story and as a conduit where the two main characters meet. Cotter has managed to build in a suspension of time and this is achieved by seamlessly depicting two separate worlds. So Annie may be transported to a setting that is at first completely foreign, but as the characters become more familiar, their stories become more and more intertwined, and it makes for a well executed synthesis. As well, this device gives Cotter's storytelling ability a lot of freedom without overly complicating the story. To be sure, this book would serve well to a young reader who is fascinated by stories of mystery and paranormal subject matter.

Thematic Links: Mystery; Paranormal

Zachary Chauvin

COUNIOS, Angie & David Gane
Shepherd's Watch (A Shepherd & Wolfe Mystery)
Your Nickel's Worth Publishing,
2017. 464p. Gr. 9-12. 978-1-927756-95-9.
Pbk. \$19.95

This novel continues the crime fighting ca-



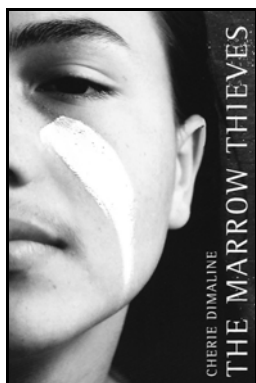
reers of Anthony Shepherd and Charlie Wolfe. After stopping a serial killer (in the previous novel), Charlie has disappeared out west and Anthony is taking a well-deserved summer holiday with his family at their cottage. When Charlie suddenly reappears, trouble soon follows. In

their little vacation town the disappearance of a local mechanic and drug dealer is causing quite a stir, and Charlie can't resist a little investigation. Despite the efforts of Anthony's parents and sister to restrain the boys, Tony is quickly dragged into the process, and after a little arson and a night in jail, Charlie gains enough local information to convince Anthony to take him across the lake, where they discover both the place of the murder and the body. After research at the local library and a conversation with a retired forest ranger, they learn that there have been several other disappearances over the past twenty years, and all seem to center on a section of forest where a young hippie couple set up camp over twenty years ago. While the boys are out chasing a person they spot in the woods, another person attacks Anthony's family. Only through the intervention of a concerned local detective who is following the boys, and heroic and life-endangering actions by Tony and Charlie, are all involved safe to continue to the next Shepherd & Wolfe adventure.

The Shepherd family is a joy to follow, and Charlie is a real wild card with lots of interesting back story yet to reveal. Although this novel appears long, Counios & Gane have mastered the art of the short chapter, and *Shepherd's Watch* is a very quick read. This novel has enough suspense, humour and gore to keep teens turning the pages.

Thematic Links: Crime; Teen Detectives; Family; Cottage Life

Patricia Jermey



DIMALINE, Cherie
The Marrow Thieves
Dancing Cat Books, 2017. 231p. Gr. 9-11. 978-1-77086-486-3. Pbk. \$14.95

Frenchie's brother, Mitch, sacrifices his survival so that Frenchie can escape the Recruit-

ers - government officials who work for the Department Oneirology. The mandate of this department is to capture Indigenous people who, rumour has it, are being experimented on and murdered because they still have the power to dream. The official rhetoric is that the Indigenous people are being put into "schools," modelled on the historical principles of Residential Schools, for their own protection. Frenchie is left to continue the journey north in the hope that he can survive long enough to meet up with other "Indians" (17). As luck would have it, Frenchie is saved from hypothermia by Miigwans and his "family" and he joins them as they journey. It is a journey that will put Frenchie's will and determination to the test and challenge his beliefs in ways he could never have imagined. Can there be a hopeful ending when persecution and strife seem to be around every corner?

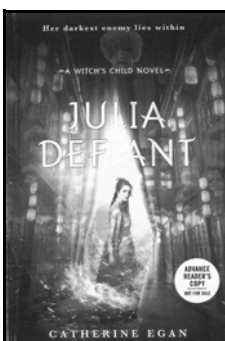
The Marrow Thieves is a gorgeous and surprising novel. Dimaline expertly weaves Indigenous lore and history with post-apocalyptic tropes to create an exciting must-read. All of her characters are rich, flawed, and multi-dimensional. Each character's story is unique. From beginning to end, this page-turner does just the right amount of heart-warming and heart-wrenching. Accolades will abound for this gem of a novel.

Thematic Links: Post-Apocalyptic Survival; Relationships; Friendship; Residential Schools; Indigenous Lore and Story; Self-Discovery; Loyalty

Angela Thompson

EGAN, Catherine
Julia Defiant (The Witch's Child: Book 2)

Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2017. 439p. Gr. 7-12. 978-0-553-53335-4. Hdbk. \$21.99



the body of Bianka's young son Theo. They have reached the land of Tianshi, where witchcraft is accepted and the monastery has an immense library of secret documents and sacred artefacts. But they have been followed by Pia, Mrs. Och's brother Casimir's assassin. Julia is aided by her new friend, Jun, and his ninja-like

In this second book of *The Witch's Child Trilogy*, Egan continues to explore the mysteries of Julia's powers and the interplay of magical forces in her world. Julia and her comrades have accompanied Mrs. Och on their quest to find Ko Dan, the male witch who infused The Book of Disruption into

abilities. Her brother Dek and her former lover Wyn strike up relationships with two local girls for additional information, but the mysteries of Tianshi run deep. They discover a Fraynish princess has been hidden there, and rescue her to take power back in their homeland. Julia realizes that her power to vanish is growing stronger, and as she moves out of this reality, she is able to enter Kahge, an inverted hellish version of her world. There she takes on the form of a monster, referred to as Lidari. In fact, her parentage seems to be in question: her unique abilities appear to come from an immortal known as Marike. At the end of this book, her brother Dek has been captured by Pia and Casimir, she has rescued Theo and left him at a way station between her world and Kahge, and Julia has surrendered herself to Pia in exchange for Dek.

Readers of the first book in this series will enjoy the greater depths of character development and plot complications here. Egan is creating a wide narrative arc, and a thoroughly invested fantasy world. Be prepared for revolution back in Frayne, more battles with the forces of Kahge, and further exploration of Julia's powers.

Thematic Links: Fantasy; Magic; Witchcraft

Patricia Jermey

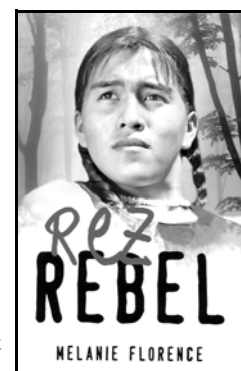
FLORENCE, Melanie

Rez Rebel

James Lorimer & Co., 2017. 173p. Gr. 7-9. 978-1-4594-1199-9. Pbk. \$12.95.

A

On an Ontario reservation, 17-year-old Floyd who will one day be the chief of his rez, and his friends Charlie and Jasper spend the summer before grade twelve mourning the suicide of their friend Aaron whose coming out as gay had enraged his father to the point that he beat Aaron. Floyd uses Aaron's death to begin searching for solutions to the suicide epidemic that surrounds them. The stats are unbelievable - twenty-four attempted suicides in the last two months including five twelve year old girls who have made a suicide pact. Floyd befriends the bullied fourteen year old Mouse, taking him fishing and including him in his group of friends. But then Floyd meets up with Mouse's sister Kaya, falling in love with her, which leaves little time for Mouse and his problems. Just in time, Floyd rescues Mouse from shooting himself and works with Kaya and her family to



recognize Mouse's comic book artistry, raising his self-esteem and keeping him safe. As Floyd's overworked father, the band's chief, tries to raise money to combat the suicide issue, Floyd realizes that his dad is selling out the rez and its people to a has-been white actor who does not have the band's interests at heart. As his father slips into alcoholism, Floyd confronts him, convincing him to take time off to get better. Floyd and his friends begin offering traditional aboriginal activities to the band's youth to keep them from despair. Floyd's mother, a traditional healer, starts classes for adults while Floyd and Mouse design a memorial pathway of moccasins honouring the people who have committed suicide.

Floyd is a cheerful, thoughtful, compassionate teen, a leader by example who loves his life on the rez and is just beginning to see that it could be better. He has difficulty communicating with his own father who shuts him down and treats him like a child. Floyd's sudden attraction to Kaya who has been away at a performing arts school, rings true and lightens the tone of the book. Floyd thinks through problems and acts deliberately to solve them. As the summer goes along, Floyd gains the courage to speak clearly to his father to help solve the problems that seem to be about to overwhelm the rez.

Secondary characters are not romanticized, demonstrating the problems of the reserve and also its possibilities. As Mouse is such a central character it is unfortunate that he behaves like a ten year old rather than a fourteen year old. Floyd's friendship group represents the way boys of that age can be close, loyal and goofy in the best way.

Dialogue advances the plot well and there is minimal "telling" as Floyd's inner dialogue, his writing, his storytelling and his gentle talking with Mouse reveal the issues at hand. The title is misleading as Floyd is really a catalyst for change rather than a rebel out to destroy his community.

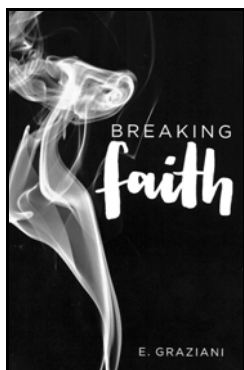
The rez setting is portrayed unflinchingly with all its warts and its happy moments, too. Although the classes and activities offered by teenagers seem a little simplistic as a solution in such a time of crisis, the intended reader will be inspired by the energy and commitment that drives Floyd and his friends to bring peace and hope to his community.

Thematic Links: Suicide; Aboriginal Reservations; Friendship; Love; Parent/Child Conflict

Joan Marshall

GRAZIANI, E.
Breaking Faith

Second Story Press, 2017. 257p. Gr. 7-12. 978-1-77260-024-7. Pbk. \$12.95



older sister, Constance, goes to live with another grandmother, who is better equipped financially and emotionally to raise a child. Although Faith does her best for her little sister Destiny, she is unable to love herself. Teased and bullied throughout her early years of school, she eventually falls in with two friends: Norma who is neglected by her busy professional parents, and Ishaan, who is rejected by his father because he is gay. As outsiders from the school cliques, they turn to alcohol and marijuana to try to feel better: *"We were rebels and badasses. We were certain that acting out against our parents and every other adult who controlled us would be payback for all the screwed-up things they did to us. In our hearts we knew that it would hurt them; we wanted it to hurt. But in the process of hurting them, we were hurting ourselves a thousand times more."* (p. 100)

By Grade Nine, Norma is hospitalized due to self-harm, and Faith realizes she must find a new direction. She tries to concentrate on school and helping Destiny. But when her older sister mocks Faith in front of her upscale friends, Faith breaks. She runs away to Toronto, and lives on the streets for months. After barely escaping a group sexual assault, she is taken in by an elderly Jewish woman. Mrs. Lieberman shows her that one can survive horrible events, and find peace. *"This little old woman had more strength and grit in her thumbnail than I had in my entire body."* (p. 184). But when Mrs. Lieberman dies in her sleep, Faith turns to the neighbour Brian for support, and he supplies her with heroin. When her older sister finally locates her, she has turned into her mother, with a crippling heroin addiction. Rehab and family counselling are her only hope: *"I still need to talk and talk and talk about everything and share my pain and my joy - yes, I can feel that now. And I know that my talking helps others, and others talk and talk to me and give me their pain. That way everything is shared and passed around, and when that happens, the load is lighter and it's just easier to carry."* (p. 255)

This novel is a harsh view of the reality of families and teens dealing with addiction. Because the author has chosen to show Faith's life from age four to eighteen, there are events and stages which seem to be passed over too

Since her earliest memories, Faith has been torn between loving the mother who cherishes and protects her, and hating the addicted mother who abandons her and her sisters for weeks at a time. Her grandmother as guardian does not provide the emotional support that Faith desperately needs. Her

quickly. But the overall impact is as depressingly powerful as it is true to life.

Thematic Links: Drug Addiction; Teen Runaways; Sibling Relationships; Depression; Self-Medication; PTSD

Patricia Jermy

GROTH, Darren

Munro vs. the Coyote

Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 276p.

Gr. 7-12. 978-1-459814097. Hdbk.

\$19.95 (Reviewed from Advance Reading Copy)

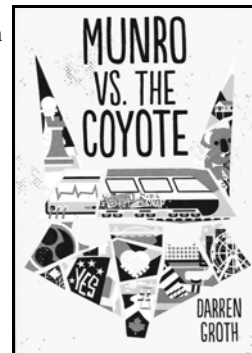
G/E

Munro is haunted by the Coyote. When his younger sister dies despite Munro's efforts to save her, he starts having flashbacks accompanied by a loud and cruel voice which he calls the Coyote. He starts to have major difficulties coping with life and school.

In an effort to escape from his memories - and the Coyote - Munro signs up for an Australian exchange program. His sister Evie's dream was to go to Australia, and Munro tries to live her dream.

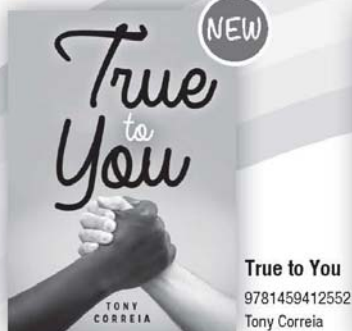
The novel deals realistically with very difficult situations. Seventeen-year old Munro witnessed his sister Evie's death and couldn't prevent it. He feels responsible. Evie had Down Syndrome, and his parents deal with her sudden death by setting up a foundation in her name to raise money for Down Syndrome awareness and research. Munro, however, deals with her death by having anxiety attacks and flashbacks while being haunted by the ever-present voice of Coyote. Evie's enthusiasm for life is in sharp contrast to Munro's attitude. Until he starts working with the inhabitants of Fair Go, a special needs community, he can't seem to cope. He feels he must live not only his own life, but also Evie's life. However, at Fair Go he discovers his enthusiasm for life once again despite the setbacks that occur.

Readers will learn a great deal about coping with grief, dealing with psychological problems, working with special needs adults, and facing responsibilities in life. As Munro tours places of interest in Australia with the inhabitants of Fair Go, readers will learn about Australian history, geography and the Indigenous population. Some readers may be surprised by the overuse of coincidence in the ending. This novel has minor instances of profanity, but all in all, readers will learn about learning to heal after experiencing trauma and death.



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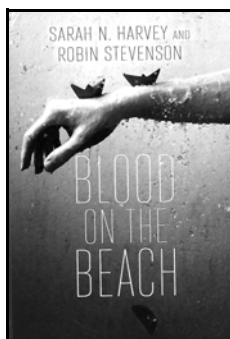
Thematic Links: Grief; Australia; Down Syndrome; Family Relationships; Anxiety; Psychological Problems; Suicide

Myra Junyk

HARVEY, Sarah N. and Robin Stevenson

Blood on the Beach

Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 259p. Gr. 9-12. 978-1-4598-1293-2. Pbk. \$14.95



Our cast of characters consists of three adults - all counsellors, one creepy Zodiac driver, and eight teenagers - all "delinquents." Add in an isolated island, a rehabilitation program called INTRO, and the realization that one of these characters is a murderous sociopath,

and you have all of the ingredients that create this mystery. Alice and Caleb narrate in alternating chapters. From these two characters we form our impressions of INTRO, Warren, Claire, Rahim, and the other six teenagers: Imogen, Chad, Jason, Mandy, Tara, and Nick. Tara, the first to disappear, is the only one who is free from suspicion. Caleb and Alice even point fingers at each other.

Blood on the Beach is not a sophisticated mystery. It is obvious very early in the novel who the killer is. While Caleb and Alice struggle to put the pieces together, all of the roadblocks they face are predictable. Their radio is missing the essential working piece. One

kayak is missing, the other is damaged. Their Zodiac ride is not coming back until the end of the week. Despite the isolated setting and the realization that a killer is on the loose, there is a lack of emotional tension in the novel. The teens say they're scared, but they aren't believable. There are better mysteries out there if that is what you are in the mood for.

Thematic Links: Friendship; Survival; Perceptions

Angela Thompson

HOWLING, Eric
Plunge (Orca Sports)

Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 145p. Gr. 4-9. 978-1-459814202. Pbk. \$9.95



Cade lives in the shadow of his big brother, Trent, the star quarterback of the local football team. With his smaller build, Cade takes up competitive swimming, but he just isn't a winner like his friend Jasmine. His father continually rubs it in Cade's face that he isn't an athlete like

Trent, and swimming isn't a "real" sport.

