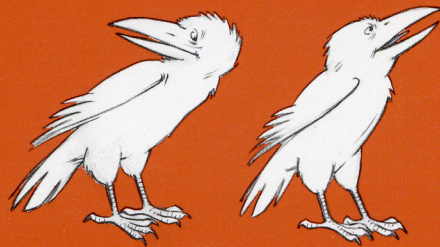


The White Ravens 2010

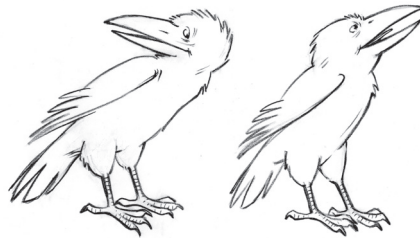
A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature



Internationale Jugendbibliothek

The White Ravens 2010

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature



Internationale Jugendbibliothek

Symbols

- ★ Special Mention – book to which we wish to draw particular attention
- ◆ book whose content is found to contribute to an international understanding among cultures and people
- book whose text is judged to be easily understandable, i.e. easy-to-read text, and yet dealing with topics of interest to older readers; well-suited to foreign-language readers and for inclusion in foreign language collections of public and school libraries

The White Ravens 2010

A Selection of International Children's and Youth Literature

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Preface

The annual catalogue »The White Ravens« features 250 new and notable titles of children's and young adult literature from over 40 countries. The language specialists of the Internationale Jugendbibliothek (International Youth Library) selected these books in the course of the previous year from the incoming donations to acclaim the most noteworthy and remarkable ones. In the case of a few countries and languages, we once again were helped by be-friended experts and organisations, whom we heartily thank.

»The White Ravens« are at the core of the collection management and mediation activities of the IYL – the largest library for international children's and young adult literature in the world, with holdings of nearly 600,000 books. Our main tasks include cataloguing, making accessible, and creatively promoting the books, which have been kindly donated by publishing houses, institutions, organisations, and individuals from around the world for decades. This catalogue, put together by our team of language

specialists, who have excellent knowledge of the international children's and youth book market, is part of our effort to promote these books.

Every year, the catalogue »The White Ravens« is published in time for the Bologna Children's Book Fair, the world's leading international event dedicated to children's publishing, where it is presented together with the books themselves.

This selection, which features books in more than 30 languages, has gained international recognition because it highlights the trends of contemporary children's and young adult literature on an international scale. It serves as a list of recommendations for parents, teachers, and librarians, and inspires publishing houses to acquire translation rights. Public and school libraries or international bookstores use the catalogue as a basis for making their purchases. Since 1996, the White Ravens selections are also registered in a database, which can be found on our website at www.ijb.de. Furthermore, thanks

to the much appreciated support of the International Children's Digital Library (ICDL), the full information is also available at www.icdlbooks.org.

Because the collections of the International Youth Library consist exclusively of books we receive from our friends around the world, only review and donation copies become part of the White Ravens selection. Therefore, the range and quality of »The White Ravens« is contingent on the books donated. To offer a broad variety of publications, we make an effort to present titles from as many publishing houses as possible. Unfortunately, not all publishing houses that consistently and generously supply the IYL can be featured every year. Nonetheless, we extend our sincere gratitude to each and every one of them for their continued shipments of books!

We can confidently assure our donors that their books will be catalogued, indexed by subject, and included in our permanent collection. In this way, they are available to international specialists who

visit our study library, make use of our reference services from abroad, or consult our catalogues on the Internet. Over the years, many books also find their way into specialised travelling exhibitions, exhibition catalogues, teacher recommendation lists, and activity programs for children.

Last but not least, we renew our request to all publishers: Please continue to send us your new titles! As for our part, we shall continue to live up to the reputation of Munich's International Youth Library as the home of the most comprehensive collection of international literature for children and young people.

Dr. Christiane Raabe
February 2010

East Asian Languages

Japan (Japanese)

1

Anno, Mitsumasa (illus./text)

Tabi no ehon 7

(Anno's Journey 7)

Tōkyō: Fukuinkan Shoten, 2009. – [54] p.

ISBN 978-4-8340-2463-0

China/Cultural history – Human being – Nature – Landscape

China is the focus country in the seventh volume of »Anno's Journey«. For the representation of his travel route, Anno takes the famous »Qingming role« of Zhang Zeduan (12th century) as his guide. He travels up the Yellow River and presents readers with a striking poetically depicted foggy river landscape. Lively scenes of everyday life in the city follow, then sights in the country, ending with the grand landscape of the loess highlands. He arranges his pictures, which are combined with elements of urban design, architecture, ship building, geography, ethnology, and archaeology, with much know-how and care, in the attempt to give a faithful impression of China. In these wordless pictures, like subtle ink painting on silk, the past and the present intermingle. (10+) ◆

2

Arai, Ryōji (text/illus.)

Ehon no kodomo

(Picture book kids)

Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2008. – [36] p.

(Kōdansha no sōsaku ehon)

ISBN 978-4-06-132385-8

Picture book – Journey – Storytelling – Imagination

Four little picture books emerge from the mouth of the yawning giant picture book. »Looking for little stories?« »Looking for short stories? We'll come to you!« – this is what those riding on the street car call out. Ryōji Arai invites readers to embark on an imaginative trip around the world. The young animals of the forest and the small fish of the river adore hearing stories. The picture book kids melodiously read them the most novel ones, for instance the one about chestnuts that like to cook, the one about dancing tea cups or the one about a pair of bridge towers. Observers along for the ride can invent stories themselves by homing in on the delightful details in the pictures. In Arai's dynamic double-sided pictures, which are characterized by intense colours and resemble children's drawings, imagination knows no limit. (4+)

3

Ekuni, Kaori (text)

Yamamoto, Yōko (illus.)

Yukidaruma no Yukikochan

(Yukiko, the girl made of snow)

Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2009. – 233 p.

ISBN 978-4-03-643060-4

Snow – Supernatural being – Zest for life

The hero of this whimsically poetic novel is a pudgy girl made of snow, like a snowman, named Yukiko. She fell from the sky during a snow storm and since then lives in the shed of the old painter at the foot of the mountain. Yukiko, the painter, her partner, and the village children become friends. Everyone needs to understand that Yukiko is made totally of snow, for which reason she can never be allowed to melt. She herself strictly abides by the rules and follows the advice of her adoptive parents for the sake of survival. In this way, she masters her everyday life and always discovers new things about people, animals, and nature. In the snowy village, she enjoys everything with great zest for life. The author lets the readers feel the magic of language. Yōko Yamamoto has befittingly illustrated the cheerful story with coloured copper stitching. (12+)

4

Hasegawa, Setsuko (text)

Tachibana, Makoto (illus.)

Shiofuki usu

(The mortar out which salt flows)

Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 2008. – [38] p.

(Te no hira mukashibanashi)

ISBN 978-4-00-116386-5

Sea – Salt – Mortar – Folktale

There are many explanatory variations for why the sea is salty. One Japanese variation comes from this small-formatted picture book series of folktales and is very similar to the German one. A poor farmer asks his rich brother for rice to offer to the gods for New Year's, which the latter scornfully refuses. On the way home, he meets an old man, who helps him find a mortar kept by the dwarves. If he turns the mortar to the right, his wish materializes. The mortar makes him rich, and he is generous to others. His greedy brother steals the mortar and tries to grind salt on the sea. Because he does not know how to stop it, he ends up sinking with the boat. On the bottom of the sea, the mortar grinds on incessantly. The illustrations are manga-style and modern, as well as classical, being indebted to the old folk block picture books of the Edo era. (5+) ◆

5

Hirata, Kenya (text)

Katō, Kunio (illus.)

Tsumiki no ie

(The house that looks like it is made from toy blocks)

Tōkyō: Hakusensha, 2009. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-4-592-76131-0

Sea – Family – Memory – Time passing – Climate change

Once there was a city by the sea, where an old man started his family. When the sea level began to rise unceasingly, its inhabitants continually had to build new houses upon their old ones. The old man is once again obliged to bulk up his house, and in the process a tool falls through a hatch in the floor. He dives down into the old rooms, where the past of his family comes alive. The story, told with atmospheric pictures in subdued colours, contains multiple layers of meaning: family, life, the passage of time, but also the effects of global warming are all broached. The picture book, which is also available in an English edition, follows the cartoon film of the same name, which won the prestigious Short Film Award (Cristal d'Annecy), the child jury prize at the Annecy International Animation Festival in 2008, and the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film in 2009. (8+) ●

6

Inui, Chie (adapt.)

Hayakawa, Junko (illus.)

Yama kara kita futago Sumantori to Sukosurono.**Kagee shibai Wayan no monogatari yori**

(Twin brothers who share no resemblance. From the shadow play of Wayang Jawa)

Tōkyō: Fukuinkan Shoten, 2009. – 53 p.

(Nihon kessaku ehon shirizu)

ISBN 978-4-8340-2452-4

Indonesia – Shadow theatre – Twin – Human likeness – Gods

This picture book concerns the traditional Javanese shadow puppet play »Wayang Kulit«. At the centre stand twin brothers, the beautiful Sumantori on the one hand and Sukosurono, who is ostracized due to his ugliness and who gains supernatural powers in the wild on the other. The latter helps his brother, who is commissioned by the king to lead the fight against a demonic god. After wild fights and tragic fates, the two souls are united in heaven. The uniting of the two so very different brothers symbolizes the multi-facetedness of the human

being. The complex story of human and divine worlds is told in a clear manner. Junko Hayakawa translates the characteristics of the shadow puppets, traditionally made out of buffalo hide, into filigreed wood cuts. The thoughtful composition of the pictures stylishly lends the drama its proper backdrop. (10+) ◆

7

Ise, Hideko (text/illus.)

Nisan = Mon Frère

(My older brother)

Tōkyō: Kaiseisha, 2008. – 40 p.

ISBN 978-4-03-963890-8

Gogh, Vincent van – Gogh, Theo van – Art – Siblings – Biography

Under the blue sky and between the waves of golden wheat stalks, a funeral procession marches by. Vincent is dead. Theo recalls their shared childhood and the further life of his older brother. Hideko Ise, painter and picture book artist, since 1990 has traced the footsteps of Vincent van Gogh, for this reason travelling to Holland, Belgium and France. She wrote essays and translated »L'autre Van Gogh. Une biographie de Theo Van Gogh« (M. A. Ozanne / F. De Jode) into Japanese with her sister in 2007. From her passionate treatment of the topic, a lively picture of the brothers crystallizes. A special deep blue, shining and noble yet sometimes also hostile to the point of being inscrutable, dominates. This is a colour highly symbolic of the ego and of tortured living, of devotion and solitude. The golden yellow of the wheat fields and the sun flowers on the other hand stand for creative joy. This is a moving biography with idiosyncratic and painterly illustrations and an equally evocative poetic text. (11+) ★

8

Ishizu, Chihiro (text)

Perrault, Charles (orig. text)

Aminaka, Izuru (illus.)

Nemureru mori no bijo

(Sleeping Beauty)

Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2009. – [40] p.

(Kōdansha no sōsaku ehon: Barē meisaku ehon)

ISBN 978-4-06-132405-3

Sleeping Beauty – Ballet – Theatre

This picture book ushers its readers right into the theatre hall for a production of Tchaikovsky's ballet »Sleeping Beauty«, which is based on Perrault's fairytale. Opening the book, readers find themselves in the foyer, surround-

ed by the murmur of a festive mood. From there they head into a magnificent auditorium, and the first act begins. The narrative text becomes an enjoyable companion. The important scenes of the piece are represented in romantic pictures that show the dancers in their typical poses. The colours spread out into a dream-like atmosphere, as can only be experienced in the theatre. At the end, the readers find themselves back in the auditorium, sensing the lingering mood of the experience. The sophisticated »staging« of the picture book very directly transmits the magical appeal of classical ballet. (6+)

9

Kitayama, Yōko (text/illus.)

Inuuekun ga wasureta koto

(What my friend the dog forgot)

Tōkyō: Akane Shobō, 2008. – 78 p.

(Inuuekun to Kumazawakun; 5)

ISBN 978-4-251-00795-7

Friendship – Individuality – Differentness – Recognition – Memory – Everyday life

Ever since the bear and the dog became friends, they have lived together. Their everyday life is peaceful. Because they are of different natures, they complement each other. The naive, sometimes dense bear likes to take over the practical tasks, in contrast to his more clever friend, who leans toward the metaphysical, enjoys philosophizing in leisure, and applies his thought to everyday life. With his logic and erudition, he continually makes the bear reflect and come to new insights. The fifth volume of the long-time seller »Dog boy and bear boy« focuses on memory: What should our memory hold onto and how to make it do so? It offers an educational and witty account of the different characters and ways of thinking about human individuals. (7+) ●

10

Miura, Tarō (text/illus.)

Oumasan shitē!

(Let me ride!)

Tōkyō: Kogumasha, 2009. – [22] p.

ISBN 978-4-7721-0194-3

Toddler – Children's play – Riding

A little child wants to play horseback riding and his father is to be the pony. He crawls on all fours and the child climbs onto his back. They set off, click clack click. Then they encounter a bear, and the child wishes to ride on that as well. Both child and father sit on the bear, stomp stomp stomp. Then a horse comes, then an

elephant! In this way, more and more riding companions join in. At the high point of the story, little viewers are surprised with playbook elements. The second to last page of the book contains a guessing game, and both pages are folded over on the last. Opening it lets a giant dinosaur emerge, on which all previous playmates are riding. Tarō Miura here works with the effect of escalation in simple scenic pictures, thus creating a lively, animating book for toddlers. (2+)

11

Nakagawa, Chihiro (text)

Koyose, Junji (illus.)

Otasuke kobito no kurisumasu

(Who brought this present?)

Tōkyō: Tokuma Shoten, 2009. – [36] p.

(BFC)

ISBN 978-4-19-862837-6

Dwarf – Christmas – Present – Transport – Utility vehicle

As usual, Old Saint Nick is completely overwhelmed with presents and so this time asks the dwarves to help him with deliveries. With his reindeer sleigh, he lands in an expansive compound, where innumerable tiny dwarves wait on standby. Because for them the packages are enormous, they have perfectly equipped themselves with all manner of transport and construction vehicles. A team lashes down a white object on a low bed trailer, then it's ready for transport. The observer follows the dwarves at eye level, curious about how they will master the transport. From page to page, it becomes more evident why so many transport vehicles are needed. This creative picture book depicts in detail all vehicles and machines, along with their special functions and operations. (4+)

12

Nanjō, Takenori (text)

Lofting, Hugh (orig. text)

Motai, Takeshi (illus.)

Doritoru sensei Afurika e iku

(Doctor Dolittle goes to Africa)

Tōkyō: Shūeisha, 2008. – 58 p.

ISBN 978-4-08-781408-8

Doctor – Love of animals – Helpfulness – Africa – Adventure

This book is a novelty for the history of the international reception of the children's classic »Dr. Dolittle«. Particularly in Japan, where the story of the humane doctor has been known since 1941, it represents an enrichment,

especially with regard to the until now largely unknown oeuvre of the illustrator Motai (1908-1956). For the first half of the first »Dolittle« volume (orig. title: »Doctor Dolittle's first adventure«), the artist left behind 31 slides that he frequently used to narrate the story to his children at home. The lovely pictures with contoured figures on translucent paper, which now appear in picture book form, evoke nostalgia among adults but still speak to today's children. Motai, loved for his simple, warmly radiating painting style, drew with much humour. (4+)

13

Ozawa, Toshio (retell.)

Kanaida, Etsuko (illus.)

Toraneko to oshōsan. Nihon mukashibanashi

(The grateful temple cat. A Japanese folktale)

Tōkyō: Kumon Shuppan, 2010. – [36] p.

(Nihon mukashibanashi)

ISBN 978-4-7743-1691-8

Cat – Priest – Gratefulness – The supernatural – Coffin – Folktale

The hero in this folktale is a tomcat who is lovingly taken care of by a poor priest and who thanks him in a wondrous way. As a funeral procession of a rich farming family makes its way toward the temple, the coffin is suddenly lifted by a gust of wind into the sky, where it remains floating. Neither the high-ranking priests nor the ascetic monks are able to coax the coffin back to earth. Only the inoffensive priest succeeds with the help of a secret prayer, which the cat revealed to him. He is greatly admired for his deed and awarded a glorious temple. The tasteful design of this book is remarkable. With delicate graphic style and quiet irony, Etsuko Kanaida illustrates events from different perspectives and so creates dramatic pictorial compositions. (5+) ◆

14

Sakai, Komako (text/illus.)

B to I to R to D

(B and I and R and D)

Tōkyō: Hakusensha, 2009. – [66] p.

ISBN 978-4-592-76135-8

Child – Emotion – Imagination – Everyday life

This little book from Komako Sakai, who currently is one of the most in-demand authors of Japanese picture book artists abroad, does not disappoint young book lovers. It contains nine fragmentary everyday-life stories about a little girl – perhaps based on vague memories from the childhood of the artist – in respect to her

fears, games, and toy friends, as well as her fascination with the outside world, like the first snow, thunder and lightning over the kindergarten, flowers in the pond or everyday objects. A child's behaviour, temperament, and imagination are beautifully and wistfully expressed in gently surrealist texts and pictures. Sakai accurately draws children's bodily postures, too. Also notable is the book's stylish design and bejewelled slipcase. (13+)

15

Wakaichi no ehon seisaku jikkō iinkai (text)

Nagano, Hideko (illus.)

Hiragana nikki

(The diary with Hiragana characters)

Ōsaka: Kaihō Shuppan, 2008. – [36] p.

(Eru kurabu)

ISBN 978-4-7592-2243-2

Old age – Illiteracy – Human Rights – Literacy

This picture book is dedicated to those people who fought for literacy in Japan and those who make an effort, despite old age, to become competent readers and writers. 83-year-old Kazuko Yoshida could not go to school as a child due to her underprivileged background and poverty. Now she is one of those who is learning to read and write, having participated for twenty years in a course on lessening illiteracy. She began to keep a diary, whose text serves as source material here. The book was published by a concern group in her community working towards literacy and human rights. Illustrator Hideko Nagano succeeds in bringing the main character with her entire social situation and in full vitality close to the reader. (8+)

People's Republic of China (Chinese)

16

Cao, Wenxuan

Jianjiao

(Screaming)

Jiangxi, Nanchang: 21-Shiji-Chubanshe, 2009.. – 179 p.

(Wo de Erzi Pika)

ISBN 978-7-5391-5001-7

Father – Son – Countryside – Screaming

In this series, Cao Wenxuan tells a story about a boy based on the life of his own son. In the first book, »Screaming«, Pika is born in the city and then brought to his grandparents in the countryside, which serves as

the backdrop for Cao's many young adult novels and is actually the place where the author spent his own childhood decades ago. Pika grows up in the open countryside and is very fond of his extraordinary talent for screaming until it seems the clouds will break apart and rain fall. Cao, a 2004 Hans Christian Andersen Award nominee, is an advocate for children's literature as a way of forming the character of a nation. Within Chinese children's literature, he has developed his own unmistakable language and style. (7+)

17

Xiao, Ping

Liunian yicin

(An inch of flowing time)

Hangzhou: Zhejiang-Shaonian-Ertong-Chubanshe, 2009. – 216 p.