After finishing dead last in the 200 meter individual medley in his team's club meet, Cade leaves the pool in disgust. While riding his bike home he collides with an older man on his bike. Mr. Grimsby explains that he is actually in training for the over-60 age group in the local triathlon. Cade has never heard of this sport, but realizes that although he isn't the best swimmer,

he is good in all three sports of triathlon: swimming, biking and running. After training with Mr. Grimsby, he comes in fourth for fourteen-year-old boys, and although he misses the podium, he qualifies for the provincial championship. When Mr. Grimsby's wife dies, Cade's family decides they can drive him to the triathlon on the way to his brother's football game.

But driving at night his father takes a short cut country road and hits a deer on a bridge over a rushing river. Their car plummets into the rushing water. With a cool head and his bicycle tool Cade smashes the rear window and enables his family to escape the car. Then his swimming skills allow him to rescue his injured parents and brother. Now he must ride his bike back the twenty kilometres to the nearest town for an ambulance. His bike gets smashed up in an accident and he finishes on foot. His unique triathlon has saved his family and gained his father's respect.

As with all *Orca Sports* novels, the sport is a conduit to character traits and family values. The simplification required to achieve this in a short format is accepted in exchange for a heart-warming conclusion.

Thematic Links: Sports; Triathlon; Swimming; Family Support; Competition

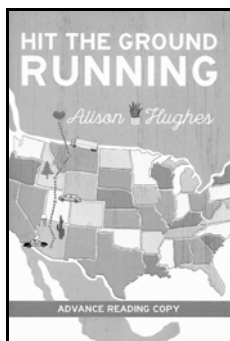
Patricia Jermey

HUGHES, Alison

Hit the Ground Running

Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 216p. Gr. 6-10. 978-1-45981-544-5. Pbk. \$14.95

When a Children's Services staffer rings the doorbell one morning, sixteen-year-old Dee



Donnelly knows the game is up. Her father has been gone from home for six weeks, the money jar is almost empty, and Dee fears what happens to siblings apprehended by Children's Services. She quickly assembles her resources and packs her brother, Eddie, in the car with

food, water, bedding, and assorted keepsakes. She can't legally drive and she may be an illegal alien, but she's determined to get out of Arizona and up to the Canadian border before a state agency can tear her family apart.

What's striking about this novel is how funny it is. Dee's situation is desperate, no doubt, but her telling of the story is leavened by eye-rolling, sarcasm, silly jokes, and prat-fall comedy. Whether she's making an early-morning escape from a stranger's yard in which she accidentally parked or charming a state trooper to avoid having to cough up a driver's licence, Dee's sardonic delivery is perfect. A brave, resourceful young woman, Dee is observant, quick thinking, and clearly mature for her age; but those qualities don't stop her from playing in the pool with Eddie - or put a filter on her potty mouth. Dee is beautifully written, the kind of character that will stick with readers long after they finish the book.

Another striking element of this novel is its frankness about being poor. At least some readers will identify: in this decade, many households live precariously close to financial disaster. The disappearance of Dee's father (who is clearly a fragile person) suggests how easily any domestic problem - a persistent illness, a mental health breakdown, the abrupt end of a relationship - could bring the façade of "doing just fine" tumbling down around a teenager like Dee. Dee is practical about her poverty; she works around it, but it's always present, always threatening, and eventually it leads to a frightening scene in which Dee and Eddie are chased by a "creeper." Alert readers may perceive how little control Dee has over her situation, despite her careful choices; here, the author raises an intriguing critique, inviting readers to ask bigger questions about an individual's circumstances and outsiders' judgments.

The novel ends hopefully, but not happily. The future for Dee and Eddie is far from certain, despite the timely arrival of their Auntie Pat. Alison Hughes leaves the novel ambiguously resolved, yet ambiguity is the more believable - and, frankly, more satisfying - ending.

Hit the Ground Running is an excellent choice for teen reading groups and for class-

room libraries, as well as public and school libraries. Readers are sure to enjoy following Dee on her helter-skelter road trip to Canada. I certainly did!

Thematic Links: Families; Arizona; Road Trips; Runaways; Mental Health

Leslie Vermeer

JACKSON, Melanie
Medusa's Scream (Orca Currents Series)

Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 137p. Gr. 5-8. 978-1-459814417. Pbk. \$9.95



This short, compelling book for struggling readers tells the story of high school student Chase who cooks for the food truck at Medusa's Scream, a tourist attraction in Fraser Valley, British Columbia - a train ride through an old converted gold mine. A nervous, tense gift shop employee, Lars, a feral cat who disappears often into the mine, mysterious jars of blood red marmalade, and crusty manager Karl Kloppe send the intrigued Chase into the mine after hours to investigate. The cat's cries lead Chase to a secret room where Kloppe, in collusion with the mine's owner Tilly McBride (but unbeknownst by either her ward and niece Sophie McBride or the owner of the claim to any gold on the site Pete the Gold Panner) has been panning for gold and hiding it in jars of marmalade to avoid detection. In a rousing climax as Chase is being interviewed and filmed about his delicious, savoury pies, Tilly threatens Lars and then accidentally drops jars of gold laden marmalade on the pavement in front of the camera before she disappears for good. Kloppe confesses his part in the scam and Pete offers Chase a job in his new diner. Sophie's grandmother comes to live with her.

In typical young detective style, Chase thinks through the puzzle and solves it with Lars' help, leaving police or other adults out of the situation. Chase is a polite but active teen who can't sit still and turns his restless energy into pie making to honour his deceased mother's cooking skills. Clever and inquisitive, he is grateful to get the food truck job as he has a reputation as being irresponsible. He makes friends easily with the bullied, nervous Lars, while Sophie's steady character and beauty attract him, too.

The villains Tilly and Kloppe hide their true characters well - Kloppe through his bluff, abusive nature and Tilly through her homey, Auntie image associated with the marmalade. As Tilly attacks Chase and tries to force him

down a mine shaft, her true nature bursts forth. The hot, dry scenery, the tourist attraction scene, and the Fraser River as a source of gold all evoke BC's summer well.

Dialogue is short, sharp and direct, leading the plot along well, while Chase's inner dialogue reveals his character and his thinking about the mystery.

Middle school students interested in mysteries will enjoy Chase's dilemma.

Thematic Links: Fraser Valley Gold Rush; Tourist Attractions; Cooking and Baking

Joan Marshall

JOHNSTON, Aviaq
Those Who Run in the Sky
Illustrated by Toma Feizo Gas. Inhabit Media, 2017. 196p. Gr. 8-12. 978-1-77227-121-8. Pbk. \$13.95

Those Who Run

in the Sky is the haunting, lyrical story of Pituniq, a boy on the edge of manhood whose life is overturned when he learns his destiny is to be a shaman. A gifted hunter and a much-admired leader, Pitu finds himself stranded during a blizzard, his sled dogs, tools, and packed food gone. Can he survive the tests of the spirits? Will he ever see his beloved mother or his intended bride again?

It was such a pleasure to read this coming-of-age novel by young Inuk writer Aviaq Johnston. The story is captivatingly told, and the novel has an almost hypnotic voice; it was a book I read in a single sitting because it was so eerie and beautiful. Strands of the Inuit worldview are woven into the story, and people, objects, and ideas are referred to by Inuktitut names, immersing readers in Pitu's reality from the first page (the glossary, including pronunciations, will help readers negotiate the language). Illustrations by Toma Feizo Gas add a further layer of drama and beauty to the text.

Educators and librarians looking to bring more Indigenous texts into classrooms and collections should include *Those Who Run in the Sky*. The book offers all readers a wise, identifiable protagonist and provides a brilliant way, as the author suggests, to "continue the tradition of sharing and teaching." I hope this book is read and recognized widely; though very different from much of what teens are reading today, it has relevant and timely themes and ideas to share.



Thematic Links: The North; Indigenous Cultures; Inuktitut; Spirituality; Leadership

Leslie Vermeer

JUBY, Susan

The Fashion Committee

Penguin Teen Canada, 2017. 305p. Gr.

7-12. 978-0-670-06760-2. Hdbk.

\$21.99



What if you could get everything you ever wanted by winning a contest? Charlie Dean is obsessed with winning a scholarship to Green Pastures, the private art school in her home town. Her dream is to become a famous fashion designer, and she has spent her whole life working

toward that dream despite all her problems. Competing against a strong group of teenage designers, Charlie still believes she has a chance to win. However, she is worried about one competitor in particular, John Thomas-Smith, whose real love is metal working. He dreams of becoming a famous metal sculptor one day, but has no chance of realizing his dream because of his circumstances. The fashion contest would get him into the art school and give him a high profile in the art community to help his future efforts.

Both Charlie and John face incredible odds against them. Charlie's mother died of a drug overdose, and her father is still an addict. Charlie is the "adult" in her household. Her dad's current girlfriend is Charlie's model for the fashion show, but her violent ex-boyfriend keeps showing up at inopportune times. Will they ruin Charlie's chances to finally attain her fashion dream? John has a dead end job at the Salad Stop and lives with his caring but impoverished grandparents. Although they support his metal-working dreams, they could never afford art school. His two best friends are supportive, but he soon betrays them. Will he be able to fake his way in the fashion contest to get closer to his metal-working dream?

This superbly written novel is told in the alternating voices of Charlie and John's journals about the fashion contest. There are very strict rules for the contest which eat up all their time before the contest. In the end, both Charlie and John must face up to their mistakes and errors in judgement as their fashion dreams crash around them.

Susan Juby has captured the spirit of the fashion world in her marvellous novel. The fact that the two protagonists are male and female makes this novel approachable for all

readers. Juby spends some time addressing the importance of "fashion" in everyone's life. There are also many interesting descriptions of fashion; however, the novel also addresses many diverse themes including: drug addiction, dating violence, poverty, resilience, grief, family relationships, friendship and same sex relationships. Readers of all ages will definitely enjoy their dose of fashion in Susan Juby's novel ***The Fashion Committee!***

Thematic Links: Creativity; Fashion; Arts Education; Friendship; Integrity; Bullying; Drug Addiction; Family Relationships; Dating Violence

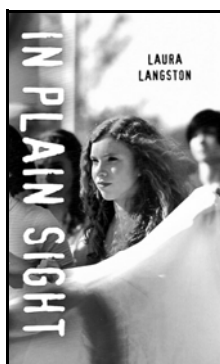
Myra Junyk

LANGSTON, Laura

In Plain Sight (Orca Soundings Series)

Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 160p. Gr.

7-12. 978-1-459814165. Pbk. \$9.95



Although this novel is located in Las Vegas, Nevada, its message is international and particularly timely.

Fifteen-year-old Megan is president of her high school political science club and has organized a demonstration on the Las Vegas strip protesting the use of unmanned drones in the Middle East because innocent children are killed in these attacks.

But the demonstration goes sideways and Megan and some of her cohorts are arrested, so Megan's mother has to pick her up from the Police Station. Then things get very complicated; Megan's mother is arrested and Megan's aunt has to be the one to take Megan home.

It turns out that unbeknownst to Megan, she and her mother have been on the run for 15 years because Megan's father was involved in a terrorist attack shortly after 9-11 and incriminating evidence was found on Megan's mother's computer. This guilt by association, combined with fear for Megan's safety was the impetus behind her mother's flight from prosecution; Megan's mother managed to finance their life under the radar as a painter who exhibited in absentia and moved often.

Being "in the right" but on the wrong side of the law is not a new theme in literature but this modest modern twist involving Megan - whose real name is Fatima - takes it one step further onto the shoulders of the inheritors of the injustice and adds a hint of gray to the dynamic. The incarcerated father is a genuine terrorist and his radicalization is not shared by Megan or her mother, nor is it their responsibility. Megan,

however, is demoted from the school political science club and is barred from attending a follow-up demonstration that she had planned before the arrest of her mother.

Megan is so unnerved by these events that she manages to catch a ride to Los Angeles where the bombing took place and where a memorial is scheduled. She attends the memorial and after she is discovered as the daughter of the bomber is told by one of the more insightful of the victim's daughters not to take on her parents' "shit". Megan sees the advice for the wisdom it imparts.

After returning to Los Angeles to stand trial on the initial charges in a Los Angeles courthouse, Megan's mother is assigned probation. I am not entirely sure that a short, simple book is the best context for a story like this but author Laura Langston has done an admirable job in focussing the complexity of the issue in a way that engages and expands the situation without sacrificing the essential point of the narrative.

Thematic Links: Terrorism; Secrets; Protests; Bullying; Police; False Identity; Incarcerated Parents

Lesley Little

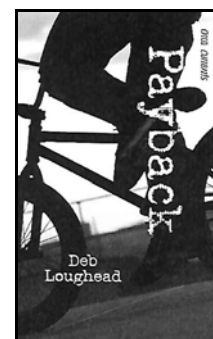
LOUGHEAD, Deb

Payback (Orca Currents)

Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 117p.

Gr. 5-9. 978-1-4598-1469-1. Pbk.

\$9.95 (Reviewed from Advance Reading Copy)



Payback is what you get for being a snitch, and that is what Dylan desperately wants to avoid. He has a horrible habit of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. This time it is just after 10 p.m. and Dylan is racing home from his girlfriend's house. According to his grandmother, all the bad apples come out after 10 p.m. (and midnight on weekends). Dylan is sideswiped by a very clean pickup truck with a muddy license plate - a detail that Dylan notices as a sign that someone is up to no good - and the driver speaks to him. Dylan thinks he recognizes the voice but knows this would bring him no end of trouble. Unfortunately, Dylan's mom's best-friend is a police officer and she wants to know what Dylan knows about recent thefts in town. Why does telling the truth have to be so complicated?

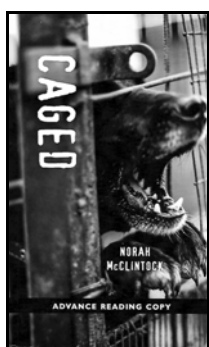
The characters in this book have appeared in other novels by Deb Loughead so the relationships are well developed. A particular favour-

ite is Dylan's grandmother who knows exactly what to say to get through to Dylan who seems to have teenaged blinders on. Hopefully a couple of major editing oversights are caught before the final printing. They make an otherwise solid story stutter. Dylan's dilemma with the telling the truth is a conflict that everyone can relate to and Loughhead explores this with a contemporary lens.

Thematic Links: Kindness; Friendship; Honesty; Theft; Consequences

Angela Thompson

MCCLINTOCK, Norah
Caged (Orca Soundings Series)
Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 106p. Gr. 6up. 978-1-4598-1499-1501-8. Pbk. \$9.95



Kenzie loves his chocolate Lab Clancy. They take walks together, play together and curl up together at night. But one morning when Kenzie discovers Clancy missing from their yard he knows this isn't just a vanishing act. Posting flyers in town Kenzie learns that many dogs in the neighbourhood have disappeared.

Kenzie's classmate Gayle points out that nearly 60 dogs have disappeared in 8 months without signs of forced entry or an escape route. Where could the dogs have gone? The local police are not concerned about the missing dogs so Kenzie and Gayle investigate and discover theft and violence as they expose an illegal operation.

McClintock skilfully builds the readers' anticipation as details about the missing dogs and their deadly surroundings are slowly revealed from both Kenzie and Clancy's perspective. Gayle is a smart, tenacious and brave female protagonist that serves as a strong counterpart to Kenzie's resourceful and rational leads. Subtle details add to the tension in this hi-lo read.

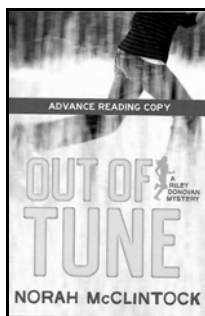
Thematic Links: Animal Abuse; Gambling; Criminal Activity; Dog-Napping; Dog Fighting; Mystery

Ana Malespin

MCCLINTOCK, Norah
Out of Tune (A Riley Donovan Mystery)
Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 222p. Gr. 6-8. 978-1-459814653. Pbk. \$10.95.



14-year-old Riley Donovan, inspired by her



detective Aunt Ginny, involves herself in the mysterious death of 16-year-old Alicia Allen. Riley's friends, Charlie and Ashleigh, provide support and ideas while Alicia's former associates, on-the-spectrum Simon, ditzzy Tina and supportive Desiree, stir up rumours, question alibis and proclaim their own innocence as they implicate others. Sketchy adults in small town Moorebridge and surrounding hamlets provide red herrings and their own sad stories that momentarily derail Riley as she bikes through the town and beautifully evoked, forested countryside, but ultimately lead her to the killer.

As in all good mysteries, it's the human stories with their emotional, needy backgrounds that create death and revenge. In this terrific mystery, the reader enjoys not only snappy up-to-date dialogue but also Riley's thoughtful inner talk that demonstrates both her deep insight and her relationship with her adoptive aunt - perfectly on the money for the mid-teen character.