ISBN 978-7-5342-5768-1

Silkworm – Pursuit – Life – Time

Inch, a silkworm unsatisfied with the thought of a silkworm's life consisting merely of eating mulberry leaves and making a cocoon, decides to go out and look for her »far away« dream, though she's not sure what kind of dream she hopes to realize. The story is told by a narrator who Inch finds when she wiggles out of her story, and she asks the narrator to teach her reading and writing so that she can be a story-spinner herself. Every chapter of the tale is composed of two parts: the narrator's soliloquy on storytelling and the story about Inch, which seem to be separated from one another, yet melt into the same plot line. This book, tinged with metafictional moments, is much more than an animal story. It treats the philosophical pursuit of the meaning of life and time, and stands out as a narrative experiment in contemporary Chinese animal fables. (12+)

18

Yin, Jianling

1937. Shaonian xia zhiqiu

(A boy's life since 1937)

Guiyang: Guizhou Renmin Chubanshe, 2009. – 167 p.
ISBN 978-7-221-08480-4

China/1937 – War – Orphan – Coming of age

A bomb that blows up at an indoor amusement centre in Shanghai in 1937 changes Xia Zhiqiu's life overnight. A boy of a rich bourgeois family, he is left an orphan and sent to a charity boarding school. The plot takes place during Japan's 1937 military invasion of China and the following eight-year-long War of

Resistance in China. The war accelerates Xia's growing up. When he tries to walk out from under its shadow and look for his younger sister, who survived the bomb yet then disappeared, he realizes that he has »grown tall enough to wear his father's coat«. Taking the perspective of a common urban boy, the author provides the reader with a new look at the war and its effects on ordinary people's lives. The author develops a way of representing war in children's literature which refrains from emphasizing heroism. (13+) ◆

19

Yu, Yujun

Chao ku tianshi da duzi da

(Beer-Belly Dad is the coolest angel)

Jinan: Mingtian-Chubanshe, 2009. – 263 p.

ISBN 978-7-5332-6125-2

Adoption – Abandoning – Disability

A single Dad has four little girls. Though his daughters are all disabled in some way, they are the loveliest babies in their father's eyes. Rice Ball, who has cerebral palsy, is called Sleeping Baby, splay-footed Pudding is named Chaplin Baby, Soda with ureteral heteroplasia is loved as Toilet Baby, and the dumb Qingge is called Slobber Bubble Baby. The four girls take it for granted that they came from their father's beer belly – as they were told by Dad, whom they think is the coolest angel in the world –, until one day they find out that they were actually abandoned by their parents and adopted by their Dad. This is a bittersweet story told with a light tone. The way the author develops the plot and the narrative voice gives the novel a special, touching power. (9+)

20

Zhang, Zhilu

Wanwan <proper name>

Jiangxi, Nanchang: 21-Shiji-Chubanshe, 2009. – 103 p.
ISBN 978-7-5391-4696-6

School – Understanding – Childhood

Xu Wanwan is a sixth-grade girl facing her first important entrance examination into middle school. She seems to be a plain girl, sometimes laughed at for her unimpressive figure and grade scores. But she is also pure-hearted, accommodating, and full of creativity, which, though at times leaving her embarrassed, finally takes her down the path of success. Zhang Zhilu is a nominee for the 2006 Hans Christian Andersen Award. One of the best storytellers in contemporary Chinese

children's literature, he delights his readers yet again by spinning the life of an ordinary girl into a fantastic novel. Zhang builds suspense and tension at the most appropriate parts of the novel. Wanwan's school stories offer not only reading fun, but also induce serious reflection on today's childhood experience. (10+)

Republic of Korea (Korean)

21

Kim, Yŏ-ryŏng

Wandŭgi [Wan-deuk] <proper name>

P'aju: Ch'angbi, 2009. – 211 p.

(Ch'angbi ch'ŏngsonyŏn munhak; 8)

ISBN 978-89-364-5608-5

Adolescence – Coming of age – Solidarity – Compassion – Social adjustment

This captivating story of 17-year-old Wan-deuk engages the minds of readers from the first sentence to the last. It reads almost like a comic, with a graphic character set-up, lively conversation, and unexpected humour. Wan-deuk, born to a poor family, is not a good student at school, but he never loses a fight and he understands the lives of the disadvantaged, such as the disabled, the poor, and immigrant labourers. His life changes when he meets an eccentric teacher; he starts kickboxing and begins to learn to control his anger and to express his love to his mother. As a coming-of-age novel, it won high praise from critics who claimed that it comes close to »The catcher in the rye« by J. D. Salinger. (12+)

22

Pyŏng, Kim (text)

Yi, Kwang-ik (illus.)

Kkum kkunŭn tojagi

(Dreaming with pottery)

Seoul: Chaek Ingnŭn Kom, 2009. – [36] p.

(On'gojisin; 7)

ISBN 978-89-93242-14-0

Pottery – Boredom – Imagination

Dooree is a boy in a family-run pottery workshop. Dad prepares clays, grandpa forms shapes by turning clay on a wheel, mom carves patterns on the shaped surfaces, and uncle glazes them. Everyone is tied up all day, every day with making pottery. »No one spares time to play with me!« One day, Dooree, who is bored and angry, is amused when a boy with a mysterious blue-green light shows up. »Come, play hide and seek

with us!« Dooree chases him into a treasure chamber, where he meets an old man dancing with a crane, kids playing under grapevines, a big fish, and a dragon rising above the clouds (they are characters from paintings on pottery objects). They had also become bored and dispirited because children, only visiting museums during school vacations, had passed them by, having little interest in famous national treasures. (4+)

23

Yi, Yŏng-sŏ (text)

Kim Tong-sŏng (illus.)

Ch'aek kwa noninŭn chip

(A house for meeting books)

P'aju: Munhak Tongne, 2009. – 191 p.

(Porŭmtal mun'go; 30)

ISBN 978-89-546-0734-6

Korea/19th century – Equality – Egalitarianism – Freedom of expression

Unlike most historical novels, this original story of a boy living in the midst of the Yi Dynasty's suppression of Catholicism in the 19th century is not only instructive and edifying, but also touching. Moonjang's father makes a living copying books, including prohibited Catholic doctrines. Moonjang delivers the manuscripts both to noble scholars and members of other classes, such as merchants and bar maids. The Western philosophy of egalitarianism spreads rapidly and leads to social turmoil. The writer vividly describes the lifestyles and ideologies of the society at large as well as of individuals living during this historically rich period, all the while never losing the protagonist's perspective. The brilliant illustrations by renowned artist Tong-sŏng Kim accompany the text and help transport readers back to the era. (10+)

24

Yu, Ũn-sil (text)

Pyŏn, Yŏng-mi (illus.)

Mŏltchŏngghan Yi Yu-jŏng

(Sensible You-jŏng)

P'aju : P'urŭn Sup, 2009. – 148 p.

(P'urŭn sup chagŭn namu; 13)

ISBN 978-89-7184-627-8

Self-confidence – Adaptation – Shortcoming – Poverty

This is a collection of five short stories about five average kids. They are not perfect – just like everyone else – yet they learn to accept themselves the way they are and to lead happy lives. You-jŏng's problem is that

she has a very bad sense of direction, which for several months makes it difficult for her to find the way back to her new home from school. Yong-soo lives with his grandpa who manages to earn a living by collecting waste paper, empty bottles, and some welfare. Yong-soo's dream is to eat real shrimp bought at the supermarket. One day, the children summon up the courage to visit a supermarket, a place they have never been before. Another boy is worried about a homework essay that he is supposed to write about his grandfather who has no high social status. (7+)

25

Yun, Yö-rim (text)
Chöng, Hyön-ji (illus.)

**Na, hwaga ka toego sip'ö! Hwaga Yun
Söng-nam iyagi**

(I want to be an artist)

Seoul: Ungjin Chuniö, 2008. – 35 p.
ISBN 978-89-01-08808-2

**Seock-nam Youn [Söng-nam Yun] <biography>
– Painting – Art**

This is a biography of the artist and feminist activist Seock-nam Youn (Söng-nam Yun), who never had a formal art education, started painting only after the age of forty, yet has become one of the leading female artists in Korea. She wanted to be an artist from when she was very young, but could not follow her dream due to her deprived family background. One day, as a poor middle-aged housewife, her childhood dream suddenly dawned on her: »I want to paint.« She paints mostly women, especially mothers who live for their families, sacrificing their own dreams and identities. The book shows, though, that her early pictures of women suffering under the heavy burdens of life later gave way to paintings depicting women handing lotus flowers to each other and to the world. The septuagenarian artist is still very active and presently lives with many abandoned dogs. (6+)

Africa

Botswana

26

Botumile, Bontekanye (text)
Stein, Debra (illus.)

**The seed children. A myth about Botswana's
enchanted trees and shrubs**

Maun, Botswana: Thari-E-Ntsho Storytellers, 2008. – 35 p.
(Voices of African souls)
[no ISBN]

**Disobedience – Metamorphosis – Secret –
Respect for nature – Environment**

This is the third children's book written by Bontekanye Botumile, a popular and award-winning author in her home country. The story she relates is based on a common superstition that Botswana parents tell their children. The colourful, sometimes unquieting pencil and watercolour pictures illustrate key scenes from the folktale-like story in which a little girl is lured into the forest by a bird. Suddenly she is surrounded by strange whispers and giggles. Terrified at first, she learns that the shrubs and trees are in fact village children that had gone missing after they had eaten fruit seeds and turned into plants. In addition to the story, the small book also contains a tree poem, various puzzles, and information about Botswana trees as well as a convincing message about showing respect for nature. (6+)

South Africa

27

Mandela, Nelson (orig. text)
Wyk, Chris van (abridg.)
Bouma, Paddy (illus.)

Long walk to freedom

Ilovo, Gauteng: Pan Macmillan, 2009. – [60] p.
ISBN 978-1-40509188-6

Mandela, Nelson – Apartheid – Discrimination

This beautiful picture book in landscape format is an adaptation of Nelson Mandela's well-known autobiography of the same title, originally published in the 1990s. The abridged text traces the most important stages in the life of South Africa's most famous leader. Accompanied by appealing watercolour illustrations in warm shades, the frugal, memorable narrative delineates the black boy's life herding goats and sheep, his days at a mission

school, and his education at a big boarding school. In a condensed text, the author then continues to describe his studies, his early political involvement, his imprisonment, and his eventual release in 1990. This non-fiction picture book makes an important part of world history available to a younger audience. It is published in all the eleven official languages of South Africa. (6+) ◆

Asia and Oceania

Australia

28

Beaton, Ben

Mama's song

Fitzroy, Vic.: Black Dog Books, 2009. – 199 p.

ISBN 978-174203105-7

Teenage pregnancy – Running away – Coming of age – Mother – Daughter – Reconciliation

When rebellious seventeen-year-old George (i.e. Georgina) gets pregnant, tensions between her mother and her rise to an unbearable level. Instead of yielding to her mother's wish of putting the baby up for adoption, she decides to run away and seek refuge with her Gran, the only family member she relies on. Yet discovering that her Gran had died two months earlier, George finds herself all alone in a small country hospital, unsure of whether she will be able to cope with her new life. This touching and gritty novel features a believable teenage protagonist with whom readers will easily identify. As the narration jumps back and forth between the past and the time after George gives birth to Hannah, readers can slowly piece the young girl's story together and witness her growing into a mature and responsible young woman. (14+)

29

Danalís, John (text)

Danalís, Stella (illus.)

Schumann the shoemaker

St Lucia, Qld.: Univ. of Queensland Press, 2009. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-0-7022-3621-1

Shoemaker – Industrialisation

Schumann is an old-school shoemaker. His shoes are not merely shoes, they are »works of art«. The old cobbler is admired for his creations, each of them unique, comfortable, and durable. Yet when a huge shoe factory opens in his home town selling boring and badly-made but cheap shoes in large quantities, Schuman can no longer make

a living. Eventually, he leaves town and settles in a forgotten forest where the animals soon gather around him proudly wearing his unique products. Exquisite mixed-media illustrations in vivid colours depict the creative moon-faced shoemaker, his boot-shaped cottage, and the happy animals. The collages, created with a multitude of patterned and printed papers, perfectly capture the mood of this touching fairytale-like story. (4+)

30

Hilton, Nette (text)

Agostino, Vincent (illus.)

My silent world

Sydney, N.S.W.: Hachette Australia, 2009. – [32] p.

(A Lothian Children's book)

ISBN 978-0-7344-1037-5

Deafness – Hearing aid

This remarkable and unusual picture book deals with the topic of deafness in a highly original way. While the sparse, poetic text describes several aspects of a deaf girl's outside world (birds, the ocean, music, colours) as she sees and experiences them, the large double-spread illustrations visualise her bubbling emotions. Teeming with a conglomeration of computer-created shapes and objects in different sizes, the impressive, slightly psychedelic pictures in loud colours clearly express her different worldview and her happiness with it. As the story develops, the illustrations build up suspense to demonstrate her uneasiness about the changes awaiting her as she receives a cochlear-implant and discovers the world of sound. This story offers a perfect incentive for school- and group discussions. (6+) ●

31

Jurevicius, Nathan (illus.)

Scarygirl

Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2009. – 126 p.

ISBN 978-1-74175-370-7

Wilderness – Abandoning – Search for identity

When Nathan Jurevicius created the character of Scarygirl in 2001 for an online project, he could not have foreseen that just a couple of years later, his quirky little piraty protagonist and her outlandish universe would mesmerize enthusiastic fans in many countries. This two-part textless graphic novel traces the small heroine's adventures from the moment she is mysteriously dumped at a remote beach. Together with two newly found friends – gentle Blister, a »super-intelligent giant octopus«, and philosophical giant rabbit Bunniguru – Scary-

girl sets off towards the huge city to uncover some secrets about her past and about the strange man who haunts her dreams. The bright computer-created illustrations (all based on colour-pencil drawings) feature a motley crew of eccentric characters placed in a sinister fantastical environment. An »Intermission« in the middle of the book includes an interview with the author plus various sketches, photographs of Scarygirl-world vinyl toys, and Jurevicius's additional artwork. (Winner, 2009 Aurealis Award for Best Illustrated Book/Graphic Novel) (12+) ●

32

Larbalestier, Justine

Liar

Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2009. – 329 p.

ISBN 978-1-74175-872-6

Murder – Investigation – Outsider – Truth – Lie

Although this novel's first-person narrator Micah has a reputation for being a notorious liar, she vows to stick to the truth in telling her story after her classmate and boyfriend (?) Zach is brutally murdered. And her affirmations do sound sincere – or maybe not? Which version of her truth is the true one? As the gripping tale unfolds, switching back and forth between »before« and »after« Zach's death, readers will be mesmerized by the young girl's story, but have doubts (and reasonably so) about trusting her as the information she offers to her audience is sprinkled with slight contradictions and Micah's odd concession of having told yet another lie. This fascinating and unnerving novel doesn't disclose what really happened and which ominous family secret Micah hides until the very last page. (14+)

33

Pajalic, Amra

The good daughter. A novel

Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 2009. – 314 p.

ISBN 978-1-921520-33-4

Australia – Bosnian family – Islam – Cultural identity – School – Bullying

For the first fifteen years of her life, Sammie has felt like a true Aussie and hasn't thought much about her Bosnian heritage. But ever since her mother decided to take in the girl's aging grandfather and become a new-born Muslim, the teenager's life has taken a weird turn. Thanks to a deadly mix of confusing new factors, Sabiha (as she is called now) does not only have to deal with all the normal teenage misery, such as being bullied at school, experiencing best-friend jealousy, and having a crush on

a cute boy; now she also has to come to grips with her Australian-Bosnian-Muslim identity and fight endless battles with her suddenly-turned-model-Bosnian mother. The moving first-person narration alternates between a witty, ironic, and desperate tone offering readers an honest insight into Australia's multicultural society. (12+) ◆

34

Robertson, Fiona (text/illus.)

Wanted: The perfect pet

Camberwell, Vic. [et al.]: Penguin / Viking, 2009. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-0-670-07356-6

Wish – Dog – Advertisement – Duck – Adjustment – Friendship

»Once upon a time there lived a boy called Henry« whose dearest wish it was to have a dog; a dog »with floppy ears and a waggy tail« and all those other qualities that »a pet with personality« possesses (and that his twenty-seven different varieties of frog obviously lacked). So he simply put an ad in the paper. Miles and miles away, a very lonely duck read his ad, and since he was desperately longing for a friend, he decided to seize the chance. Having made some minor adjustments to his appearance, the transformed duck/dog hit the road. The protagonist in Fiona Robertson's comical black-and-white drawings accentuated by the odd stroke of colour bears some resemblance to Oliver Jeffers's spindly-legged figures. Complemented by a short, down-to-earth text, they create an endearing and funny story about loneliness, pets, adaptability, and perfect friends. (4+) ●

35

Wild, Margaret (text)

Blackwood, Freya (illus.)

Harry & Hopper

Malvern, S. Aust.: An Omnibus Book from Scholastic

Australia, 2009. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-1-86291-740-8

Dog – Death – Grief

Since Hopper was a jumpy black-and-white pup, he and Harry have done everything together from wrestling, catching balls, doing Harry's homework, and falling asleep. That is why the young boy simply refuses to believe when his father tells him about the accident and the faithful dog's death. Numb with grief, Harry sleeps on the sofa – and is over the moon when Hopper appears for nightly visits. Night after night, the two of them play together until Harry is finally able to say goodbye to his best friend. Heart-warming watercolour and gouache

paintings with scribbly charcoal lines and shadings complement this touching poetical story. They document the two protagonists' close friendship, their fun-filled days and vivacious energy, as well as the boy's unbearable sadness and eventual readiness to let go. (4+)

India

36

Morgenstern, Christian (text)

Ramanathan, Rathna (illus.)

Rao, Sirish (transl.)

In the Land of Punctuation

[Chennai]: Tara Books, 2009. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-81-907546-0-6

Punctuation – Discrimination – Language

Christian Morgenstern (1871-1914), German poet and translator, was particularly known for his comical poetry. His poem »Im Reich der Interpunktionen« (In the Land of Punctuation) is one of his many witty works, yet with quite a dark political undertone. The story about the dots' and dashes' war against commas and semicolons comes alive in Sirish Rao's smoothly flowing rhymed text, which does a wonderful job in staying true to the original poem's tone and rhythm. Rathna Ramanathan's (typo-)graphical illustrations in black and red offer an ingenious and clear visual interpretation of the great battle being fought within the realm of punctuation marks. This small-format picture book will inspire young readers' linguistic creativity but also spark off serious thinking. (6+) ◆ ●

37

Ravishankar, Anushka (retell.)

Kastl, Christine (illus.)

The boy who drew cats

Chennai: Karadi Tales Company, 2009. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-81-8190-159-0

Drawing – Outsider – Cat – Folktales

»Akiro was a Japanese boy who drew cats.« This would certainly not have worried his parents had he also drawn other things besides and played as most children did. Yet, practising to draw the perfect cat is Akiro's one and only preoccupation. There doesn't seem a place where he really belongs – not his home, nor the nearby temple. One day, however, the boy finds his true destiny: His painted cats come alive and kill a demon rat. Akiro is pronounced a hero and becomes a celebrated artist. In this atmospheric picture book, popular Indian writer

Anushka Ravishankar offers an enchanting retelling of a Japanese folktale. The modern text is placed against a sand-coloured background on which German illustrator Christine Kastl has created delicate watercolour-and-ink illustrations reminiscent of Japanese paintings. (4+)

New Zealand

38

Azaro, Victoria M. (text/illus.)

Saffron <proper name>

Wellington, N.Z.: Mallinson Rendel, 2009. – 92 p.

ISBN 978-1-877423-26-0

Siblings – Travel – Self-confidence

Eleven-year-old Saffron loves travelling with her family because she knows exactly what to pack, understands foreign languages perfectly, and is so much more mature than her inquisitive five-year-old sister Sage – or so she likes to pretend. Still, crossing four-lane highways in Buenos Aires, ordering dinner in France, or figuring out the tram in Hong Kong can be tricky at times and thus Saffron often finds herself in big trouble. These hilarious travel episodes told by confident, worldly-wise Saffron include lots of playful elements (little notes, changing typography, etc.) that make this book perfect for beginning readers. The zappy black-and-white collages, slightly reminiscent of British illustrator Lauren Child's pictures, add a further note of craziness to the stories. (6+)

39

Mahy, Margaret (text)

Hodgson, Trace (illus.)

Awesome Aotearoa. Margaret Mahy's history of New Zealand

Auckland, N.Z.: AUT Media, 2009. – 128 p.