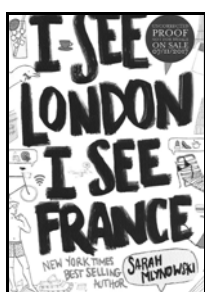
Secondary characters display the typical unpredictable, drama-filled, gossipy behaviour of small town high school students who are finding their own way. McClintock cleverly portrays teens from fourteen through eighteen, introducing themes of spousal abuse, musical giftedness, and the dangers of exhausting police work.

Middle school readers will devour this exciting, complex mystery.

Thematic Links: Friendship; Music; Coming of Age; Gossip; Detective Work

Joan Marshall

MLYNOWSKI, Sarah
I See London, I See France
HarperCollinsCanada, 2017. 377p. Gr. 10-12. 978-0062-39707-2. Hdbk. \$19.99



Leela Veer and Sydney Rothstein are best friends. They have just finished their first year of university - Leela at McGill University and Sydney at the University of Maryland - and are embarking on a four and a half week backpacking trip across Europe. Leela has just broken up with her boyfriend, Matt (who cheated on her), and Sydney is leaving behind her mother, who is agoraphobic and suffers from debilitating anxiety and panic attacks, and her 16-year old sister. Sydney's parents are divorced and her

mother depends upon her help just to get through the day. Sydney takes her mother everywhere because she can't drive and provides support through her panic attacks. Out of deep concern and worry that her younger sister can't care for her mother as well as she can, she almost decides not to go on the trip.

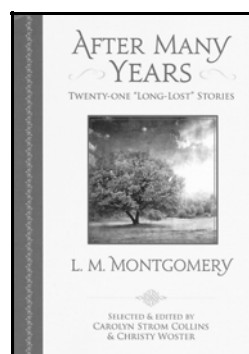
Not even 10 minutes into their flight to London, Sydney sees Leela's ex-boyfriend Matt, which sets the mood for the rest of the trip. Leela alternates between pining over Matt and hating him, all the while Sydney is falling for his handsome friend and travelling companion, Jackson. The book is a realistic journey into the lives of 19-year olds as they navigate their first trip overseas without their parents. They have a plan of where they want to go and what they want to do, but over the course of the trip, things happen and plans get changed. Leela is jealous of Sydney's friendship with Kat, a classmate from university, Sydney has to hide her relationship with Jackson from Leela because she is miserable over her own love life (or lack thereof), and Sydney is also worried about her mother's increasing anxiety over her absence. This book is drama, angst, romance, and comedy all rolled into one. Leela and Sydney aren't perfect and that makes their characters and friendship so realistic. They fight and make-up; most importantly they are one another's biggest supporter no matter what. Over the course of the trip, they create new memories, have new experiences, meet new people, and go to new places.

The book offers some great insight about real places in other cities mentioned, including London, Paris, Venice and Amsterdam. A word of caution: this is not a book for the younger teen crowd. There are curse words in the story, and it does feature 19-year olds smoking marijuana, drinking, and attending sex shows (in Amsterdam). It also references sex.

Thematic Links: Friendship; Travelling; Europe; Romance; Drama; Jealousy; Relationships; Dating; Backpacking; Divorced Parents; Parent Dealing with a Mental Illness

Catherine Bellamy

MONTGOMERY, L. M.



After Many Years: Twenty-One "Long-Lost" Stories by L. M. Montgomery
Selected and edited by Carolyn Strom Collins and Christy Woster. Nimbus Publishing, 2017. 296p. Gr. 7 up. 978-1-77108-499-4. Pbk. \$21.95



Lucy Maud Montgomery is beloved around the world for *Anne of Green Gables* and its sequels. In addition to *Anne*, the *Emily* trilogy, and several other novels, Montgomery wrote hundreds of poems and short stories. Most of these works have been tracked down, but some remain elusive. *After Many Years* presents twenty-one L. M. Montgomery stories that had not been seen since their original publication in the early twentieth century. Their publishing history is briefly annotated by the editors, and those who wish to learn about Montgomery's publishing context may do so from the Resources list at the end of the collection. (Book history scholars and Montgomery specialists may be looking for more particular bibliographic and editorial detail not included in this volume, which is intended for a broader readership.)

The publication dates for these stories range from 1900 to 1939, displaying Montgomery's maturing style. Some of the stories are clearly written for schoolchildren - "*Jean's Birthday Party*" and "*The Pineapple Apron*," for example - while others, such as "*The Matchmaker*" and "*Hill o' the Winds*," are intended for all ages. Readers familiar with Montgomery's work will recognize some of the plots and character types, as Montgomery was a smart professional writer who reused her ideas. She concentrates on domestic themes: family, friendship, love, marriage; some of the stories have an overt moral, while others bear a less didactic touch. All of the stories demonstrate the passion for language, allusion, and storytelling that makes Montgomery's voice so distinctive.

Teachers, librarians, and writers all recognize that there is a profound need for greater Canadian content in language arts classrooms. This attractively published, versatile collection offers an easy way to teach more Canadian short fiction. Most of these gentle, straightforward stories are appropriate for grade seven and up, and Montgomery's loving hand with local setting and natural description may increase readers' appetites for regional Canadian literature. (Do note, however, that readers who prefer grittier realism and dystopian fiction may not like these light-hearted, often sentimental, stories.) The book is also one for teachers themselves to read and enjoy.

All in all, *After Many Years* offers a satisfying selection of rediscovered Montgomery stories. It likely won't win her many new fans, but it's an accessible volume to recommend to readers who have devoured the *Anne* series and are looking for more.

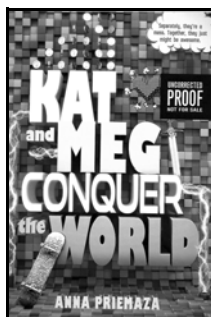
Thematic Links: Writing: Short Fiction; Lucy Maud Montgomery; Canada; Families; Friendship

Leslie Vermeer

PRIEMAZA, Anna

Kat and Meg Conquer the World
Harper Teen/HarperCollinsCanada,
2017. 355p. Gr. 8-10. 978-0-06-
256080-3. Hdbk. \$17.99

G/E



Kat and Meg Conquer the World is a joyous, funny, endearing novel about an odd couple united by a science project and a Youtube video star. The story follows them, from alternating points of view, through their grade ten year. Kat, a transplant from Ontario, resents having to be a "freshman" again; Meg, bruised from previous relationships gone sour, is eager for a new school and a new start. As they navigate the perils of high school, boyfriends, and growing up, they learn to trust each other and themselves.

This novel surprised me: it's so fresh and engaging! The author touches on highly topical, sensitive issues such as race, mental wellness, and family stress, but lightly, without engaging in the miserablism that has overtaken so much of YA writing recently. Although privileged in

different ways, Kat and Meg are not naïve. They face situations involving drinking, drug use, and sexuality directly and intelligently (albeit reluctantly, in Kat's case). They talk, they think, they sometimes brood (and call each other out for brooding), but in the end they act, informed by their own good sense. I applaud the author for drawing her still-maturing characters with such a complicated mix of agency and fallibility. Many girls will find either Meg or Kat someone to identify with, empathize with, learn from.

Both girls are anxious, but the expression of their anxieties is very different. Kat is aloof and silent, trying to be invisible. Meg is outgoing, loving, and impetuous, sometimes to a fault. It took me a few chapters to warm up to Kat; initially she reads more as prickly than as anxious. But I was won over immediately by Meg's persistent friendliness and optimism, and was rooting for the girls' friendship. Though Meg believes she and Kat are BFFs from the start, for Kat the friendship emerges slowly but solidly, as in the scene when Meg takes Kat to the hospital after Kat's grandfather collapses in a grocery store. Not being a relative, Meg cannot go into the grandfather's room in the ICU with Kat, who is paralysed by fear, sadness, and guilt.

"Meg unzips her coat, revealing her

favourite black cardigan with the oversized purple plastic buttons. Out of nowhere, she grabs one of the buttons and pulls. There's a snap, and then she's pressing the button into my palm and folding my fingers around it.
"There," she says. "Now it's like I'm with you."

Meg's apparent fearlessness teaches Kat to trust love; Kat's careful, measured friendship later reflects the lesson back to Meg. Both grow stronger for it.

I liked this novel so much! It's filled with lovely touches and good humour, and it underscores the importance of women's friendships as a source of strength and resilience. I hope to read more from Anna Priemaza.

Thematic Links: Friendship; Video Games; Learning Disabilities; Anxiety

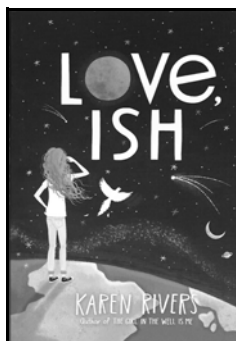
Leslie Vermeer

RIVERS, Karen

Love, Ish

Dancing Cat Books, 2017. 239p. Gr. 6-9. 978-1-770864924. Pbk. \$12.95

E



Love, Ish certainly is not your typical novel for middle school girls; no pink, no fluff, no heartbreaking romances, and no girly-girl rivalries. But heartbreak is definitely something that *Love, Ish* will bring to the readers. Karen Rivers has written a novel that provides an emotional

punch from beginning to end. Twelve-year-old Mischa (Ish) is the main character in this story; she is funny, determined, smart, and she wants to be the first person to be on Mars! Being a misfit of sorts, Ish doesn't have a lot of friends and doesn't seem to relate well to her classmates. On top of the fact she's almost "friendless", it seems Ish's best friend Tig might no longer be a friend either.

Ish is on a mission, a mission to Mars that is. She is doing everything in her power to make that dream come true. Then life throws her a nasty curveball, as she collapses on the first day of school. As her dream becomes crushed, becoming very ill, and trying very hard to remain positive; one "good" thing is that the new guy in the school visits her in the hospital and a new friendship is created.

Karen Rivers has created a dynamic character in Ish, as are many others in the novel. But Ish is the star, with her quirkiness, witty wise-cracks, and off the wall personality. One technique that the author uses very effectively in the

novel is that of hallucinatory scenes, something that Rivers is known for, setting her apart from other middle-grade writers. Besides fabulous characters, the author has also written the story from the perspective of a teen in a time, as she describes the teenage world perfectly, down to the clothes worn, the language used, and realistic situations at the social and family levels. It truly is a book for the 21st century teen. Whether it is a sibling rivalry or a struggle to belong, this novel hits the mark.

Another major strength of the novel is Karen Rivers' description of Mars, and all the information provided. Having a strong female character interested in science and astronomy is also not the norm for many tween novels, but for this story, it is a super match for the main character. The reader may even learn a thing or two about the red planet that they may not have known. Ish's story of dreaming to be on Mars is a message in itself: dream big, and do whatever you can to make that dream come true, because sometimes, life isn't that easy. Despite possible setbacks, and hard work, one must work hard and never give up hope. The cover is reflective of Ish's dream, standing on earth, with her long hair flowing in the wind looking out at Mars; the hair aspect is very symbolic for the book as well. It also is about the struggle for teens to fit in, and in Ish's case, fitting in at a time of deep pain.

Love, Ish is a story about love in the face of adversity and the unknown. Tugging at your heartstrings, told in first person, it is a story about family and friends coming together just when they are needed. Just be prepared with a box of tissues while reading this endearing and realistic story. Oh, all my tissues are gone!

Thematic Links: Space Travel; Serious Illness; Middle School; Friendship; Dream; Family

Carmelita Cechetto-Shea

RODMAN, Sean

Firewall (*Orca Soundings*)

Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 127p. Gr. 7-12. 978-1-459-81453-0. Pbk. \$9.95

G



Firewall is a new addition to the *Orca Soundings Series* which features high interest stories for reluctant readers. Despite the series' focus on plot, I can happily say that *Firewall* zips along without sacrificing character development or writing quality. Video-game fanatic Josh, recently transplanted by his newly divorced dad from big city Chicago to a small town, quickly becomes disillusioned by

the samey "pod people" who populate his high school. Instead of trying to fit in, Josh starts losing himself in a new game where he can control his surroundings. But when his actions in the game start to have real world consequences, he realizes he needs to disable his emotional firewall before someone gets hurt.

While some of the descriptions of high school at the novel's beginning are a bit trite (everyone fits into a different group, if you don't you won't survive), and the plot wraps up a little too neatly at the end, Rodman's descriptions of Josh's videogames were strong enough to suck me into his world. Marathon-ing through the book, I felt like I was on one of Josh's videogame binges and couldn't stop until it was game over. The vocabulary is occasionally a bit challenging, but gamers will likely be hooked. A gripping read that doesn't underestimate the intelligence of its reader.

Thematic Links: Video Games; High School; Bullying; Hackers; Divorce; Friendship; Moving

Natalie Colaiacovo

ROSS, Jeff

Up North (*Orca Soundings*)

Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 130p. Gr. 6-10. 978-1-4598-1456-1 Pbk. \$9.95

G

Up North is the second high-interest/low vocabulary title to feature Rob and Adam McLean. With his brother in jail and his mother dividing her time between working and visiting Adam, Rob has just enough freedom to get in trouble - though it is not Rob who instigates the events that put him on the wrong side of the law. Rob's buddy Keith bears that burden. Keith is also the one in the group with the most vehement hatred of aboriginal people. When Keith decides to drive up to the Res. for some "fun", Rob has no idea that someone's life is at stake.

The theme of "choices" figures prominently in this title. One's choices impact the eventual consequence and one is capable of choosing how to act or react in a given situation. Rob figures this out. Keith does not. It is a realistic parallel. This novel would also be suitable if you are looking for a title that deals with overcoming or confronting prejudice.

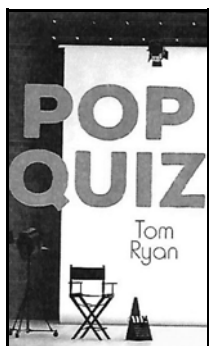
Thematic Links: Aboriginal Stereotypes; Choices; Racism; Friendship; Survival; Teamwork; Self-Reflection

Angela Thompson



RYAN, Tom
Pop Quiz (Orca Limelights)
 Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 117p. Gr. 6-9. 978-1-4598-1222-2. Pbk. \$9.95
 (Reviewed from Advance Reading Copy)

A



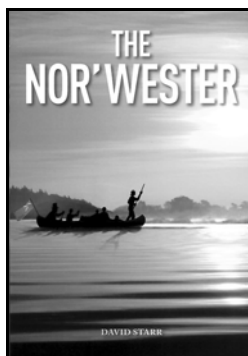
Aiden has been in the limelight for a while as one of the minor characters on a popular cable television teen drama. He hopes that he will be chosen to take on one of the central roles in the upcoming season when some of the older teens "graduate". He hopes that Anais will be chosen as well. She has been his

love interest on the show and now he thinks he has a crush on her in real-life. Aiden wonders though, does he have the talent and the skill to be successful as an actor? He loves the job and the recognition, but he has doubts. New challenges arise, however, when instead of going ahead with a new season, the network decides to cancel the show. Aiden and his friends decide to pool their collective creative energy and figure out how to salvage their acting careers. Maybe the Internet will hold the key.

This novel is a commentary on technology in many ways. Aiden and his friends are forced to look at how their passion for acting can survive in world that is increasingly on-line and free to consume. The group turns this to their advantage using a FundZone page to fund one final "reunion" episode of the show and "googling" former *Pop Quiz* actors to return for the episode. It is rather predictable that the kids are successful when the adults are mired in their own set ways. There are also several scenes in the book where Ryan's need to teach about the processes on a television show and elaborate on filming jargon get in the way of the story.

Thematic Links: Overcoming Challenges; Friendship; Success; Self-Doubt; Planning for the Future

Angela Thompson



STARR, David
The Nor'Wester
 Ronsdale Press, 2017. 212p. Gr. 7 up. 978-1-55380-493-2. Pbk. \$11.95

A

The Nor'Wester by David Starr is a book that moves at a frantic speed. The

main character Duncan Scott begins in his birthplace of Scotland, where he is working at a mill for a cruel Nobleman. Slave labour conditions at the mill are taking a great toll on him and eventually tragedy strikes with the death of his parents due to an unsafe, inadequate work site. Duncan and his sister Libby must escape after a confrontation with the Nobleman marks them as wanted persons. Eventually Duncan manages to escape onto a Liverpool ship bound for Quebec. In the mayhem of their escape, Duncan is forced to leave his sister behind in England and vows that one day he shall return to her side.