ISBN 978-0-9582829-7-0

New Zealand/History

Reading a book about one country's history can be a fairly dull affair; yet not so when Margaret Mahy is the author. As New Zealand's most popular writer and poet for children, Mahy is clearly predestined to create a history book of a different sort. In thirty-five short chapters with quirky headings her history covers a wide range of topics starting with the creation of New Zealand in ancient times and ending with the »Rules and Rights« of modern-day politics, with a tumble of issues in between: fauna and flora, the arrival of the Maori, Captain Cook's journey to Aotearoa, the invasion by European settlers and their

illnesses, New Zealand rugby, women's fight for equal rights etc. Instead of offering a mere recital of names and dates, the entertaining texts, interspersed with witty asides, chronicle memorable events in an amusing way. Mahy's humour is aptly visualised in well-known cartoonist Trace Hodgson's sketchy drawings that seduce the readers' eyes to wander away from the writing. (10+) ★ ◆

Europe

Great Britain

40

Allen-Gray, Alison

Lifegame

Oxford [et al.]: Oxford University Press, 2009. – 339 p.
ISBN 978-0-19-272843-2

Authoritarian state – Orphan – Search for identity – Cloning

The island, ruled by the powerful Officiate, is the only world that orphan boy Fella knows. He has always accepted the official explanation that the rest of the earth and civilisation were destroyed long ago by some environmental catastrophe. Yet when Fella comes across his dead mother's secret diary, he decides to risk everything and search for his roots. Together with his best friend Grebe, he escapes through an underwater tunnel, reaches the mainland, and is thrown headfirst into an adventure trying to untangle a web of secrets, lies, and crime. In this futuristic thriller about the illegal exploitation of clones, the mind-boggling mystery unfolds in short chapters and easy-to-read language that will grip the readers' attention right from the first page. (14+)

41

Christopher, Lucy

Stolen

Frome: Chicken House, 2009. – 301 p.
ISBN 978-1-906427-13-9

Kidnapping – Stockholm syndrome – Australian outback – Survival

When Gemma suddenly wakes up in a makeshift house in the middle of the Australian desert, she slowly realises that she has been kidnapped from Bangkok airport. What seems like a random abduction at first, soon turns out to be the result of meticulous planning. Initially, the London girl feels nothing but hate and disgust for Ty, her handsome young captor. Yet, two failed attempts to es-

cape him that almost cost Gemma's life, eventually bring the two closer together. Lucy Christopher's gripping debut novel is written as a long letter by Gemma to her kidnapper. The unusual first-person narration draws readers in immediately, makes them share Gemma's hope, despair, and fear, but also allows them to empathise with Ty. In addition, the novel also paints a vivid picture of the dangers and the beauty of the Australian outback. (14+)

42

Hodgkinson, Leigh

Smile!

London: Orchard Books, 2009. – 32 p.
ISBN 978-1-40830-181-4

Smile – Loss – Search – Happiness

As her name already suggests, little Sunny normally is a chipper and chirpy girl. Today, however, something is terribly wrong: She has lost her smile! This large-format picture book in portrait format is brimming with wit and funny details as the goggle-eyed, balloon-headed protagonist turns her house upside down in search for her trademark happiness. She doesn't even shy away from cleaning up her room; that's how desperate she's become. In the end, the smile secretly creeps up on her when she least expects it. Unusual perspectives, flat-coloured, largely uncluttered backgrounds, bold outlines, and a short, original text make for an utterly enchanting read that will put the smile back on every reader's face. (3+)

43

Lake, Nick

The secret ministry of Frost

London: Simon & Schuster Children's, 2009. – 358 p.
ISBN 978-1-84738-309-9

Inuit – Father – Daughter – Supernatural being – Metamorphosis – Evil – Magic

In this action-packed, sparkling fantasy novel, a young half-Inuit, half-Irish girl sets off to the North in search of her father who mysteriously disappeared from his research station in the Arctic. Yet it is not only the extreme weather that turns her quest into a life-threatening adventure trip; ancient, evil, and indestructible Frost, determined to kill young Light, sends massive polar bears, violent »isserkait«, and other mythical creatures to destroy her. The fast-paced narrative is interspersed with various newspaper articles on historical Arctic explorations and entries from the journal of Light's father. It offers young readers a breathtaking tale embedded in Inuit myth and culture about a courageous and unusual girl. (12+)

44

Law, Stephen (text)
Choksi, Nishant (illus.)

Really, really big questions about life, the universe, and everything

London [et al.]: Kingfisher, 2009. – 62 p.
ISBN 978-0-7534-1781-2

Question – Answer – Science – Philosophy – Ethics

Children love asking millions of questions – both small ones and really big questions. Taking advantage of the inquisitive energy of children, renowned philosophy lecturer Dr. Stephen Law has created an appealing collection of philosophical, scientific, and ethical queries such as: »Did someone design the universe?«, »Are some people psychic?«, »What makes stealing wrong?«, or »Is time travel possible?« Rather than providing set answers to all these issues, Law offers information, various pro- and con-arguments, and intellectual tools to encourage readers to search their own brains for possible solutions. The playfully designed book with varying typography and texts accompanied by boldly-coloured matt illustrations in a 1950's retro style will invite readers to plunge into the mysteries of the universe. (8+) ●

45

Long, Hayley

Lottie Biggs is (not) mad

London [et al.]: Macmillan Children's, 2009. – 229 p.
ISBN 978-0-330-47973-8

Writing – Mental disturbance

Asked by her teacher to hand in a piece of »extended personal writing« at the end of term, Lottie Biggs starts noting down episodes from her not-so-very-exciting life in a small Welsh suburb. In an entertaining style complete with sketches, collages, and witty footnotes addressed to the possible examiners of this assignment, the fifteen-year-old prattles away about her best friend Goose, their job at the shoe shop Sole Mates, her crush on Neil Adam (whose name spelled backwards reads »Mad Alien«!), love, and poetry. Very subtly, however, the carefree rambling acquires a darker tone as Lottie seems to lose grip on reality. Eventually the teenager is diagnosed with a mental disturbance (probably bipolar disorder). This amusing debut novel offers a surprisingly light-hearted look at a serious problem. (12+) ◆

46

Myers, Benjamin J.

Twisted Symmetry

London: Orion Children's Books, 2009. – 329 p.
(The Bad Tuesdays; 1)
ISBN 978-1-84255-645-0

Siblings – Homelessness – Evil – Parallel world

The three Tuesday children, living rough among hundreds of other street rats (i.e. homeless children), are used to stealing, running, hiding, and fighting to survive. One day, however, young Chess and her fourteen-year-old twin brothers Box and Splinter are picked up by an organisation called the Committee. They intend to engage the children's help in their fight against their enemy, the Twisted Symmetry, who are secretly stealing thousands of children. This suspenseful adventure is the first in a series rife with action. In volume 1, the protagonists face evil hunters and a mysterious mission. The mix of magical and sci-fi elements, the cast of well-rounded characters, and the complex issues woven into a fast-paced and accessible narrative make this an irresistible novel for readers of any age. (10+) ◆

47

Perera, Anna

Guantanamo boy

London: Puffin, 2009. – 339 p.
ISBN 978-0-141-32607-8

Kidnapping – CIA – Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp – Torture

Certainly everybody has heard or read about the infamous detention camp at Guantanamo Bay. Yet hardly any information has leaked out about underage prisoners supposedly being held in these camps. Anna Perera's shocking debut novel imagines just such a case. Told in third person from the point of view of Khalid, a fifteen-year-old British Muslim boy from a Pakistani family, the oppressive story chronicles an incredible journey. Khalid, an avid football-fan and ordinary teen who happens to be on a first time visit to Karachi, is secretly abducted by Pakistani guards, handed over to the CIA, accused of being involved in terrorist activities, and dragged from one prison camp to the next. Tortured repeatedly, he suffers an unbelievable ordeal until he is eventually released two years later. (16+) ◆

48

Raven, Nicky (adapt.)
Stoker, Bram (orig. text)
Gilbert, Anne Yvonne (illus.)

Dracula

Dorking, Surrey: Templar Publ., 2009. – 95 p.
([Bram Stoker's gothic classic]) (A Templar book)
ISBN 978-1-84011-516-1

Vampire – Hunt – Murder – Defeat

Originally published in 1897, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is probably the most popular vampire novel ever written. In this adaptation for a younger audience, Nicky Raven, who has admirably tackled two other retellings of classics in this series, manages to condense the voluminous novel into almost one tenth of its length while still maintaining the sinister and threatening tone of the original. Abandoning Stoker's epistolary style (with the exception of a few diary entries), Raven offers a straightforward, lyrical narrative that lures readers into the suspenseful story about Dutch Professor Van Helsing and his English friends' attempt to kill evil Vampire-Count Dracula. The ominous black-and-white cross-hatched illustrations, which are only sparsely coloured, add to the mysterious and perilous atmosphere of the text. (12+)

49

Taylor, Sean (text)
Shaw, Hannah (illus.)

Crocodiles are the best animals of all!

London [et al.]: Frances Lincoln Children's, 2009. – [28] p.
ISBN 978-1-84507-904-8

Animals – Skill – Bragging – Humiliation

Crocodile is a high-achiever – and doesn't he know it. Not only can he swing around the jungle trees better than Orang-Utan and nibble grass better than the rabbits, he can also climb better than Mountain Goat. Be that as it may – the other animals soon become fed up with the snooty reptile's boasts. Luckily enough, Donkey confronts his haughty green opponent with a shocking truth that puts him back in his proper place. With just a few black lines, Hannah Shaw perfectly captures postures and facial expressions of the annoyed animals as well as the insufferable bragging of Mr. Snootiness. The highly amusing rhymed text and the hilarious colour illustrations created with pen and ink and scanned textures make this book a feast for the eyes and ears. (3+)

50

Walliams, David (text)
Blake, Quentin (illus.)

Mr Stink

London: HarperCollins Children's, 2009. – 267 p.
ISBN 978-0-00-727905-0

Outsider – Friendship – Homelessness

Following his highly praised debut novel »The boy in the dress«, David Walliams has created another comical page-turner for young readers. The absurd story follows the fate of twelve-year-old chubby Chloe who feels lonely because she is bullied at school, neglected by her snobbish, over-ambitious mother, Mrs Crumb, and outshined by her far-too-talented sister Annabelle. When she strikes up a friendship with the smelly town tramp Mr Stink, Chloe's life suddenly takes an unexpected turn. Peopled with an amiable heroine and several larger-than-life supporting characters of Dahl-like quality, the hilarious narrative, complemented by Quentin Blake's lively black-and-white illustrations, will have readers of any age splitting their sides with laughter. (8+) ●

Ireland

51

Mac a'Bháird, Natasha (text)
Forkan, Ray (illus.)