After travelling up the St. Lawrence, Duncan is put to work in the North West Company as a clerk, and tasked with running a letter across the wilderness to Fort Williams and eventually further on to Fort St. James. At Fort St. James he meets the infamous Simon Fraser and works with his expedition crew to ensure their survival in the wilderness of what shall eventually become British Columbia. They must defend themselves against the cold of winter, the cultural unfamiliarity of Indigenous peoples and the dissension within their own ranks for an extended period of time. As Duncan is forced to push further toward the Western shore, seeking the Pacific Ocean, his promise to Libby that he shall one day return to England becomes more and more of a remote possibility.

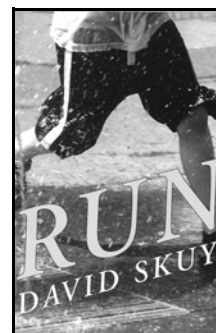
The Nor'Wester spans an immense amount of territory and time for just 212 pages. Starr attempts to cover this much ground by maintaining a hectic pace, filling the book with copious amounts of action and furthermore dicing the book up into 44 short chapters. This tends to leave the reader a little flustered, as each scene is only granted a very brief description and setting before moving onto the next place and circumstance. A young reader may however find the pace quite satisfying and will nonetheless learn something about Simon Fraser's expeditions and how the prospects of commercializing and populating the Canadian West began. Starr does portray the ambitions of Fraser as a reaction to an American push into the region in order to advance his plot. So while he does take some liberties in fashioning such a literary device, he provides an "Author's Note" upon the conclusion of the book, stating that "*there is nothing in the historical record to indicate they did so as an official response to the journey of Lewis and Clark.*" This does well to remind the reader that it is after all a work of fiction and that if their historical curiosity is piqued, then the "Author's Note" provides resources and further snippets of information.

Thematic Links: Exploration; Simon Fraser; Canadian History; Historical Fiction

Zachary Chauvin

SKUY, David
Run
 Dancing Cat Books 2017. 207p. Gr. 6-8. 978-1-77086-488-7. Pbk. \$12.95

E



Although his abusive father has been gone for years, Lionel continues to practise the skills he learned when he tried to avoid being smacked around. Now in grade 8, he's an expert at "disappearing", even in the middle of a crowd. That's a pretty good skill when Nick and his gang of bullies are around.

But using it doesn't make Lionel happy, especially when it means watching his friends terrorized.

Then Lionel discovers something about himself. He loves running. As he begins to run regularly, he improves his diet. Then he joins a bunch of other runners that include Kiana, the most popular girl in grade 8. Soon he's doing push-ups, running regularly, and getting involved with others in the community.

What happens when these changes attract the attention of Nick, the bully he's been trying to avoid? Read and find out.

When I was teaching grade 7, this is the kind of book I searched for to encourage that group of students, usually boys, who were far greater than they thought they were. It's a great read and will make a welcome addition to any classroom or school library.

Thematic Links: Identity; Self-Image; Bullying; Running; Conditioning; Diet; Community Participation

Helen Mason

STRATTON, Allan
The Way Back Home
 Scholastic Canada, 2017. 269p. Gr. 7-12. 978-1-4431-4838-2. Hdbk. \$19.99

E

Zoe Bird can't catch a break even though she has, "the biggest heart in the world." (p. 17) She cherishes the time she spends with her grandmother, but the family wants to put her grandmother in a home because of her dementia. Her mother's hair salon in their living room ruins her social life. Her obnoxious cousin Madi makes her life miserable at school with constant



criticism and bullying. She tells Zoe, “*Stop talking to me at school, stop sitting at my table, and don’t visit my locker. Okay?*” (p. 9)

The issue of her grandmother dominates Zoe’s life. Her grandmother is very forgetful, but she tells Zoe she would, “*rather be dead than trapped in Greenview Haven.*” (p. 34) For Zoe, her grandmother’s desire to remain at home is not a matter of safety, it is a matter of freedom to do what she wants with her remaining days. Her grandmother wants her son Teddy to take care of her, but he has been disowned by his family for some mysterious reason. As a result, she goes to the retirement home, much to Zoe’s dismay.

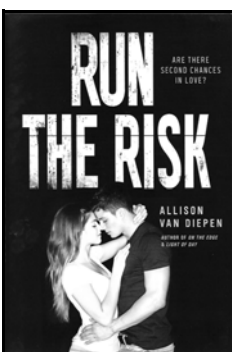
Zoe decides to find Teddy. After an argument, Zoe is violently bullied by her vicious cousin Madi. Her parents believe Madi’s lies and blame Zoe. “*You lock me up. You take my phone. You never listen.*” (p. 114) With nothing to lose, Zoe and her grandmother run away from the retirement home and travel to Toronto to find Teddy. However, they soon discover that Teddy now has a new life - as a woman.

This is a beautifully written narrative about the strong relationship between a granddaughter and her grandmother. It is also an examination of how one family deals with the onset of Alzheimer’s disease. This novel deals with several important questions: How does a family ensure the dignity of a grandparent while still keeping them safe during the onset of memory loss? Where do you draw the line on bullying? What role does forgiveness and acceptance play in family relationships? How does change impact relationships? Readers of all ages will discover that this wonderful novel deals with important questions with sensitivity and honesty. “*Sometimes there’s no good answer. Those are the hardest times of all.*” (p. 260)

Thematic Links: Alzheimer’s Disease; Family Relationships; Senior Care; Bullying; Empathy; Transgender Relationships; Retirement Homes; Homelessness

Myra Junyk

VAN DIEPEN, Allison
Run the Risk



Harper Teen/
HarperCollins
Canada, 2017. 277p.
Gr. 9-12. 978-0-
0624333350. Hdbk.
\$21.99

Four years ago Grace broke up with Mateo because he chose his gang over her. At least, that is what she thought at

the time. How ironic that he has re-entered her life, working part-time at the same local cinema, when her fifteen-year-old brother is considering joining a gang. Their single-parent father is absent too much, between his job on the road and his new girlfriend. Grace is trying to upgrade some high school courses, while volunteering at a day care centre and working part-time. She and Mateo still have a strong attraction for each other, and she could use his help. But does she dare run the risk?

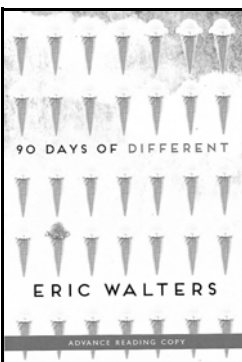
As the story unfolds, we learn that Mateo’s older brother is in jail for a gang-related murder, and Mateo was beaten and left for dead when he broke with the gang. He had been cold to Grace at the time to save her from the gang’s vicious payback. Now he is studying to be a paramedic, and is involved with the Destinos, a group that has an understanding with the police and tries to limit gang violence. With his help, Grace’s brother is able to start a new life with their father and his girlfriend.

Van Diepen knows the boxes to check for successful teen fiction: hot romance, hot music, and hot Miami nights. Mix in cool slam poetry and menacing gang members, cute kids at day care and responsible teens who know where to draw the line, and what is there not to like?

Thematic Links: Teen Romance; Gangs

Patricia Jerney

WALTERS, Eric
90 Days of Different
Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 303p. Gr.
7-12. 978-1459-81673-2. Hdbk. \$19.95



90 Days of Different is a story about friendship, stepping outside one’s comfort zone, and self-discovery. The book centres around Sophie Evans and her best friend Ella. The first chapter opens up to the girls graduating high school. Sophie is dumped by her boyfriend, Luke, who

waited months to do so because, in his words, “it was never the right time”. Adding insult to injury, he tells her she’s too predictable, boring, and mature; he wants someone that is spontaneous and fun, something she is not because she’s either too busy studying so she can get high enough marks to qualify for a scholarship for university or taking care of her father and brother. Even her best friend, Ella, agrees (in spite of her never liking Luke). Ella reiterates Sophie’s predictability and predilection for routine. She points out that Sophie is beautiful, smart, popular, never without a boyfriend, and

well-liked by parents for being so mature; Sophie has little time to do the usual things teens her age do because she’s too busy being responsible (this could be because Sophie’s mom died several years before and she has assumed responsibility for her father and younger brother in her place). Wanting to help her friend, Ella comes up with a brilliant plan to help her out: there are 90 days between high school graduation and the start of university; 90 days for Sophie to try new things, push her boundaries, and leave her comfort zone behind.

Each day, Ella comes up with a new, unique challenge designed to make Sophie do something she’s never dreamed about doing before. Each challenge is a mystery, designed to ease Sophie’s “control freak” ways. The first challenge sees Sophie signing up for social media, including Twitter, Instagram, and a blog. Ella even ordered her to post a status update and accept the 50-or-so friend requests on her rarely used Facebook. Her blog was to be updated frequently to document her summer adventures. These adventures include riding rides at an amusement park, not making her bed for 24 hours, rock climbing, getting fired from a job, and much more! Sophie learns some things about herself, as does Ella. Sophie learns to let go of perfection and Ella confronts her jealousy of her best friend. Each chapter is just a few pages long and chronicles each day’s challenge.

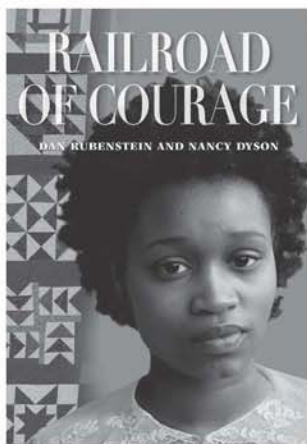
This book is ultimately about friendship. Sophie gets dumped by a jerk and Ella is there for support. She challenges Sophie to realise her full potential and to try new things and in turn, Sophie trusts her friend enough to accept each day’s challenge. While the reader may have to suspend their belief a bit to get through the book (some of the challenges are a bit unbelievable and the ultimate perfection of Sophie’s character is a bit hard to accept because why would someone that great and perfect want to change?), it is truly a fun read with a good message: that it is ok to push boundaries and do things one would not normally do. This book is an easy read and is suitable for preteens and teens. It would be a perfect project for the classroom or for a teen program at the library; teens could be challenged to do something new each week for a certain period of time and start a blog to write about their adventures.

As an added bonus, for the 90 days leading up to the release of the book, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WordPress, “Sophie Evans” will be posting supplemental material as a companion to the book!

Thematic Links: Friendship; Adventure; Summer; Dating; Social Media; Blogging; Death of a Parent; Going off to College; Relationships

Catherine Bellamy

NEW ADVENTURES FROM Ronsdale Press



Railroad of Courage

Dan Rubenstein & Nancy Dyson

Twelve-year-old Rebecca makes a daring escape from slavery on the Underground Railroad to Canada, led by the famous Harriet Tubman, aided along the way by compassionate abolitionists.

978-1-55380-514-4 (PRINT)

978-1-55380-515-1 (EBOOK)

5-1/4 x 7-5/8 ■ 170 pp ■ \$11.95

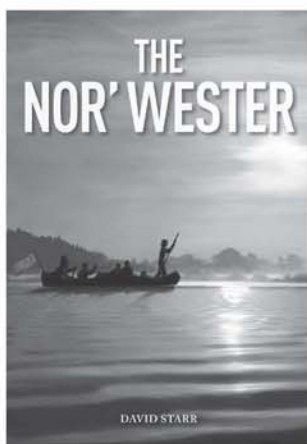
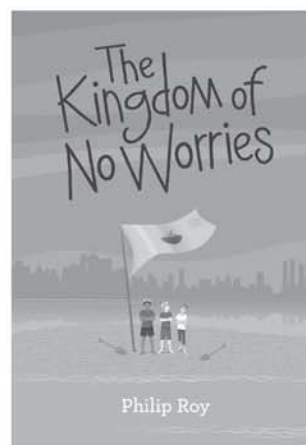
The Kingdom of No Worries

Philip Roy

During their summer vacation, three boys create their own “kingdom” on an island, attracting multitudes to their utopia—until the police arrive to evict them, and the boys face a difficult decision.

978-1-55380-511-3 (PRINT) / 978-1-55380-512-0 (EBOOK)

5-1/4 x 7-5/8 ■ 152 pp ■ \$11.95



The Nor'Wester

David Starr

A Scottish boy flees to Canada, where he is taken on by the North West Company and sent to join Simon Fraser on his epic 1808 journey to the sea—facing death, danger and treason along the way.

978-1-55380-493-2 (PRINT) / 978-1-55380-494-9 (EBOOK)

5-1/4 x 7-5/8 ■ 214 pp ■ \$11.95

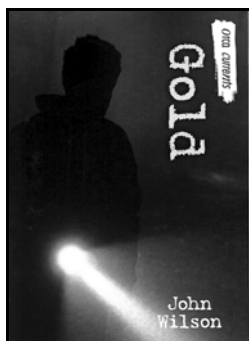


Available at your favourite bookstore or order from PGC/Raincoast

www.ronsdalepress.com

WILSON, John
Gold (Orca Currents Series)
 Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 128p. Gr. 5-9. 978-1-4598-1481-3. Pbk. \$9.95

G



Sam and Annabelle find adventure wherever they go, even in a remote hilltop town in Italy. They set out to explore the labyrinthine tunnels of Civita and discover a tale of hidden treasure. They soon find they are not the only ones exploring the tunnels

and encounter their nemesis Humphrey Battleford; and the grandson of the “Eagle of Death,” a ruthless Nazi from WWII. The search for gold bars hidden in the tunnels leads to kidnapping and ransom.

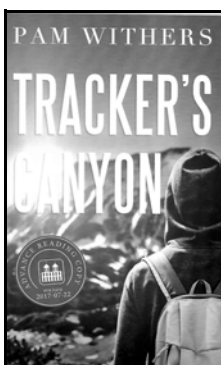
Wilson’s love of history shines in this high interest novel. Strong descriptions mingle with historical details making readers want to learn more about the places Annabelle and Sam visit. While the plot is familiar the characters are so likeable and believable the readers can’t help be engrossed with the quirks of Sam, Pi loving Annabelle and her family, Humphry Battleford, the museum keeper Pietro and even Percy the dog.

Thematic Links: Greed; History; Theft; Nazis; Adventure; World War II

Ana Malespin

WITHERS, Pam
Tracker’s Canyon
 Dundurn Press, 2017. 180p. Gr. 7 up. 978-1-4597-3963-5. Pbk. \$12.99

A



Pam Withers, in her book *Tracker’s Canyon*, writes about the perils of a sixteen year old canyoneer named Tristan who is dealing with the recent loss of his father. Tristan’s grief becomes a struggle that he projects onto his climbing adventures as his father’s death occurred in the very canyons that Tristan explores. This exploration

takes on greater importance as the death of Tristan’s father remains a sort of mystery, as no trace of his body was ever found and it remains somewhere within the canyon walls. The book is written in the first person so it reads like a *mémoire*, and because of this we get a very intimate understanding of Tristan’s pain and grief.

The central conflict of the book surrounds a mysterious and enigmatic canyoneering guide named Brigit who as it turns out has a deep connection to the death of Tristan’s father. Brigit at first seems willing to help Tristan but soon becomes antagonistic when matters of Tristan’s loss are brought up. Slowly Brigit becomes more contemptuous and her connection to the plot becomes more and more intricate as we learn that her mother had an intricate connection with Tristan’s father. Brigit slowly becomes more sinister, until Tristan must find a

way out of the danger she has intentionally created.

The setting of *Tracker’s Canyon* is predominately in the treacherous pathways of Swallow Canyon which the characters navigate at their peril. The canyon becomes a metaphor for the difficulty of Tristan’s life, as the grieving process proves to be arduous with little family support to guide him. As well, Withers develops Tristan’s character as fiercely independent, portraying him as an adept tracker of animals and people, and consequently associates such an ability with his need to unearth the truth about his father. All of this is well and good and provides a nice foundation for the plot. By the end of book Withers writes as though both Tristan and his father are together, she writes,

“I feel Dad with me. We always tracked together, so this is our time of day. We spot some deer tracks and veer off the trail after them, slowing, consumed by the joy of being outdoors, the thrill and anticipation of following a wild creature.”

In this way an important message is conveyed to a young reader who is given a good sense of the profound relationship between a son and his father.

Thematic Links: Canyoneering; Grief; Outdoors

Zachary Chauvin

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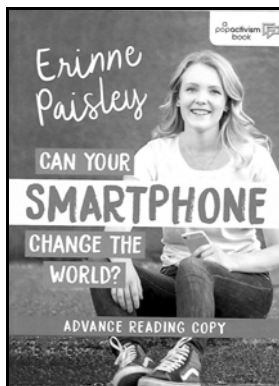
Non-Fiction Grades 7-12

PAISLEY, Erinne

Can Your Smartphone Change the World?

Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 136p.

Illus. Gr 6-8. 978-1-4598-1303-8. Pbk. \$14.95



Erinne Paisley wore a paper dress to her Senior Prom. She made it herself using old math homework, Scotch tape, and some black satin. Across the skirt were the following words: *I've received my education. Not every woman has that*

right. Malala.org.