Olanna's big day

Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 2009. – 32 p.
(Bridges)
ISBN 978-1-84717-171-9

St. Patrick's Day – Interculturalism – School band

Little Olanna is excited: From what her friend Ciara tells her, St. Patrick's Day sounds like a lot of fun (»a bit like Independence Day in Nigeria«), and the best news is that her school band is going to march in the big parade. Yet, on the special day, just as the band is about to start, the drummer's drum strap breaks. No drum, no parade for the school band. Luckily enough, the clever Nigerian girl has an ingenious idea. She hands over her long, green-and-white scarf knitted by her beloved grandmother as spare strap and thus saves the day. The vibrant, idiosyncratic computer-collage pictures aptly match the witty story's energy. This is one of the first four titles in the new »Bridges« series celebrating »Ireland's ethnic and cultural diversity«. The large-format hardback books feature short engaging stories about protagonists from different

home countries that help young readers to learn about other cultures. The appealing illustrations are created by members of The Cartoon Saloon. (6+) ★ ◆

North America

Canada

52

Abley, Mark (text)

Adams, Kathryn (illus.)

Camp Fossil Eyes. Digging for the origins of words

Toronto [et al.]: Annick Press, 2009. – 131 p.

ISBN 978-1-55451-180-8

Summer camp – Language – Origin

In this amusing facts-and-fiction book, a sister and brother are packed off to summer camp in a badlands region. While fifteen-year-old Jill is sulking, her younger brother Alex gets really enthusiastic about the opportunity to learn about the origins of different words in »Camp Fossil Eyes«. After a few adventurous hikes through the French mountains, the Old English Hills, and the Latin Alps, where they dig up bizarre linguistic fossils, even grumpy Jill catches the language-expedition bug. Written as a series of emails by the siblings (and some camp staff) to their parents, interspersed with the odd »note« from the camp director's desk, and accompanied by comical vignette illustrations, this book provides interesting facts about the English language and its roots. (11+)

53

Clark, Joan

Road to bliss

[Toronto]: Doubleday Canada, 2009. – 271 p.

ISBN 978-0-385-66687-9

Running away – Coming of age – Religious cult – Oppression – Independence

In her latest book, award-winning author Joan Clark deals with universal issues to which teenagers will easily relate, such as family relationships, independence, and the oppression of women. When fifteen-year-old runaway Jim arrives at Bliss, an abandoned little house in the Canadian Prairies, he just wants to take a break from school, city life, and his family. Yet when he meets Miriam, a member of a strict religious cult living on nearby Majestic farm, he starts to reassess his values. Eventually he manages to help the girl escape and start life away from the sect's brainwashing techniques and female sup-

pression. In this captivating third-person narration, Clark presents the coming-of-age of a strong-minded boy who needs to find his path in life. (14+)

54

Denman, K. L.

Me, myself and Ike

Victoria, BC [et al.]: Orca Book Publishers, 2009. – 192 p.

ISBN 978-1-55469-086-2

Schizophrenia – Suicide attempt – Natural mummy – Obsession

This intense first-person narration, infused with a lot of direct speech, acquaints readers with seventeen-year-old Kit's thoughts, fears, and mental confusion. Spurred on by his best buddy Ike, he is determined to commit suicide on top of a nearby glacier in order to be dug up by a future scientist and labelled the twenty-first-century »Ice Man«. Although Ike's sudden (dis- and re-) appearances already indicate that something fishy is going on, it is not until the end that readers' suspicions about his being merely a hallucination are confirmed. Rescued by his brother literally at the last minute, Kit is brought to hospital and diagnosed with schizophrenia. The harsh and oppressive teenage novel makes readers share the experiences of Kit as he loses touch with the real world around him and slips deeper into his illness. (14+)

55

Fagan, Cary (text)

Petričić, Dušan (illus.)

Jacob Two-Two on the high seas

Toronto: Tundra Books, 2009. – 102 p.

ISBN 978-0-88776-895-8

Family – Move – Ship – Pirate – Danger

Jacob Two-Two, the beloved star of Mordecai Richler's book »Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang« (1974) and its two sequels, is finally back. After Richler's death in 2001, renowned children's book author Cary Fagan has now taken on the challenge to pen another episode featuring the little two-plus-two-plus-two-year-old boy. This time, the family is moving to Canada, so Jacob and his four siblings find themselves on the SS Spring-a-Leak crossing the Atlantic together with some more or less dubious characters including handsome Captain Sparkletooth, mean First Mate Mr. Scrounger, and ... some very dangerous pirates. Fagan's quirky, nonsensical text perfectly captures Richler's original style. Accompanied by comical black-and-white illustrations, the new adventure proves to be a truly entertaining read. (5+)

56

Jones, Andy (adapt./retell.)

Erdelji, Darka (illus.)

The queen of Paradise's Garden. A traditional Newfoundland tale

St. John's, NL: Running the Goat Books & BroadSides, 2009. – 42 p.

ISBN 978-0-9737578-4-2

Parents – Son – Old age – Quest – Rejuvenation – Siblings – Helpfulness

In this traditional Newfoundland tale, three brothers set out on a quest for a magic fruit that is said to make their old parents young again. On their journey to the Queen of Paradise's garden, the young men are set some tests that only Jack, the youngest brother, passes thanks to his kind-heartedness. In the end, he is the one who finds the cure, returns home safely, eventually marries the Queen of Paradise, and »... they were havin babies in baskets. ...«. As writer and actor Andy Jones explains, there is a lively tradition of Jack-stories in Newfoundland, which are rooted in tales brought over by settlers from England, Ireland, and Scotland. His adaptation of this particular tale enchants readers with an authentic oral voice and the atmospheric blue-green pictures in different sizes created by Slovenian artist Darka Erdelji. (4+)

57

Oldland, Nicholas (text/illus.)

Big bear hug

Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press, 2009. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-1-55453-464-7

Bear – Hug – Friendship – Tree – Love of nature

This square little picture book introduces young readers to a cuddly black bear who is »so filled with love and happiness« that he simply can't resist hugging everyone and everything he meets – trees especially. The slightly caricature-like computer-generated illustrations in dull colours follow the furry fellow as he enthusiastically squeezes an array of forest-dwellers from rabbit and bird to moose and skunk, as well as trees of any sort and size. When he suddenly comes across a man wielding an axe to cut down one of his favourite trees, he is utterly shocked. However, being the most peaceful creature alive, he can't bring himself to hurt the woodcutter. Nick Oldland's engaging story and hilarious pictures may make readers long for a world where every problem can be solved with a big bear hug. (3+)

USA

58

Brown, Jennifer

Hate list

New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2009. – 408 p.

ISBN 978-0-316-04144-7

Bullying – School shooting – Guilty conscience – Hostility

True – Valerie did start the infamous list, on which she and her boyfriend Nick noted down everything and everyone (including all the school bullies) they hated; yet never would she have guessed that this list was more for Nick, that he actually planned to kill anyone. Even five months after the shooting, during which she was wounded while trying to stop this nightmare, Valerie has trouble coping with the aftermath. This shocking and harsh novel is a challenging read. Told from the point of view of the killer's unsuspecting girlfriend, it explores Valerie's feeling of guilt, the open hostility she is confronted with when she returns to school, and her muddled emotions for her late boyfriend. Feeling abandoned by her family and her former friends, the shattered girl struggles hard to go on with her life. (16+)

59

Coombs, Kate

The runaway dragon

New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009. – 292 p.

ISBN 978-0-374-36361-1

Dragon – Princess – Quest – Magic – Folktales

After having defeated a pack of princes and rescued a tiny dragon in this book's prequel »The Runaway princess«, Princess Meg feels bored to death by the uneventful life a well-behaved princess is supposed to lead. When Laddy, by now an almost-grown-up dragon, runs away, Meg is worried but also secretly delighted for this opportunity to set out on a new quest. Together with her friends, she embarks on an exciting and sometimes hair-raising adventure. They stumble through an enchanted forest for miles, narrowly escape the giants in their Sky Kingdom, and defeat evil sorceress Malison in her black fortress. Weaving characters and elements from various folktales into this witty and enthralling tale, the author easily manages to entertain young and older readers alike and make them wish for another sequel. (10+)

60

Hoppe, Paul (text/illus.)

Hat

New York, N.Y. [et al.]: Bloomsbury U.S.A. Children's Books, 2009. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-1-599-90247-0

Hat – Imagination

Have you ever found something and started imagining the million things you could do with it? Well, Henry does just this when he spots a big red hat lying on a park bench. He muses that this hat would protect him from sun, rain, and wild animals or could be used as boat, sled, or magic device – the possibilities are endless. But then his Mum reminds him that the hat's owner might need it even more than he does, and immediately the boy considers all the catastrophes this hat-less person might encounter. This amusing square little picture book is a wonderful advocate of the power of imagination. The comic, predominantly blueish brush-and-ink illustrations are witty snapshots of Henry's exuberant fantasy. His ideas will inspire young readers to use their own creativity and invent other ways this hat could be used. (4+)

61

Kelly, Jacqueline

The evolution of Calpurnia Tate

New York: Henry Holt, 2009. – 340 p.

ISBN 978-0-8050-8841-0

USA/1899 – Family life – Siblings –**Gender role – Grandfather – Granddaughter – Natural science**

Eleven-year-old Calpurnia loves exploring the riverside, watching animals, and collecting scientific specimen. Ever since she expressed an interest in Darwin's »The Origin of Species«, her initially grumpy grandfather, an eager naturalist himself, has taken to nurturing her scientific curiosity. Unfortunately, Callie's mother is less than amused by this. After all, she considers »The Science of Housewifery« in infinitely superior read for a young girl if she is to survive in the jungle of late nineteenth-century American society. In a fresh and authentic voice full of wry humour, the amiable and inquisitive protagonist relates the excitement and dread of being the only girl in a big family as well as the ups and downs of life as a budding scientist. (10+) (Newbery Medal Honour Book 2010)

62

McGhee, Alison (text)

Yoo, Taeun (illus.)