The fashion statement created an online storm that garnered Paisley more attention than Kim Kardashian, Willow Smith, and Rihanna on MTV.com that weekend. For Paisley, it was a piece of activism. She donated the money she would have spent on a regular dress to the Malala Fund, a group dedicated to helping girls around the world get 12 years of quality education. The resultant publicity helped raise far more than she ever dreamed.

Can Your Smartphone Change the World? explains the story behind the dress. It then describes how people around the world are using social media to promote social and political change. Many of the activists are ordinary teens, people like Rosea Lake, who posted a high school art project on Tumblr that has resulted in raising awareness about gender inequality and the expectations placed on girls and women. As well as discussing Lake and multiple other pop activists, Paisley encourages readers to get involved. Her Pop Quiz pages suggest ways to get started.

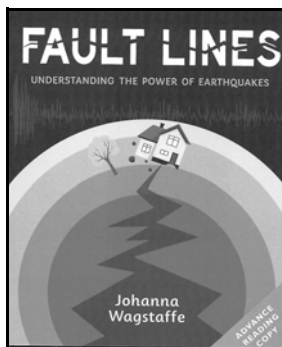
This highly recommended book is a must for every Intermediate library. Imagine how a group of kids from your school could use the ideas to change the world.

Thematic Links: Pop Activism; Social Activism; Social Media; Smartphones; Gender Inequality; The Right to Education; Malala Yousafzai; Awareness Campaigns; YouTube; Human Rights; Bullying; Bystander Revolution; Environmental Activism

Helen Mason

WAGSTAFFE, Johanna

Fault Lines: Understanding the Power of Earthquakes



class and experienced a minor quake when she was playing with her dolls. Now a seismologist, Wagstaffe shares her extensive knowledge of earthquakes with young readers.

They'll be fascinated by the explanations of what goes on under the earth during an earthquake, and drawn in by the stories of young people around the world who have experienced a quake first-hand. What makes the book particularly interesting, however, is Wagstaffe's knowledge of the many earthquakes she has reported for CBC, and frequent sidebars that provide information about specific quakes, including their magnitude, date, and location.

Simple graphic art provides clear visual backup for the running text. Excellent photos show the aftermath of many quakes, and illustrate what many people do to prepare for them. The book ends with a list of websites and videos kids can check for additional information, as well as a full glossary and index.

This highly recommended title would be an ideal read for Junior and Intermediate level readers interested in this topic.

Thematic Links: Earthquakes; Natural Disasters; Emergency Preparedness; Tsunamis; Seismology; Meteorology; Plate Tectonics

Helen Mason

Your Startup Starts Now: A Guide to Entrepreneurship: MASON, Helen.

What is Digital Entrepreneurship?

(978-0-7787-2740-8); HYDE, Natalie.

What is Entrepreneurship? (978-0-7787-2758-3); OFFORD, Alexander.

What is Environmental Entrepreneurship? (978-0-7787-2756-9); HOOVEGEN, Margaret.

What is Social Entrepreneurship? (978-0-7787-2757-6)

Crabtree Publishing, 2017. 48p.



Orca Book Publishers, 2017. 96p. Gr 6-8. Illus. 978-1-4598-1243-7. Hdbk. \$24.95

When Johanna Wagstaffe was four, her family lived in Japan. She remembers regular earthquake drills in her kindergarten

Illus. Gr. 5-9.

Hdbk. \$29.36 ea.

This series introduces the topic of entrepreneurship, including digital, social, and environmental entrepreneurship. The first book in the series explains entrepreneurship as a whole, and each of the other three books tackles a different type of entrepreneurship. This series provides information that could actually be practically applied when starting a business, without dumbing it down. The authors manage to lay out the details and facts of starting a



business without being too dense.

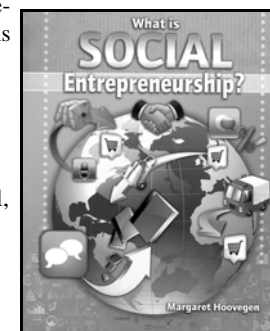
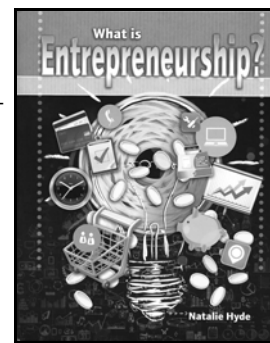
The information is accompanied by real-life examples of successful entrepreneurs who founded business that students have likely heard of before, which makes the topics more engaging.

The design of the series is colourful and exciting, although sometimes a little too busy.

Overall, the *Your Startup Starts Now Series* introduces entrepreneurship to preteens in a way that empowers them to become entrepreneurs themselves, whether they are interested in digital, social, or environmental entrepreneurship.

Thematic Links:

Entrepreneurship; Start-ups



Alice Albarda



French Resources

ARNOLD, Tedd

Zig Zag en voyage

Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 30p. Illus.

Gr. K-1. 978-1-4431-6043-8. Pbk.

\$7.99



Zig Zag en voyage

is the latest book in a series dedicated to early readers. Biz, a little boy, has a very peculiar pet friend, a fly, named Zig Zag. The friends have something in common: bulging eyes. In this story, they find themselves in unbelievable adventures as Biz's dad invites

them for a car ride on a warm and beautiful day. Safety comes first and friends quickly fastened their seat belt. Imagine for a moment a seat belt around a fly! Windows are rolled down and dad hits the road. It all goes well until an unexpected guest, the wind, takes things under control and Zig Zag finds himself in a series of precarious adventures. First our small friend flies into a truck, then on a boat, a circus train, an airplane windshield, and ... almost onto a rocket ship. Working tirelessly and frantically, Biz and his dad try their best to rescue Zig Zag.

Thematic Links: Friendship; Support; Imagination; Rescue

Suzanne Dagenais

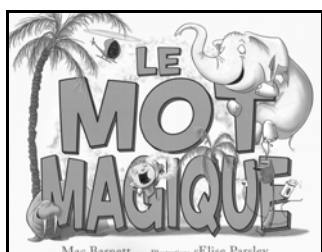
BARNETT, Mac

Le mot magique

Illustrated by Elise Parsley. Éditions

Scholastic, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. 2-3. 978-1-

4431-6048-3. Pbk. \$11.99



This book is a French translation of the English title *Magic Word*. The story follows a young boy, Paul-Émile Hurtubise,

being watched by his babysitter. He asks her for a cookie and she asks him to say the magic word. Young Paul-Émile makes up a word, *Alakazoumba* and a cookie appears. He soon discovers that he can make anything appear by saying this magic word. First, he makes a walrus appear to chase away his babysitter, then a

G

swimming pool in his living room. His parents come home and are none to pleased to find a swimming pool in the living room and when they scold Paul-Émile, he makes another walrus appear to chase them away. Soon, he has a full roller coaster in the backyard of his neighbourhood and a butler to serve him food, an elephant and sundae making robot. He invites his friend Rosie to come have some fun with him but she is not easily impressed. When she asks him to play cards, he offers his elephant friend to play with her but Rosie misses the companionship of her friend. Deciding she is bored, she leaves Paul-Émile. He tries to entertain himself alone and soon realizes he misses the companionship of his friends and family. Paul-Émile tries to make amends and succeeds with everyone except the babysitter.

This humorous tale is sure to entertain children and ignite their imagination. Though the story is a bit lengthy, the vocabulary and sentence style is straight forward making it suitable for French second language learners. Engaging and eye popping illustrations brilliantly accompany the text to make an enjoyable read while incorporating a valuable lesson about friendship and the value of companionship over material wealth. This book would make a suitable addition to a classroom or school library.

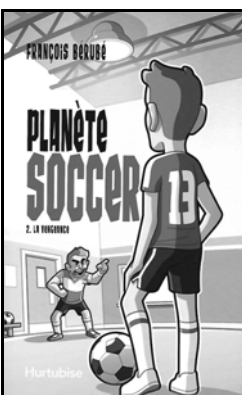
Thematic Links: Friendship; Politeness; Selflessness

Veronique Lavoie

BÉRUBÉ, François

La vengeance: Planète Soccer 2

Éditions Hurtubise, 2017. 260p. Gr. 7-9. 978-2-89723-935-0. Pbk. \$14.95



the two soccer players must settle their differences and help their team make it to the provincial championship. While the two young men learn to work together and begin to respect one another, Raphaël's sister is again a victim of cyberbullying and soon, with the help of Jean-Seb's older brother, the common goal of de-

In the second novel in the *Planète Soccer Series*, Raphaël Rousseau, a talented young soccer player is at odds with his rival, Jean-Seb, a rivalry which started on the soccer field and now escalates after Jean-Seb targets Raphaël's sister, Maryan, on social media. Forced to play together on a newly formed team,

fending Maryan becomes just as important as winning the championship.

At first glance, readers may see the second *Planète Soccer* novel as a light-hearted sports story, centred around the rivalry of two young players. However, the novel takes a more serious turn when it delves into the very current topic of cyberbullying and the dangers of social media. In fact, it is the cyberbullying storyline and brother-sister relationship which become the most engaging and interesting parts of this story, with the game-day narratives serving mostly as filler and at times, seeming too long and drawn-out. While Raphaël and Maryan, and by extension their familial bond, is well-developed, the characterization of Jean-Seb, as well as Maryan's cyberbully, James, would benefit from more development and depth.

Overall, the novel is engaging and modern and will certainly appeal to intermediate readers with an interest in sports. This novel would be best suited for use as an independent novel study or as a prompt for further discussions surrounding the subject of cyberbullying and the dangers associated with social media.

Thematic Links: Family; Friendship; Forgiveness; Sports and Competition; Perseverance; Loyalty; Cyberbullying; Bullying; Social Media

Amy J. Flight

BOOSHAY, Guy

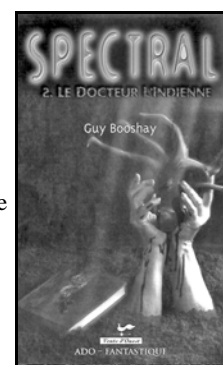
Le Docteur l'Indienne: Spectral 2

Éditions Vents d'Ouest, 2016. 200p.

Gr. 10-12. 978-2-89537-584-5. Pbk. \$11.95

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In the follow-up to the first installment in the *Spectral Series*, we find the brilliant psychologist Brijit Baskanegan teaming up with occult specialist Samuel Vincent to come to the aid of Samuel's long-time friend Sarah. After the accidental death of her young son and the dissolution of her marriage, Sarah is re-establishing her life in a small rural community. However, as soon as she moves into her new home, Sarah begins to experience bizarre and frightening events, all seeming to lead back to the abandoned psychiatric hospital located not far from her new residence. As Brijit and Samuel work together to solve the mystery surrounding the haunting of Sarah's home and the hallucinations she is experienc-



ing, they uncover a dark conspiracy routed in the asylum's past.

Well-written and suspenseful, this second novel in the series is a mystery that focuses on the supernatural and the past. The characters are well-developed and the author provides vivid descriptions which allow the reader to be drawn into the story. The novel builds suspense and the strength lies in the fascinating conclusion, as the reader learns about the history of the asylum as well as the power of ancestral ties. The novel is also unique in that it seamlessly ties together elements of the occult, the modern, Québécois culture and history, as well as Aboriginal culture. One element of the novel which readers may find challenging is the use of multiple points of view, as the young psychologist must enter Sarah's mind to help the grieving woman. This novel would be most suitable for an independent novel study and will appeal to more advanced readers with an interest in the occult, the supernatural, and history.

Thematic Links: Occult; Supernatural; Mystery; Friendship; Loss; History; Québécois Culture; Aboriginal Culture

Amy J. Flight

BRALLIER, Max

Le pouvoir interdit; Tome 1 (Série: L'Académie des chevaliers)

Illustrated by Alessandro Valdrighi and Paul Lee. Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 190p. Illus. Gr. 7-8. 978-1-4431-6050-6. Pbk. \$12.99



Le pouvoir interdit is the first novel in a new series: **L'Académie des chevaliers**. Fletcher Bowman, an orphan, leaves the countryside where he has lived since his birth near the fishing village of Salty Town. He goes by train (we will see here similarities with Harry

Potter) to Knightonia at the Academy of Knights. He does not understand why the director of the orphanage sends him there since he knows nothing about chivalry. Arriving at the Academy, he feels lost: to this day, life at the orphanage is the only one he knows. His timidity and his ignorance of the world of chivalry make him vulnerable. Some students laugh at him. On the other hand, Isabella, the young sister of the famous Lance Richmond, the most famous knight of the country, will become friends with him. Impulsive and rash, Izzy (Isabella) Richmond will force Fletcher to

surpass himself and overcome his anxiety.

On the first day, the director of the Academy, Mr. Brickland, sent them on a mission and told them not to venture outside the walls of the Academy where Monstrox and his black magic roam! Of course, the mission is full of surprises and unexpected encounters. Above all, Fletcher feels this strange "sensation" that dictates what he has to do. He will then find that he has magic abilities. In the heat of the action, the two young apprentice knights meet outside the school. This incursion outside the Academy awakens a threat that endangers the kingdom of Knighton. After numerous vicissitudes, the wicked Baron von Bludgeonous (Monstrox) is annihilated. The forbidden power is withdrawn.

Izzy and Fletch - with Rogoule as guardian angel - form a sympathetic tandem. I am sure that the young readers will adopt them and will be happy to find them in the other volumes of the series.

We are in the world of LEGO. The characters are also.

A thrilling story that takes place in 12 chapters with pencil drawings by Paul Lee. Funny reading. Good translation.

Thematic Links: LEGO; Science Fiction; Knights and Chivalry

Louise Melançon

BROWN, Lisa

À l'aéroport

Translated by Isabelle Montagnier. Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 30p. Gr. 1-3. 978-1-4431-5986-9. Pbk. \$11.99



The best part of this charming, simple story from Lisa Brown, recently translated from English to French, is the illustrations. Young readers will have fun poring over detailed airport scenes and tracking characters from page to page.

The pictures would also serve as a useful tool for teaching inferencing. What can students tell about certain characters based on who they're interacting with? Can students guess where characters will be traveling based on how they're dressed? The story's main text primarily serves as an introduction to airport customs and etiquette, following a family of four visiting grandparents in another city as they travel from their home to the airport, onto a plane and out the other side.

For early French readers, **À l'aéroport** would also be a useful introduction to travel vocabulary. But, ultimately, this book isn't about the words. Come for the clean colourfully drawn

images, which tell a story all their own.

Thematic Links: Airports; Travel; Families; Younger Siblings; Inferencing

Natalie Colaiacovo

BRUEL, Nick

Méchant Minou n'aime pas les jeux vidéo

Translated by Isabelle Montagnier. Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 22p. Gr. 1-3. 978-1-4431-6018-6. Pbk. \$10.99

This simple story, an installment of Nick Bruel's **Bad Kitty Series** translated into French, tells a useful message. After becoming addicted to video-games, the titular Minou is forced



by his owner to try other activities, including reading a book, drawing and going outside, until he eventually finds these activities more stimulating than the games he used to enjoy.

Unfortunately, however, I don't think this book is likely to inspire young readers to put down their videogame controllers. The message is a little on the nose, and I'm unsure why a cat would be playing videogames in the first place. Perhaps Minou could have been participating in activities that cats actually enjoy. While the story itself is important, it doesn't seem organic to the **Méchant Minou** character. An interesting idea with an ultimately disappointing execution.

Thematic Links: Video Games; Reading; Drawing; Media Literacy; Cats

Natalie Colaiacovo

BRUEL, Nick

Méchant Minou se creuse la tête

Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 144p. Illus. Gr. 3-5. 978-1-4431-6025-4. Pbk. \$9.99

Méchant minou

se creuse la tête is part of a series of books by Nick Bruel. It is presented as a comic book. In this story, Minou must write a test in order to recover his cat's license. Who has ever heard of a cat's license? It sets the tone for a ludicrous



book.

According to the Société de Gestion des Aptitudes Félines (SGAF), Minou has been goofy and lost the privilege to be considered a member of the cat's family. It is my first Bad Kitty book and I am inclined to think that the silliness of the tale is what appeals to the readers. Minou Tout-fou, responsible to administer the test, is mocked by a mouse who constantly throws in his two cents, and the company responsible to develop the test is run by hens. Not surprisingly, the defective organization leads to foolish incidents. Fortunately, Minou is happily reinstated as a cat. The author has added some humour for the benefit of adult readers and I must add that the most endearing feature of the book is Minou's body language.