Only a witch can fly

New York, NY: Feiwel and Friends, 2009. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-0-312-37503-4

Halloween – Dream – Flying – Witch

It's a widely known fact that only real witches can fly. But one Halloween night, a young girl's wish to soar through the night sky grows so strong that she grabs her witch costume and broom and tiptoes through the front door onto the porch. Although the first attempt leaves her sprawled out on the lawn, she is determined not to give up and eventually, with some encouragement from her little brother and the help of her black cat, she actually lifts off the ground. The highly poetic and evocative text is written in a form inspired by the *sestina* (a twelfth-century poem of six six-line stanzas and one three-line stanza). The magical matt linoleum block print illustrations in black and muted shades of green and brown transform this tale into a feast for little would-be witches' and wizards' ears and eyes. (4+)

63

Myers, Edward

Far from gringo land

Boston [et al.]: Clarion Books / Houghton Mifflin

Harcourt, 2009. – 229 p.

ISBN 978-0-547-05630-2

Mexico – Summer job – Building a house – Cultural conflict – Poverty

In this laid-back teenage novel, Edwards Myers takes readers on an interesting journey into the poorer quarters of a Mexican town. Seventeen-year-old Rick has taken on an unusual summer job: In order to have a bit of an adventure and to improve his classroom Spanish, he has agreed to help the Romeros, old family friends, build their new house. Yet the »Gringo« has not expected the work to be quite as back-breaking nor the cultural differences to be that dividing. However, the more difficulties arise, the less he is prepared to give up and return home. Thanks to its short chapters and lots of details about everyday life in a Mexican family, and with Spanish words and phrases seamlessly interwoven into the easy-going narrative, this novel will be an engaging read for learners of Spanish and anyone interested in Mexico. (16+) ♦

64

O'Brien, Anne Sibley (text/illus.)

O'Brien, Perry Edmond (text)

After Gandhi. One hundred years of nonviolent resistance

Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2009. – ix p. + 181 p.
ISBN 978-1-58089-129-5

Non-violent resistance/1900-2000

One hundred years ago, a young Indian lawyer led a protest against discrimination of Indian immigrants in South Africa. This lawyer, named Mohandas Gandhi, went on to become the world's most famous ambassador for non-violent resistance. Taking his peaceful revolt in 1908 as a starting point, the authors introduce fifteen people on six continents from Thich Nath Hanh and Martin Luther King to Vaclav Havel. During the past century, all these people followed in Gandhi's footsteps by fighting to achieve their aims without resorting to violent means. Accompanied by striking black-and-white drawings, each chapter briefly describes one pivotal event and then adds some background information about that event and the respective person. Thus the book offers the perfect incentive for further discussion and research. (12+) ♦

65

Sidman, Joyce (text)

Zagarenski, Pamela (illus.)

Red sings from treetops. A year in colors

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Books for Children / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-0-547-01494-4

Seasons – Colour

»Green is queen in summer. / Green trills from trees, / [...] covers all with leaves. / leaves, leaves!« Colours are at least as popular a topic for picture books as the year's seasons. In this utterly enchanting collaboration, award-winning team Joyce Sidman and Pamela Zagarenski combine the two topics in a unique way. Spring, summer, fall, and winter – each season is evocatively described in quiet, non-rhyming lines of poetry by conjuring up different colours and their special seasonal quality. »Black holds secrets in summer: / night-sky Black, / [...] Deep, wild Black / that stares from the eyes / of a surprised racoon.« Detailed mixed-media-and-computer collages depict the changing landscapes of the year and a delicate, crowned figure clad in multi-patterned robes as he roams through them. (5+) (Caldecott Medal Honour Book 2010) ●

66

Umansky, Kaye (text)

Wright, Johanna (illus.)

Clover Twig and the magical cottage

New York, N.Y.: Roaring Brook Press, 2009. – 297 p.
ISBN 978-1-59643-507-0

[originally published in the UK in 2008, Bloomsbury Children's Books, with different illustrations]

Witch – Siblings – Jealousy – Black magic

Earning a few extra pennies certainly wouldn't hurt; so Clover Twig, neat and sensible as she is, gladly answers the nearby witch's job-offer as live-in cleaner. In the beginning, everything goes swimmingly but with Mrs. Eckles away for a few days and her evil sister Mesmeranza intent on stealing the snug little flying cottage, Clover feels out of her depth. Luckily enough, the eleven-year-old girl and her clumsy friend Wilf just about manage to escape, and eventually the witch sisters' ancient, long-retired grandmother takes care of their squabble. This magical adventure is mastered by a loveable heroine and filled with just the right dose of absurd side characters, animated objects (e.g. the grumpy garden gate), and funny mishaps to keep young readers chuckling away and eagerly waiting for its sequel. (8+)

67

Various authors

No such thing as the real world. Stories about growing up and getting a life

New York, NY: HarperTeen, 2009. – 246 p.
(Laura Geringer books)
ISBN 978-0-06-147058-5

Turning point – Coming of age

In this thought-provoking collection of short stories, six well-known authors each deliver a tale about teenage protagonists who have to face the harsh »real world«. At a turning point in their journey from child to adult, all of these young people deal with demanding situations that somehow define their future way. Whether it be Sam and Alec getting increasingly worked up in »The Projection: A Two-Part Invention«, which almost reads like a Theatre of the Absurd-play, or Rachel in »Survival« witnessing her mean older sister Sarah destroying her hopes, the protagonists are thrown into a whirligig of emotions and experiences. Beth Kephart, Chris Lynch, An Na, M.T. Anderson, K.L. Going, and Jacqueline Woodson have created stunning tales that will undoubtedly stay in the readers' minds. (14+)

68

Werner, Sharon / Forss, Sarah (text/illus.)

Alphabetisms and other amazing typesMaplewood, NJ: Blue Apple Books, 2009. – [50] p.
ISBN 978-1-934706-78-7**Alphabet – Animals – Type**

In this unusual animal ABC book, the animals are not really the ones who take centre stage. True, children will certainly enjoy meeting a lot of familiar four-legged (or eight-armed) friends from Alligator and Elephant to Octopus and Zebra, each roaming around a single or a double-spread page. However, by creating each animal entirely from the initial letter of their name – i.e. the Giraffe is made from big and small, bold and thin, small and capital »G/g«s – the authors of this book put particular emphasis on various typefaces. In addition to the main animal, a few other words starting with the same letter are included and illustrated in the margins, as well as little comments on different styles of letters to inspire young and older readers alike to ponder the way in which these varying styles may influence the meaning of the words they form. The whimsical pictures, exceptional design, witty vignettes, and large flaps invite readers to explore this alphabetical typographical treasure chest. The pictures are also available in a box as twenty-six flash cards and as a floor puzzle. (6+) ★

Austria

69

Helffer, Monika (text)

Loeprecht, Sofie (illus.)

Tiere allein

(Animals alone)

Weitra: Verl. Bibliothek der Provinz, 2009. – [21] p.
ISBN 978-3-85252-998-1**Holidays – Pet – Neglect**

This book deals with a fairly sad topic. Max the dog's family is going to Italy for their holidays and simply abandon Max en route. Other animals, such as Theo the horse, are driven from their homes. Cat Bruna on the other hand is happy to be home alone and finally able to do whatever she wants. Spontaneously she decides to take Max and Theo in – the sad story continues more cheerfully, even if the animals still miss their human owners. The book's language is clear and comprehensible; the author leaves ample space for readers to ponder, embellish, and continue the story. The pictures are simple line drawings – and there is a good reason for that: They were created by the author's six-year-old granddaughter. (4+)

70

Janisch, Heinz (text)

Wolfsgruber, Linda (illus.)

Wie war das am Anfang

(What was it like in the beginning?)

Wien: Wiener Dom-Verlag, 2009 – [24] p.
ISBN 978-3-85351-212-8**Religious belief – The Creation**

How and why have I become the person I am? This book tackles an important or probably THE most important question in life by telling a very personal creation story. »What was it like in the beginning / when God thought about me?« asks a voice that, on the following pages, goes on to ponder that he or she might just as well have become a tree, a cactus, or a snail in a fragile shell instead of a human being. Each page features only a few simple words – simple but not simplistic. The illustrations are equally minimalist: Subtly marbled, sand-coloured paper is cut out and glued together to create slightly stylised collages complemented by stamped-on elements. Text and pictures perfectly correspond with each other because both leave ample space for the readers' own thoughts. (4+)

71

Schatz, Eva (text)
Straßer, Susanne (illus.)

Dackel Franz sucht seinen Schwanz

(Franz the dachshund is looking for his tail)

St. Pölten: Residenz, 2009 – [48] p.

(Nilpferd in Residenz)

ISBN 978-3-7017-2057-6

Dachshund – Tail – Search

One morning, Franz the dachshund wakes up to find his tail has disappeared. No use whining, what's gone is gone. So Franz sets off in search of it – but in vain. Whenever and wherever Franz appears, the tail hides: Once it pretends to be a street lamp, then a pirate's saber, etc. Finally, at the zoo, Franz spots a chimpanzee scampering around with a dachshund tail at his back! The naughty guy simply nicked Franz's tail because all other apes have a tail, too. Yet when the dog crafts a new tail for the chimp, he gets his own tail back. This book is great fun: not only because young children will enjoy listening to the witty texts and searching for the camouflaged tail in each picture; but also because older readers will discover many intertextual allusions in the collages. (3+)

72

Wendelken, Barbara

Die Zuckerschwestern

(The Sugar Sisters)

Wien: Ueberreuter, 2009. – 107 p.

ISBN 978-3-8000-5495-4

Holidays – Family – Dislike – Cockroach

Since her two cousins Patrizia and Piadora, called Pipa, announced their visit for the holidays, Luzie has been in a really bad mood. She simply can't stand bookworm Patrizia or Pipa who, from hair to nail polish, is going through a »black phase«. Thus, the three girls are constantly quarrelling with each other. Yet when a huge cockroach turns up in their grandmother's guesthouse and threatens to scare away all the guests, they start a detective-like investigation to find out who might have brought the animal to the house. Together they take up the battle against the pest. The great appeal of this book, told in turn from Luzie's and Patrizia's points-of-view, lies in its fast-paced dialogues and the real-life slapstick humour. (8+)

Germany

73

Auerbach, Isabelle / Weindel, Yvonne (text)

Filler, Anja (illus.)