Some discussion questions for the young readers could be: Are there rules by which a cat must abide in order to remain in the cat's family? Do children feel that Minou was treated fairly or unfairly? One good lesson to be learned is that cheating is never allowed.

Thematic Links: Cat's Behaviour; Testing; Rules; License; Cheating; Silliness

Suzanne Dagenais

CHARLAND, Danielle
Elle savait parler aux oiseaux
(Collection: *Vive le vent!*)

Illustrated by Éric Péladeau. Éditions Vents d'Ouest, 2017. 72p. Illus. Gr. K-3. 978-2-89537-560-9. Pbk. \$9.95



Elise has just moved and is finding it difficult to fit in with her new family and her new neighbourhood. She meets an elderly lady in the park and together they look at the birds and the clouds and find they enjoy one another's company a great deal. But Elise notices that sometimes Alice doesn't remember her and that although she always brings her needles and wool with her, she doesn't seem to recall how to knit properly. Elise is often a little absent-minded and thinks perhaps that is Alice's problem as well.

This is a touching and tender story about the relationship between a child and a senior who is suffering from memory loss. The child simply accepts Alice as she is and makes no effort to force her to remember things. And Alice is child-like, delighting in the birds in the park and in watching the clouds in the shapes of elephants or whales. Any child who has elderly relatives or family acquaintances will en-

joy the rapport and understanding between Elise and her aging friend.

This chapter book has large print and very short chapters, making it ideal for young readers.

Thematic Links: Friendship; Imagination; Dementia

Ann Ketcheson

CHARLESWORTH, Liza

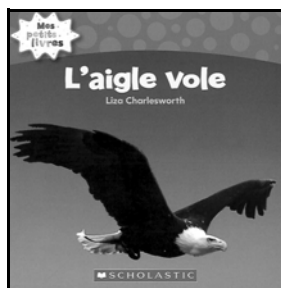
Mes petits livres series: Soyons gentils (978-1-4431-5990-6); **L'ours** (978-1-4431-5988-3); **Du bleu** (978-1-4431-5991-3); **Il pleut sur moi** (978-1-4431-5995-1); **Un chien avec une perruque** (978-1-4431-5993-7); **L'aigle vole** (978-1-4431-5996-8); **Des taches** (978-1-4431-5997-5); **Tu aimes l'exercice** (978-1-4431-5999-9); **La vache et son petit** (978-1-4431-5992-0); **Son animal de compagnie** (978-1-4431-5994-4); **Jaune comme le soleil** (978-1-4431-5989-0); **En quoi est-ce fait?** (978-1-4431-5998-2)

Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 8p. Illus. Gr. K-1. Pbk. \$17.99 set



This series of mini books are 8 pages in length and designed to help children learn words as used in sentences, with a variety of themes. It is a translation of the English series, *Nonfiction*

Sight Word Readers. Each page contains one sentence using a repeating word, found in bold, along with an appropriate picture to help word recognition. One example, is the word "Tu" in the exercise-related sentences, "Tu cours.", "Tu frappes le ballon.", "Tu glisses.", "Tu nages.", "Tu fais du vélo", etc. With the word "Tu" in bold. The images depict happy children engaging in sports participation. The colourful



images that accompany the text help to guide and develop confidence in young readers.

Some of the books are more interesting than others, while a few come across as awkward and not

challenging; some contain more advanced vocabulary. At the end of each book there is a simple "Bingo" game where the child is asked to circle the sight word in a 9 tic-tac-toe board and when they find 3 in a row they have "Bingo". The content feels sparse though the cost is likely inexpensive due to the small size of each mini book. This collection could be used for extra reading practice in the classroom or for a home reading program. It would be an acceptable addition to a classroom or school library, though may be most practical to have small classroom sets for guided reading.

Thematic Links: Early Reading; Sight Word Recognition

Veronique Lavoie



DIESEN, Deborah

Pout-Pout part en vacances

Illustrated by Dan Hanna. Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 30p. Illus. Gr. K-2. 978-1-4431-6027-8. Pbk. \$11.99

Part of a series for toddlers and early readers, the book **Pout-Pout part en vacances** is simply adorable. It describes how Pout-Pout, a young fish, is about to embark on his first trip. After researching the best destination, he packs two suitcases: one for him and the other one for his beloved Doudou.

The next morning, he sets out happily on the ocean highway, not expecting any bumps along the road. Pout-Pout soon learns that traveling brings its share of unforeseen events. The first one is a huge sign announcing a 'detour'. Fortunately, a ray gently offers him a map. Pout-Pout continues on while taking in all the outstanding views. He is in high spirits and all goes well until snack time when he realizes that he did not bring enough food. It does not matter as an eel is quick to recommend a friendly restaurant. It goes on and on, and surprisingly every time there is a new hiccup, there is someone to lend him a friendly hand.

At the end of the day, he checks in at a pleasant hostel. He unpacks to settle in comfortably but to his great dismay, Doudou's suitcase is E M P T Y. Total shock! How can



Reviewers

Thanks to all our reviewers who have been busy over the summer months reading and writing reviews to make this issue of Resource Links possible.

Alice Albarda, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS

Catherine Bellamy, Librarian, Surrey, BC

Tanya Boudreau, Librarian, Cold Lake Public Library, Cold Lake, AB

Carmelita Cechetto-Shea, Library Consultant Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board, Sydney, NS

Lara Chauvin, Illustrator and Writer, Montreal, QC

Zachary Chauvin, Writer, Historian and Software Developer. Montreal, QC

Natalie Colaiacovo, Reference & Digital Resources Librarian, Toronto District School Board, Toronto, ON

Carolyn Cutt, Teacher-Librarian, Vancouver, BC

Suzanne Dagenais, Program Officer, Ottawa, ON

Amy J. Flight, French Immersion Teacher, Mount Pearl Senior High, Mount Pearl, NL

Erin Hansen, Teacher- Librarian, Calgary, AB

Mavis Holder, Librarian at Volunteer Calgary, Calgary, AB

Patricia Jermey, Former Teacher-Librarian, Durham District School Board, Courtice, ON

Myra Junyk, Literacy Advocate and Author, Toronto, ON

Ann Ketcheson, Retired Teacher-Librarian, Ottawa, ON

Isobel Lang, Librarian, Wychwood Library, Toronto Public Library, Toronto, ON

Veronique Lavoie, Primary/Elementary French Immersion Teacher, Vernon, BC

Anne Letain, Sessional Instructor UBC/Author, Ladysmith, BC

Lesley Little, Coalhurst High School, Lethbridge, AB

Ana Malespin, Children's Services Specialist/ Youth Librarian, Brentwood Branch, Toronto

Public Library, Toronto, ON

Joan Marshall, Winnipeg Bookseller, Winnipeg, MB

Helen Mason, Writer, Former Teacher and Science Editor, Trenton, ON

Louise Melançon, Specialist in French Literature for Children and Young Adults, Sherbrooke, PQ

Laura Reilly, Retired Children's Librarian, Comox, BC

Nicole Rowlinson, Library Technician, Lindale School, Moose Jaw, SK

Angela Thompson, Secondary Teacher-Librarian, East Northumberland Secondary School, Brighton, ON

Sadie Tucker, Children's Librarian, Vancouver Public Library, Vancouver, BC

Leslie Vermeer, Chair and Instructor in the Bachelor of Communication Studies Program, Grant MacEwan University, Edmonton, AB

If you are interested in becoming a reviewer for

Resource Links

please contact the editor

Vicki Pennell at

Phone: 709-335-2394; Fax: 709-335-2978

E-Mail: resourcelinks@nl.rogers.com

he fall asleep without Doudou? Pout-Pout feels that his holidays are ruined and he is ready to go back home. Luckily, he calms down and falls asleep dreaming about Doudou. The next day, he puts on a brave face and pursues his trip. Fortunately, he has a grand time but nothing compared to the joy of returning home to his Doudou.

Children will enjoy the recurring verse about Pout-Pout's enthusiasm at new discoveries and hunger for new adventures.

Thematic Links: Traveling; Itineraries; Discoveries; Openness to the World; Unexpected Events; Absence of a Loved One

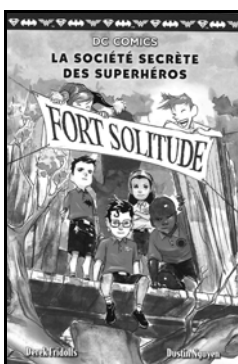
Suzanne Dagenais

FRIDOLFS, Derek

La Société Secrète Des Superhéros: Fort Solitude

Illustrated by Dustin Nguyen.

Translated by Isabelle Allard. Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 175p. Illus. Gr. 6 up. 978-1-4431-5928-9. Pbk. \$11.99



The loyalty of friends is often times reinforced by their mutual admiration for the hero archetypes they imagine themselves to be. In *La Société Secrète Des Superhéros: Fort Solitude*, four friends bring their own superhero talents to a summer camp and quickly learn that the powers

they claim to hold may actually be required in order to defeat the villainous counsellors and save the day. The book is thereby centred around a summer camp where the children attending are disappearing at an alarming rate. In true DC Comics fashion our team of superheroes will need to gather their resources to achieve the impossible and rescue the kidnapped kids who just happen to be caught up in the mayhem.

The writing of Derek Fridolfs and the illustrations of Dustin Nguyen have managed to produce an entertaining take on summer camp, or what is for some kids, a coming of age experience. They have first of all managed to select characters that are unique and fitting to the personas they have chosen to adopt. Clark (Superman) is the quirky but calm and collected leader who rallies the troops in times when the enemy seems all but destined to win. Diana (Wonder Woman) is the tough and pragmatic team player who resolves any internal conflicts the group may face. Bruce (Batman) is the complex loner who would

rather retreat to his cave and await the inevitable call to defeat the enemy. And Vic is the technical brains behind their operation, hacking into the counsellor's equipment and managing all the communication methods the group will need to utilize. The characters all fit into their proper role and understand their place in the superhero society rather quickly, as kids keep disappearing and the strangely foreboding counsellors are dismissive of the entire situation.

The book also provides the overhanging fear that mythical creatures such as the sasquatch and a haunted scarecrow are kidnapping children. Alas, this is just more investigations for our heroes, more danger to confront as a stalwart crew. This chaotic sort of environment where danger seems to lurk around every corner keeps the book moving at a steady pace and should surely keep the interests of a young reader. Furthermore, the layout of the book contributes greatly to a wide range of humorous episodes, as each page either contains a journal entry by Clark, a comic strip style dialogue, a missing person's report, a catalogue of items confiscated, or an incident report. By diffusing the content of the book in such a way the reader is given a good sense of life at an actual camp. Any fan of DC Comics should appreciate this style of book and it will honour nicely their admiration for the genre.

Thematic Links: Superheroes; Summer Camp; Adventure

Zachary Chauvin

GIRARD, Edith

Cathryn Vol. 1 - Avec un Y et pas de E

Éditions Hurtubise, 2017. 242p. Illus. Gr. 7-9. 978-2-89723-920-6. Pbk. \$14.95



things start to fall apart. She quits as the set designer for the school play. Her romance with Sam is based on lies because she wants so badly to make a good impression. She isn't getting along well with her friends or her family. Cathryn has no idea how to get her life back on track.

Girard's main character is likable, strong and

Cathryn has joined all kinds of extra-curricular activities at school and beyond and is popular with others. However she feels abandoned by her birth mother and wonders if she is somehow at fault for her mom's departure. Her marks at school are dropping; she just doesn't have time to study. Eventually

determined but also makes mistakes. Readers understand that she is a 14-year-old who is just beginning to find her way in life. She wants to help others and to be involved in everything, but has to learn how to prioritize and organize.

Girard touches on the theme of mental illness when Cathryn learns her birth mother is bipolar and this is the reason for her odd behaviour. Cathryn becomes informed about the disease and takes steps to find out if it is the reason for some of her own actions.

It is clear from the title that this is part one of a trilogy and readers will be keen to find out if Cathryn can establish a relationship with her mom and if she and Sam will ever resume their romance.

The characters and themes of the novel will appeal particularly to young readers at the intermediate level. The book is in four large sections which are subdivided into 19 chapters.

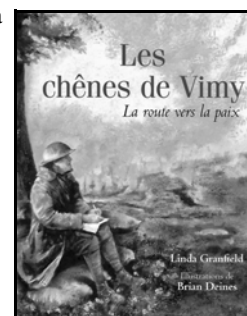
Thematic Links: Coming-of-Age; Romance; Mental Illness

Ann Ketcheson

GRANFIELD, Linda

Les chênes de Vimy: La route vers la paix

Illustrated by Brian Denis. Texte français by Martine Faubert. Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 36p. Illus. Gr. 4-9. 978-1-4431-4851-1. Pbk. \$10.99



Leslie Miller was a young Canadian soldier at the battle of Vimy Ridge in 1917. From the ruins of the battlefield, he saved some acorns and sent them back home to Canada. When he returned, he planted them and eventually had wonderful oak trees - symbols of strength and endurance - on his farm. And one hundred years later, thanks to efforts at repatriation, the oak trees have returned to Vimy Ridge once again.

This is a wonderful book and a heart-warming story. Granfield describes details from World War I and paints a picture of the hardships faced by many young soldiers. She then traces the story of the acorns and their eventual use in nurturing new oak trees for Vimy Ridge. Canadians were instrumental in the 1917 battle and in replanting the Vimy oaks a century later.

The highlights of the book are original photos from the war, from Miller's farm in Ontario and of the planning and erection of the Vimy Monument. As well, there are quotes from Miller's diary which help to bring the story to life for young readers. Last, but cer-

tainly not least, are the beautiful illustrations by Brian Deines, an award-winning illustrator of children's books.

Young readers interested in history, war and Canadian soldiers will find this book both informative and entertaining. It conveys essential facts and a fabulous story in language which is appropriate for students in the junior and intermediate grades. This is an absolute must in any school library as Canadians look back at their history and the challenges and sacrifices of the first world war.

Also available in English. See p. 28

Thematic Links: World War I; Vimy Ridge; Canadian History

Ann Ketcheson

GRAVEL, Elise

Olga et le machin qui pue

Texte français by Isabelle Allard.

Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 170p. Illus.

Gr. 2-6. 978-1-4431-5925-8. Pbk. \$16.99



Olga finds a strange animal and has no idea what it is. It looks rather like a potato and smells terrible. Olga does her best to take care of this new discovery - finding out what it likes to eat, where it will sleep, and so on. She wonders if it is an entirely new species

and decides to call it *olgamus ridiculus*. Olga muses about potential fame and fortune in the world of zoology once her findings become public.

It is refreshing to see a budding female scientist as the focus of the story. Olga is curious and anxious to learn. She understands the importance of the scientific method of observation, questioning, research, making and proving a hypothesis. Despite being something of a loner by nature, she calls in help from the local library, a shopkeeper and some friends in order to further her scientific study.

The book is illustrated in comic book fashion with simple figures coloured in red, black and pink. Pages are filled with illustrations and a variety of fonts which will keep young readers and reluctant readers interested in the story. The book contains lots of potty humour - poop and pee - which contribute to it being both funny and just weird enough to be entertaining.

Thematic Links: Science; Animals; Becoming more Social

Ann Ketcheson

GRUNBERG, Greg and Lucas Turnbloom

Prisonniers de Cauchemar (Le Gardein des Rêves Series)

Texte français by Isabelle Allard. Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 203p. Gr. 7-9. 978-1-4431-6020-9. Pbk. \$16.99



Ben is able to go into other people's dreams and when his friends suffer from nightmares he feels he has to help them. Entering the nightmare world means confronting all kinds of monsters but Ben is determined to win and has the magic skills to succeed. In the real world, his mother is worried

about Ben's apparent lack of sleep and opts to put him in a sleep clinic. Thus the real world and the nightmare world come remarkably close together.

Reluctant readers and others who enjoy graphic novels will have fun accompanying Ben on this fantasy adventure. The plot is essentially good versus evil with typical fantasy villains. The artwork is done with bright and vivid colours rather than the softer tones perhaps associated with a dream-like world.

The excitement continues right to the final page of the book and it is evident that there will be a sequel so fans can enjoy more of Ben's travels and adventures in the world of dreams and nightmares.

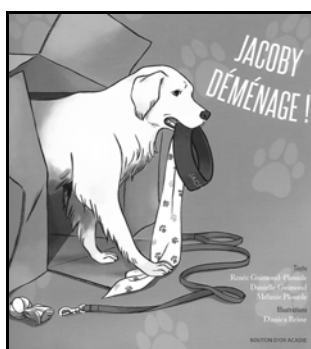
Thematic Links: Fantasy; Adventure; Graphic Novels; Nightmares

Ann Ketcheson

GUIMOND-POURDE, Renée, Danielle Guimond and Mélanie Plourde

Jacoby déménage!

Illustrated by Danica Brine. Bouton d'or Acadie, 2017. 34p. Illus. Gr. 4-5. 978-2-89750-061-0. Pbk. \$9.95



Jacoby déménage! tells the story of a dog named Jacoby who deals with a stressful situation; his life is turned upside down when his owner has to move. Told from the dog's

point of view, the book begins with Jacoby saying goodbye to his friends at school. He remembers their scents, as his sense of smell allows him to keep them in his memory. He sees movers taking boxes and his things into a truck, and this morning his owner Madame Ève seems distant. As they ride in the car together, Jacoby notices a change in scenery. He doesn't know where they are going, and Madame Ève sighs upon arriving at their new home. Jacoby frequently licks his paw throughout the story to the point, the fur begins to thin and Madame Ève takes him to a veterinarian who suggests it may be due to discontentment with changes in his life. Jacoby in the prior pages has trouble adjusting to his new environment, has lost his appetite and continues to lick his paw raw. Madame Ève comes up with a plan and takes Jacoby to the local library where he forms a new friendship with a young girl. Jacoby stops his detrimental habit of licking his paw, instead focusing on helping his new friend learn to read, with the help of Madam Ève. The book ends with Jacoby beginning to show signs of enjoying and adapting to his new environment.

Much of the story telling uses indirect storytelling; much information crucial to the story, the reader must derive from implications, from images and scenarios. The story is not entirely explained through the wording alone like many early-reader children's novels and also uses some advanced vocabulary. This book will encourage young readers to learn to use deductive reasoning. The metaphor of Jacoby's owner's move is a great metaphor for children whose lives are upset when parent have to move for job relocation. The story may be relatable and encouraging to children in those circumstances. This book may serve as an ideal bridge between picture books and young adult novels. It would make a great addition to an older elementary or intermediate classroom or school library.

Thematic Links: Stress; Anxiety; Coping

Veronique Lavoie

HUGHES, Catherine D.

Mon Grand Livre D'Animlux (National Geographic Series)

Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 128p. Illus. Gr. K - 6. 978-1-4431-6028-5. Hdbk. \$21.99



Mon Grand Livre D'Animaux is a French translation of a National Geographic Kids vol-

ume written by Catherine D. Hughes. This condensed starter animal book explores the commonly known creatures found in and around the many landscapes and oceans around the world. Just like other specific books within the set, it focuses on one type of habitat and therefore explores a wider variety of critters including unique and uncommon species.

The book blends the traditional encyclopaedic elements by way of information and content page, dividing each habitat with dedicated chapters then examining a small range of common animals that exist within those systems. It includes facts and statistics with a fun explosion of colour and bold fonts including real life photography of animals in their natural environments and in motion alongside punchy information bubbles. It also includes interesting tid-bits about the creatures participating in the action, “*Le diable cornu mange environ 750 fourmis par jour*”.

Travelling through forests, deserts, oceans, polar regions and prairies we learn interesting facts and get a general understanding of some of our favourite creatures, including insects, arachnids, mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians such as the “*rainette aux yeux rouges*” that “*Ces grenouilles ne quittent pratiquement jamais les arbres*”.

By the end of the book there is a *Conseils aux parents* section that discusses activities, music and games to play that would stimulate the child's knowledge of the animal kingdom. As well, there is a *Carte des animaux*, including a glossary, photographic reference list and an alphabetical index.

This book breaks the commonly found monotone text heavy style that textbooks tend to follow. It cleverly demonstrates a merger of important factual information that you would find in an encyclopaedia, yet there is a very fun almost website-like interactive feel to hook the reader. It will stimulate even those reluctant readers to turn the pages and examine each section intently by hopefully bouncing their gaze from each image to the information bubbles, building on their curiosity to read the fun facts and learn something interesting and new!

Kids will want to roam through all the pages like an animal in *Mon Grand Livre D'animaux*!

Thematic Links: Animals; Mammals; Fish; Reptiles; Insects; Ecosystems; Habitats; Forest; Ocean; Polar Regions; Prairies; Deserts; Food; Survival; World Map; Oceanography

Lara Chauvin

HUGHES, Catherine D.
Mon Grand Livre de l'Océan
(National Geographic Kids)



Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 128p. Illus. Gr. K-6. 978-1-4431-5580-9. Hdbk. \$21.99

“*Cette créature étrange possède une carapace en forme de fer à cheval, une longue queue et cinq paires de pattes...*”



Mon Grand Livre de l'Océan is a French translation of a National Geographic Kids volume written by Catherine D. Hughes, exploring the interesting and unique creatures found in

and around the oceans of the world.

This book blends the traditional encyclopaedic elements by the way of information and content page, dividing animals by oceanography where each ocean is dedicated a new chapter. It includes facts and stats with the fun explosion of colour, varying and bold fonts with real life photography of animals in their natural habitats and in motion alongside punchy information bubbles, including interesting tid-bits of the creatures participating in the action. “*La Loutre de mer fait sa toilette.*”

The author did not forget to mention the multiple types of species in some creatures, showcasing them on double page spread, like the many types of dolphins, coral, star fish etc. in a collage on a double page spread, with its respective names clearly printed below alongside a general information bubble. “*Il existe plus de 2000 espèces de Coraux de pierre...*”

As we travel around each ocean we come across the more commonly known creatures like the: *Tortue à écailles*, *poisson-clown*, *orca*, *baleines* to the more obscure and uncommon *Iguane Marin* and the *Baudroie des abysses*, or the *Limule* to name a few!

Even though the book is titled **Mon Grand Livre de l'Océan**, it also explores the creatures that are part of the overall ecosystem which include birds and furry mammals from *Mar-careux moine*, *Albatros hurleur* and *Loutre de mer*,

By the end of the book there is “*Dix choses...*” which demonstrate what contributes to the functioning of the ocean's ecosystem. We also find a “*Conseils aux parents*” section that discusses activities, music and games to play that would stimulate the child's knowledge of oceanography. As well, there is a “*Carte des océans*”. At the end there is a glossary, photographic reference list and an alphabetical index. And to aid the reader at the beginning of the book there is a double page on how to navigate through it.

Heavy texts about animals can be bothersome and boring to some children, however this book breaks the barrier as it cleverly demonstrates a

merger of important factual information that you would find in an encyclopedia yet there is a very fun almost website-like interactive feel to the book. It will surely get those reluctant readers turning the pages and being stimulated not only visually but hopefully moving their gaze to the information bubbles, building on their curiosity to read the fun facts and learn something interesting and new!

Kids will dive into **Mon Grand Livre de l'Océan**!

Thematic Links: Oceans; Fish; Birds; Mammals; Coral; Underwater Creatures; Deep Sea; Ecosystem; Habitats; Food; Survival; World Map; Oceanography

Lara Chauvin

KUIPERS, Alice
La nuit du 31

Translated from English by Rachel Martinez. Éditions Hurtubise. 2017. 232p. Gr. 12. 978-2-89723-978-7. Pbk. \$17.95.



After a three-year absence, Ivy returns to the small town from which she abruptly fled and re-ignites her friendship with Callie. As the two young women fall quickly back into their friendship, and their bad habits, the true history of the friendship resurfaces and, when Callie's friend Kurt become the object of Ivy's romantic interest, the complications, and the secrets, only multiply. As Ivy and Callie confront their past, struggle with a love triangle, and try to reconcile the distance between them after three years separation, the situation comes to a climax on one fateful summer night.

Presented from the alternating point of view of the three main characters (Ivy, Callie, and Kurt), this novel ties together the themes of romance, mystery, and coming of age in a seamless way. The characters are well-developed and engaging, real and complex, and we are immediately drawn into the friendship that exists between Ivy and Callie. However, with the realness and the complexity of the characters, as well as the modernity of the story, it should be noted that the novel is very mature and makes reference to alcohol use, drug use, underage drinking, sex, suicide and features some strong language. It should also be noted that the novel does not shy away from serious topics, such as homosexuality, drug abuse, and, death. This novel is advised for mature readers only and would be best



suited as an independent novel study focused on the topics of identity, self-discovery, and friendship.

Thematic Links: Friendship; Family; Love; Love Triangle; Adolescence; LGBTQ; Identity; Self-Discovery; Secrets and Lies

Amy J. Flight

LAVOIE, Michel

Un trésor qui dort (Collection: TatouLu! - Enquete)

Illustrated by Paul Roux. Éditions Vents d'Ouest, 2017. 139p. Illus. Gr. 3-6. 978-2-89537-528-9. Pbk. \$13.95



When Frederic receives a letter dated 1945 he is launched into a world of history, adventure and mystery. The letter suggests that somewhere in Gatineau there is a hidden treasure which can only be discovered by finding and following some rather obscure clues. Frederic isn't sure he can manage this on his own but luckily he meets up with Lydia, whom he calls 'the tornado', and the two detectives work together to see if the treasure really exists.

Readers who enjoy mystery stories will have fun as Frederic and Lydia decode various clues which lead them on an adventure through various parts of the city of Gatineau. They have quite different personalities but realize that they each have special qualities and if they work together they are very likely to succeed.

Lavoie mentions buildings and institutions which will be familiar to those in the National Capital area such as the E.B. Eddy Plant, the Chez Henri Hotel, Radio Station CKCH and Gauvin Printers. This allows the author not only to provide local colour but also to bring in a few facts about the history of the area. The letter which Frederic receives is written by a World War II soldier and briefly gives readers a glimpse into the horrors of that time.

The two characters manage to solve this rather daunting puzzle within less than a day which seems rather unrealistic but that is a minor quibble. There is drama, adventure and humour in this novel which will appeal to a variety of readers. Although it might look rather long, the book is divided into 10 chapters plus an epilogue and so is within the reach of most junior school readers.

Thematic Links: Mystery; Adventure; Treasure Hunts; World War II

Ann Ketcheson

LAVOIE, Michel

Une histoire de chat (Collection: le vent!)

Illustrated by Éric Péladeau. Éditions Vents d'Ouest, 2017. 88p. Illus. Gr. K-3. 978-2-89537-522-7. Pbk. \$8.95



Cedric thinks it will be a long, boring summer until he gets involved with solving a mystery. Cats are disappearing all over the village and pet owners are up in arms. Cedric, Sirene and Christian work together to figure out who has taken the felines and when they understand what has happened they manage to get the cats back to their owners without getting the perpetrator into trouble.

Children will enjoy the mystery of the missing pets and the humour of the trio of detectives who solve the case. Particularly funny is Sirene, a no-nonsense young woman who brainstorms ideas and takes charge of the two boys in order to get something done. The fact that the person who took the cats really meant no harm gives the book an interesting secondary plot and gives readers a sense of how empathetic the children are.

This is a great chapter book for primary students with large print and chapters of approximately 10 pages each. The use of colour and many illustrations help readers understand both the details of the plot and, in some cases, the emotions of the characters involved.

Thematic Links: Cats; Mystery; Humour

Ann Ketcheson

LOBBE, Anne-Marie

Une vie à 4 vitesses

Éditions Hurtubise, 2017. 327p. Gr. 10-12. 978-2-89723-932-9. Pbk. \$19.95



Four distinct characters, united by one thing: a car. As the stories of Érika, Daniel, Jasmine, and Phil are linked by an automobile, they are also tied together by the theme of love, in all its forms. Érika, the first owner of the vehicle, schemes to find out if her boyfriend

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is cheating and when her machinations do not work out the way she intended, her father passes the vehicle on to a deserving young man, Daniel. Daniel, the second owner and young man in search of love, must sell the car when his family needs financial help. The new owner, 16-year-old Jasmine, spends her time between driver education courses and chatting online with a mysterious young man. It is ultimately the theft of Jasmine's car which may keep her from making a serious mistake. The final driver of the vehicle is car thief Phil, a young man motivated by the need for money to help pay for medical treatments for his younger brother.

While this novel could be easily read as four short stories, with distinct and well-developed characters and intrigues, it is the originality of the common thread of the car which is the biggest strength of this novel. The four adolescent protagonists are very different, yet they are all motivated by love. Érika wants to keep the love of her boyfriend, Daniel sells the car to support his family, Jasmine is learning about love, and Phil would do anything, even break the law, to help his ill brother. Readers will be most drawn to the characters of Daniel and Jasmine and will find this both a challenging and engaging read. This novel is best suited for advanced readers and would be a great addition to any French classroom or school library.

Thematic Links: Love; Friendship; Fate; Coincidence; Family

Amy J. Flight

MCCARNEY, Rosemary



Où vais-je vivre?

Éditions Scholastic, 2017. Unp. Illus. Gr. K up. 978-1-4431-6014-8. Pbk. \$11.99

For review in English see p. 29.

MARSH, Laura



National Geographic Kids Series:

Les suricates (978-1-4431-6022-3); **Les animaux marins étranges** (978-1-4431-6023-0) Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 32p. Illus. Gr. 2-3. Pbk. \$7.99 ea.

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This selection of non-fiction books from National Geographic Kids series are French translations of the English titles *Meerkats* and *Weird Sea Creatures*. The series is an introduction to nonfiction books for young readers. The books are categorized into 3 levels based on readi-

ness and challenging content. *Les suricats* is designated a level 2 for beginner readers and *Les animaux marins étranges* level 3 for autonomous readers. Each book begins with a table of contents on the first page, followed by pages of colourful photographs of the animals. Fascinating facts are presented in easy to understand sentences, and some unfamiliar words are explained in more detail throughout the books. At the end of each, readers will find reminders about key facts and other interesting information about the creatures.

These titles make great additions to the National Geographic Kids series. The stunning photographs of the animal kingdom engage young readers in the informational content by piquing their curiosity about the natural world. The facts presented are relevant and vocabulary used is appropriately challenging for developing readers. Sensitive children might be initially frightened by some of the images in the higher level *Les animaux marins*, while others may find them intriguing. These books would be useful to have in a classroom unit on the animals or simply for pleasure reading. Recommended for classroom or school libraries.

Thematic Links: Animal Kingdom

Veronique Lavoie

MARTIN, Christian

La chute des grands-mères
(Collection Girouette)

Éditions Vents d'Ouest, 2017. 255p.

Gr. 7-9. 978-2-89537-581-4. Pbk. \$10.99



As grandmothers in Ste-Praxède de Brompton are falling prey to vicious attacks, the young group of detectives, les Enquêteurs, find themselves drawn into the mystery as Pierre and Christian's grandmother is attacked. Through a series of adventures and misadventures, the young detectives un-

cover clues to lead them to the perpetrators, with the aim of uncovering their motives and stopping them from finding more elderly victims.

This light-hearted mystery, written in a similar style to the classic Little Nicholas (Le Petit Nicholas) stories, will keep young readers in suspense and turning the pages to follow the trail with the young detectives. While the mystery is action-packed and suspenseful, the story lacks in character development and also lacks the presence of a strong female protagonist. In addition, while the search for the assailants is very detailed, the conclusion feels rushed and fails to adequately explain the motivations behind the attacks. This novel will appeal to intermediate readers who appreciate mystery and humour and would be best suited for use as an independent novel study or as a part of a literature circle.

Thematic Links: Mystery; Crime; Suspense; Friendship; Family

Amy J. Flight

MILES, Ellen

Praline, Caramel et Nougat
(Collection - Mission: Adoption)

Texte français by Isabelle Fortin. Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 92p. Gr. 3-6. 978-1-4431-6021-6. Pbk. \$7.99



When Rosalie and her best friend Maria arrive at the cottage, they are surprised to find a box containing three Pug puppies on the porch. The girls agree to look after the dogs for the weekend and are astonished at how much work it takes.

Children who enjoy pets will perhaps be familiar with the *Mission: Adoption Series* of books by Ellen Miles. The stories are entertaining and interesting and Miles includes ideas about different breeds of dogs and how to care for them. In this case, she points out within the story that puppies need lots of attention and patience in order to housebreak them, feed them and watch over them when they try to run off in order to explore their environment.

The book has no illustrations to assist with comprehension. It is divided into ten chapters of approximately nine pages each and so would be suitable for older primary children or those in the early junior grades.

Thematic Links: Pets; Puppies

Ann Ketcheson

PATTERSON, Heather



Le Canada, C'est Moi
Éditions

Scholastic, 2017.

Unp. Illus. Gr.

Preschool - 1. 978-1-4431-6305-7. Hdbk. \$14.99

For review in English see p. 11.

PELLETIER, Dominique

Traversons le Canada! (Je suis capable! Series)

Éditions Scholastic; 2017. 36p. Illus. Gr. 1-2. 978-1-4431-6019-3. Pbk. \$9.99

This instalment of the *Je suis capable!* series featuring

characters Gustave and Olivia follows them as they travel across Canada. Beginning in the East and travelling West, readers follow the children's adventures as they visit each Canadian province. The book begins by depicting a map of Canada and each province is given a two page spread depicting notable attractions and features. Following the familiar format of the series, each page poses a question with the answer/reply *Je suis capable! (I can do it!)*. For example, on the New Brunswick page, the question posed

Pêcher le homard au Nouveau-Brunswick? (Go Lobster Fishing in New Brunswick?) or further in the book *Monter à cheval en Saskatchewan? (Go horseback riding in Saskatchewan?)*. At the end of the book, the characters are quite proud of everything that they were able to do while visiting this great country.

This delightful book about Canada is a great way to introduce children to the geography and different cultural elements that make up this vast country. The simple vocabulary and colourful images make this an easy choice for parents and teachers of young children. The humorous elements in the pictures will captivate children while the educational value of the pictographs show what makes each region unique.

This book serves as a wonderful addition to a great series of books and is sure to ignite curiosity and an appreciation of Canada. It would make a fantastic addition to a classroom or school library.

Thematic Links: Canada; Geography

Veronique Lavoie



REYNOLDS, Peter H.
Joyeux rêveur
 Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 32p. Illus.
 Gr. Preschool - 3. 978-1-4431-6009-4.
 Hdbk. \$19.99

*"Je m'illumine! Mes oreilles,
 mes yeux, mon cœur et mon esprit
 sont grands ouverts!"*



Joyeux Rêveur, a translated book written and illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds is a cleverly amusing book about the wonderful activity of dreaming.

We are guided through the book by a little boy that goes on dreaming adventures, from being a king, playing a solo jazz tune, touching the clouds and screaming to the world *"Bonjour le Monde"*.

The author also takes the child into the subconscious where he mentions dreaming can create sensations like seeing colours, being surprised when turning a street corner, or feeling your heart and spirit open, as it brings about creativity *"un chaos créatif"*, where you can dream in quietness, and you can accomplish anything and have the most delicious wonderful dreams *"Je plonge dans des rêves"*

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merveilleux, délicieux et remplis de joie.", from flying in the sky to landing back on earth *"je retombe sur terre..."*.

By the end of the book a double pull out flap-page accompanies an adorable chart of forty-eight situations where you can dream and become something amazing like *"rêve inter-sidéral"*. The author then cheekily asks *"Mais quelle est la meilleure façon? Reste toi-même..."*

Delightfully this inspirational dream book's illustrations are quirky and energetic. The almost stick like caricature of the little boy bounces through the pages elegantly and whimsically amongst the bright and pastel backdrops of zig-zags, swoops, clouds, brushstrokes and splashes; a wonderful balance of light and colour with punches of black outline. Furthermore, various fonts work cohesively with the changing of the dream scenarios on each page, joyously jumping out for one's attention!

Dream a little and open your heart and mind, have fun dreaming anywhere and everywhere, have a *Joyeux Rêveur* and get children to talk about their dreams and discuss the adventures they went through, and the abilities they have and perhaps they can bring it into reality!

Thematic Links: Adventure; Children; Sleep; Fantasy; Play; Games; Sky; Meditation; Sport; Fun; Feelings; Emotions; Colours; Dreams

Lara Chauvin

A

RONDEAU, Sophie
Selfies et sushis tome 3: Réconciliation
 Éditions Hurtubise, 2017. 222p. Gr.
 7-8. 978-2-89723-941-1. Pbk. \$12.95

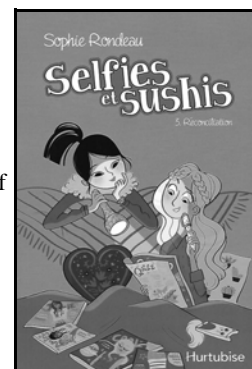
Anaé and Raphaëlle are 12 years old and attend high school in their neighbourhood. Laurent, Anaé's father, is the director of this school and is also her mother Élise's lover.

The two girls share the same locker, but there is no harmony between

them, because they are very different from each other. Raphaëlle is rather athletic, impulsive and suffers from ADHD. She is in love with William. In this third volume of the series, she participates in a contest of selfies.

Anaé, meanwhile, is involved in her school and actively participates in the organization of the "Dinner of Nations" where it will honor Japan by making sushi. She would like to go out with Thomas, but she can not tell him. Finally, it is another, Arthur, who will become her lover.

In this third volume of the series *"Selfies and sushis"*, the two narrator-characters are



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told alternately, in the form of a newspaper, from December 10 to February 26. In this two-part narrative, they share their daily lives with the readers: stories of love and friendship, activities, outings, good shots, etc. And the reconciliation between them will take place!

An uncomplicated reading that will please young readers of the same age as the characters. Readers who already know this series will enjoy reading this third volume.

The novel ends with the recipe of the cake of the angels.

The first two volumes of this series were published in 2016

Thematic Links: Family Relationships; Friendship; Teenage Issues

Louise Melançon

SCHREFFER, Eliot

Gardiens Immortels - Animal Totem (Les Bêtes Suprêmes Series)

Texte français by Anath Riveline.
Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 286p. Gr. 7-9.
978-1-4431-652-0. Pbk. \$16.99



In the fantasy world of Erdas some children find out they have spirit animals. The main characters in this novel - Conor, Abeke, Meilin and Rollan - have great beasts as their spirit animals. An evil villain wants to capture the great beasts and use them for his own purposes. Meanwhile

the eternal tree, thought to be the source of life itself, has been poisoned and is dying. Two of the heroes set out to find the fallen beasts and the other two go to the sacred tree in order to try and save it.

Like most fantasy novels, this story depends a great deal on action and adventure. The characters are somewhat stereotypical and the plot can be summarized as the classic good versus evil fight. Schreffer hints broadly at the end of the story that this is only the first in another series of books starring the great beasts and their immortal guardians.

Fans of the fantasy genre will enjoy exploring new worlds and combating the forces of evil alongside the main characters. At 286 pages this is a long book, but those who get involved with the story will be on the edge of their seats as destiny does its best to separate the main characters from their four spirit animals.

Thematic Links: Fantasy; Adventure

Ann Ketcheson

SCOTT, Lisa Ann

Des ailes scintillantes (L'école des poneys enchantés series)

Illustrated by Heather Burns. Texte français by Marie-Josée Briere. Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 140p. Illus. G. K-3. 978-1-4431-6030-8. Pbk. \$9.99



Celeste is a horse than can fly and she can also talk to any other creatures who fly. This is the magic gift which allowed her to enter the Enchanted Pony Academy. Celeste is always willing to help her friends but when she discovers a dragon on the school grounds she needs to

find the courage to be of help. She is the only pony who can communicate with the dragon, so she must try to be brave.

This is the second book of the series and again Scott takes her readers to a world of imagination and magic. Thanks to the dragons, there is more adventure and excitement in this book than in the first story in the series. Once again, there is also an underlying theme of believing in yourself and finding courage in a difficult situation.

Like *Un brillant debut*, this book's pastel cover suggests that it is aimed at girls in the primary grades. This is a chapter book whose 140 pages are divided into 12 chapters. The illustrations aid with the interest level and with comprehension of the story.

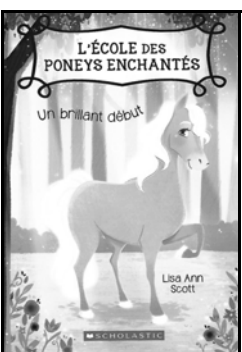
Thematic Links: Ponies; Magic; Self-Esteem

Ann Ketcheson

SCOTT, Lisa Ann

Un brillant debut (L'école des poneys enchantés Series)

Illustrated by Heather Burns. Texte français by Marie-Josée Briere. Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 134p. Illus. Gr. K-3. 978-1-4431-6029-2. Pbk. \$9.99



Diane is excited that she's been accepted at the Enchanted Pony Academy and will learn to use the magic she's been born with. But she has worries too, because her hooves don't give off glitter like the other ponies and she really has no idea what her special magic power is

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or if she even has one. Perhaps she doesn't really belong at the Academy after all.

Lisa Ann Scott gives her readers a world of enchantment filled with magic ponies, sea ponies and unicorns. Children who enjoy magic and fairy tales will be drawn to this series.

Underlying the magic is the theme of believing in yourself and working hard to achieve your goals. Diane is told this more than once in the story and finds that it improves her self-esteem and eventually helps her discover her own magical powers.

The pastel colours of the cover and the mostly female pony characters suggest that this chapter book is intended for girls in the primary grades. The 134 pages are divided into 10 chapters and there are occasional illustrations to assist with comprehension.

Thematic Links: Ponies; Magic; Self-Esteem

Ann Ketcheson

TEN NAPEL, Doug

Spectropolis

Texte français by Philippe Touboul.
Éditions Scholastic, 2017. 267p. Illus.
Gr. 4-9. 978-1-4431-5172-6. Pbk. \$16.99

Garth is accidentally captured and sent to the spirit world by Frank Galloway, a man who catches wayward ghosts and sends them back to the afterlife. In this spirit world, Garth discovers he has many supernatural powers. This also comes to the attention of the evil dictator of Spectropolis who wants nothing more than to capture Garth and use his powers to take over the whole of the spirit world. Frank and his friend Claire head to the afterlife themselves in order to find Garth and rescue him.

The author includes superpowers, technical wizardry, mummies, zombies and skeletons in this fantasy/adventure story. There is a great deal of action but the plot jumps from one theme to another so readers have to carefully pay attention to the illustrations. The story is a classic battle of good versus evil as seen in most fantasy books. Claire is a strong character at the outset but for some reason is made to change into a dress and look more feminine. This is just one detail which doesn't seem to make much sense in the context of the story.

Young readers who enjoy the graphic novel genre and reluctant readers will be fans of the story which doesn't contain a great deal of text and where much of the tale is told within the illustrations.



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Thematic Links: Fantasy; Graphic Novel; Adventure

Ann Ketcheson

TREMBLAY, Étienne
***Les Mauvais Magiciens* (Series: *Collection Girouette*)**
Illustrated by Paul Roux. Éditions Vents D'Ouest, 2017. 153p. Illus. Gr. 5-9. 978-2-89537-537-1. Pbk. \$10.95



In ***Les Mauvais Magiciens*** by Étienne Tremblay, the main character Rita is both an aspiring wizard and a troubled adolescent, struggling both with her abilities to cast spells and her difficulties with low self-esteem. As a young wizard she can do nothing consistently besides the strange ability to liquefy objects. Rita is therefore forced into a special education class which hosts a similar band of magical misfits. This dichotomy of proficient

versus not so proficient wizards divides the casters into cliques and just like many common everyday high schools, our band of misfits are exposed to a series of bullying situations.

The crux of the story has Rita and her friends leaving the school to seek the advice of *Le Magicien Bleu*, a mysterious figure who haunts the woods of an island situated next to their village. Their friendly inspiring encounter with a *sorcière errante* and an amusing *Monstre Fou* (who is in fact a *Monstre Doux*) results in all the characters engaging in some serious introspection and thus developing a better sense of who they are.

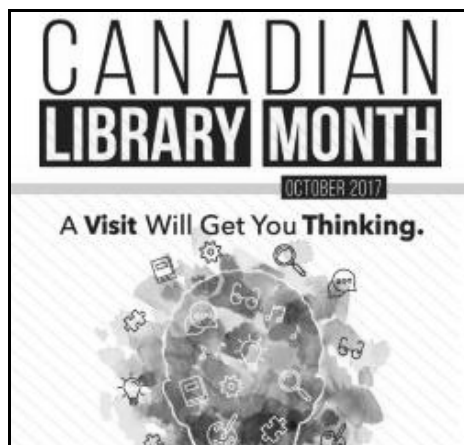
The actual setting for ***Les Mauvais Magiciens*** is in Sainte-Pierre-La Rive, a fictional yet quaint village in Quebec with beautiful views and eccentric residents. All the scenes on the remote island are really well done, as the wilderness hosts all sorts of animated animals and plants that shall help Rita and her friends. This provides for the young reader a great appreciation for nature and the implicit magic it holds. Tremblay has managed to combine elements of reality with elements of fantasy in a way that leaves the reader familiar yet amused by the phenomena which surrounds this common everyday setting.

The book explores issues of bullying with a humorous twist, and not only works at demon-

strating the psychological affects that bullying develops but most importantly insists that victims of bullying become empowered to stop it. Rita begins the story in an almost hopeless sense of despair, saying to herself often, "*Je me deteste*", and admiring from afar the greater abilities of wizards more adept at casting spells. Her character then evolves so that she appreciates her own unique abilities even if they may not fit a common mould. "*Les gens ont le pouvoir que tu leur donnes, n'oublie pas ça.*" - this quote becomes a sort of mantra throughout the book, that power over others is only present when it is obliged by the individuals who are shamed by it. Rita will therefore come to realize that her fear of the bully is only a manifestation in her own mind, and once she manages to recognize him as just a troubled peer, she manages to drain him of his power. For adolescents, ***Les Mauvais Magiciens*** is an extremely imaginative story, written in a Tolkien-like way, where every unsuspecting natural creature has a stake in saving the day.

Thematic Links: Fantasy; Magic; Bullying

Zachary Chauvin



October 2017

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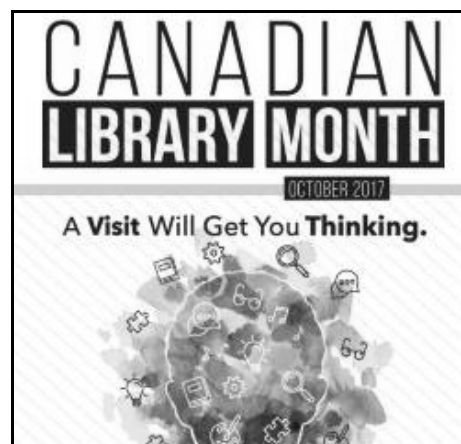
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Dashing Through the Snow: A Canadian Jingle Bells
Illustrated by Werner Zimmermann.
Scholastic Canada, 2014/2017. Unp.

Illus. Gr. K-3. 978-1-4431-2822-3. Bdbk. \$9.99

Hardback reviewed in v. 20, # 2, December 2014.

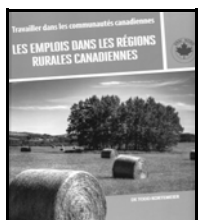
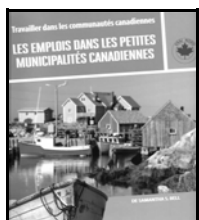


KORMAN, Gordon
Jingle: A Swindle Mystery
Scholastic, 2016/2017. 199p. Gr. 4-7. 978-0-545-86144-1. Pbk. \$8.99

Hardback reviewed in v. 22, # 2, December 2016

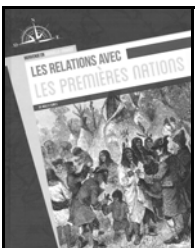
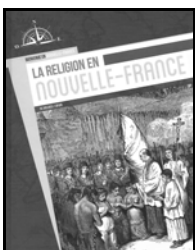
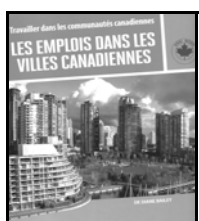


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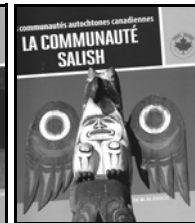
Beech Street Books/Saunders Book Co., 2018. 24p. Illus. Gr. 1-3. Hdbk. \$26.95 ea.

English version reviewed in v. 22, # 2, December 2016



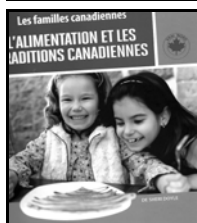
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The Manitoba School Library Association
SAGE Conference
in October, 2017
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TMC will explore research papers on issues in school library learning commons practice that speak to Indigenous education, human rights, diversity and inclusiveness to complement the timely conference theme, *Truth in Our Stories: Seeking a Path to Reconciliation*.

The SAGE conference will take place on Friday October 20 followed by a tour of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The traditional TMC evening dinner social will be held on Friday evening and the TMC symposium will take place on Saturday October 21, 2017.

The theme of TMC5 and sub-themes are

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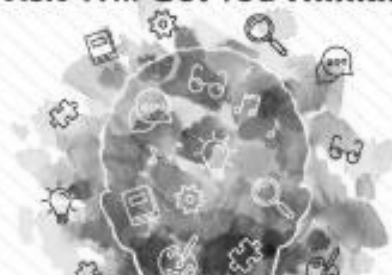
May 5-12, 2018

For information on events and activities visit the
website at www.bookweek.ca

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