Was wäre, wenn wir fliegen könnten?

(What if we could fly?)

Hamburg: Carlsen, 2009. – 298 p.

ISBN 978-3-551-20987-0

Thought experiment – Philosophy – Utopia

In this book, the authors spin a variety of imaginary yarns that go beyond the limits of what is known and possible today. The authors' questions, all starting with »What if...?«, tackle different areas and are grouped under five headings. Some of the questions have a serious, existentialist context, others have a more humorous connotation. In addition to the two authors, children also get to have their say and talk about their view of things. This can sometimes be refreshingly upside-down and playful; at other times their thoughts seem quite »world-wise«, for example when they answer the question: »What if you had to earn money?« Surprisingly enough, there is no mention of squandering, but instead the children propose saving money and putting it aside. (5+)

74

Belinda [i.e. Belinda Rodik] (text)

Wünsch, Dorota (illus.)

Fenna

<proper name>

München: mixtvision, 2009. – 100 p.

ISBN 978-3-939435-21-1

Magic – Attention – Move

If you happen to know Ms. Schmittchen, you needn't be afraid of getting bored anytime soon. So Fenna is a lucky girl. She has just moved into an old house and, thanks to Ms. Schmittchen, lots of exciting things start to happen. She meets talking animals, plants, and objects, sets off on an under-water treasure hunt, and climbs into wall paintings. True, her parents seem slightly confused when she tells them about her adventures, but so what? Funny as the story itself is, the illustrations are even more entertaining because they explicitly invite readers to continue, adorn, and complete the pictures. Dorota Wünsch draws with jaunty lines that inspire readers to sharpen their own pencils and have a go. (6+)

75

Bernier, Rotraut Susanne (text/illus.)

Hund & Hase

(Dog and Hare)

Berlin: Jacoby & Stuart, 2009. – 75 p.

ISBN 978-3-941087-42-2

Dog – Hare – Prejudice – Friendship – Tolerance

Dogs and hares don't like each other because – well, because it's always been that way. Hannes the hare and Hugo the dog do consider this a fairly meagre explanation; still, they both compete in the big annual race at Hummelhausen as main opponents. Grimly they are sprinting along, fighting to win, until a thunderstorm erupts above their heads. Hannes helps Hugo, Hugo helps Hannes. When the two of them even save a little piglet from drowning, there is nothing left that prevents them from becoming friends. Rotraut Susanne Bernier displays the clear and precise lines typical for her style; yet in addition, she deftly plays with sayings about dogs and hares, thus communicating the moral of her story with lightness and charm. (4+)

76

Bertram, Rüdiger

Knastkinder

(Jail kids)

Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2009. – 125 p.

(Rororo; 21497: Rotfuchs) (Das besondere Buch)

ISBN 978-3-499-21497-4

Arrest – Innocence – Jail

Originally conceived as a theatre play, »Knastkinder« (Jail kids) was so successful that it was rewritten as a novel. It tells the story of 12-year-old Jonathan from Berlin who is mugged in Manila by some street gang but ends up in a children's jail himself. With Jonathan's father being Filipino, the boy looks the same as all the other street kids, speaks Tagalog, and thus, to the police, he is just another face in the crowd. Nobody believes him when he says who he is and where he comes from. His situation seems hopeless. Luckily enough, Jonathan finds friends who help him survive the jail and finally escape. Jonathan's fear and his anger about being completely helpless are described realistically. At the same time, the author points out the precarious situation of street kids in Manila without a moralistic undertone. (10+) ◆

77

Boie, Kirsten (text)

Bauer, Jutta (illus.)

Ein mittelschönes Leben.**Ein Kinderbuch über Obdachlosigkeit**

(A semi-nice life. A children's book about homelessness)

Hamburg: Hinz & Kunzt [et al.], 2009 – 27 p.

ISBN 978-3-00-026146-6

Homelessness – Poverty – Fate – Respect – Prejudice

Kirsten Boie and Jutta Bauer, multi-award winning author and illustrator respectively, have teamed up to create a special book for Hinz & Kunzt, the Hamburg initiative for homeless people. It tells the story of »the man« who leads a perfectly normal life until suddenly everything goes wrong. He is made redundant, his wife leaves him. Although he finds a new job at first, things go rapidly downhill when he loses it again. Financial worries and loneliness become overpowering. Thrown out of his flat, the man becomes a vagrant. His children feel embarrassed by him. Thanks to its simple style and the linear, yet dramatically refined narration, even beginning readers will be able to cope with this book. The narrator's loyalty towards the protagonist ensures that any touch of condescension or disrespect is avoided. The book comes with a little glossary as well as a question-and-answer section in which homeless people themselves have their say by answering the questions of pupils and allowing an insight into their lives. (5+) ★ ◆ ●

78

Damm, Antje (text/illus.)

Nichts und wieder nichts. Anlässe, um miteinander über Nichts nachzudenken

(Nothing at all. Opportunities to get together and think about nothing)

Frankfurt am Main: Moritz, 2009 – 92 p.

ISBN 978-3-89565-211-0

Philosophy

Is an empty glass a glass full of nothing? Can you think about nothing? Questions as well as succinct texts about »nothingness« both by famous philosophers and by children pervade this small book created by Antje Damm, a specialist for philosophical reflection in picture books. She has collected diverse aspects of the nebulous nothing that, to put it lightly, is ever-present in our daily lives but also possesses an existential dimension. Are we nothing before we arrive on earth? On each double-page spread, text and picture form a dialogue

showing that nothingness must be something more than nothing after all. Those who are familiar with the never-ending questions of three- to five-year-olds will soon notice that the book aptly mirrors the thoughts of small and big brooders. (4+)

79

Dörrzapf, Anke (text)

Lieb, Claudia (illus.)

Die wunderbaren Reisen des Marco Polo

(Marco Polo's wondrous travels)

Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 2009. – 111 p.

ISBN 978-3-8369-5256-9

Polo, Marco – Journey – Adventure

This facts-and-fiction book describes Marco Polo's travels to Asia during the second half of the 13th century, both his solo ones and the ones that he undertook together with his comrades. Since so many exciting things happened to him, a lot of his contemporaries were convinced that it was all his imagination. Nevertheless, the stories and discoveries that Marco Polo brought to Europe are still present today. What makes the book unique is its illustrations. Watercolour paintings, scanned and edited by computer, are mounted next to and across each other, so that the illustrations seem at once multi-layered, stylised, and reduced. The quiet and harmonious visual language complements the clear diction, while both of them form a suspenseful contrast to Marco Polo's exciting and sometimes life-threatening experiences. (6+)

80

Düwel, Franca (text)

Spitzer, Katja (illus.)

Julie und Schneewittchen – Schlimmer geht's immer

(Julie and Snow White – It can always get worse)

Würzburg: Arena, 2009. – 276 p.

ISBN 978-3-401-06407-9

Diary – Friendship – Violence – Bullying – First love

Perky and frank, twelve-year-old Julie confides all the ups and downs of her life to her diary. This makes for an extremely funny read, even though things are soon getting fairly dramatic. Julie talks about domestic violence, about bullying, and ostracism at school, but also about new friendships and her first love. The first-person narrator is a clever and eloquent protagonist with a big heart. She is nobody's fool. Even when catastrophes are lurking and life gets almost too much to bear, Julie

remains calm. This book seems to be taken directly from real life, an impression reinforced by the many doodles and small drawings that give the diary entries a further air of authenticity. (10+)

81

Erhardt, Heinz (text)

Bauer, Jutta (illus.)

Ein Nasshorn und ein Trockenhorn

(A Rhinoceros and a Sunoceros) <pun>

Oldenburg: Lappan, 2009. – 75 p.

ISBN 978-3-8303-3224-4

Poetry – Pun

In 2009, on the occasion of Heinz Erhardt's 100th birthday, numerous Erhardt-poems were re-issued, many of them with new illustrations. »Ein Nasshorn und ein Trockenhorn« joins the rank of these new publications. It consists of both well-known and lesser-known classics by Heinz Erhardt, one of the most popular German jesters, comedians, and entertainers in the first decades after World War II. The wordsmith's rhymed puns and non-sense poetry have always delighted young and old people alike and are still doing so today. Jutta Bauer has created mostly small vignettes, but also larger pictures and series of pictures to accompany these verses. Her delicate lines and tinted illustrations visualise particularly succinct and noteworthy aspects from the poems and perfectly mirror Erhardt's wit and irony. (6+)

82

Essig, Rolf-Bernhard (text)

Schweitzer, Marei (illus.)

Da wird doch der Hund in der Pfanne verrückt! Die lustigen Geschichten hinter unseren Redensarten

(That makes the dog in the frying pan crazy [Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle]. The funny stories behind our sayings)

München: Hanser, 2009 – 142 p.

ISBN 978-3-446-23381-2

Saying – Pun

Divided into eleven chapters, this book introduces idiomatic expressions that people use or hear almost daily, such as: »Doing a milkmaid's calculation« (i.e. a naïve assessment of a situation) or »Wooden eye, be alert« (i.e. Keep your eyes peeled) and explains their usage and etymology. In addition to the section headed »Sharp-minded Brainiacs! Expressions about cleverness, cunning, and experience«, readers will find a chapter called »Jumped as a tiger, landed as a bedside rug

(i.e. Start with big plans or promises but fail to carry them through). Expressions about defeat, misfortune, and mishaps.« Another one is entitled »On the sunny side of life! Expressions about good luck, winning, and success.« Rolf-Bernhard Essig has a talent for using sayings and idioms as the starting point for short and crisp stories, further spiced up by the impish colour-pencil illustrations. (8+) ●

83

Freund, Wieland (text)

Meyer, Kerstin (illus.)

Törtel, die Schildkröte aus dem McGrün

(Törtel, the tortoise from the McGreen)

Weinheim: Beltz & Gelberg, 2009. – 182 p.

ISBN 978-3-407-79963-0

Tortoise – Friendship – Diversity – Threat – Trick

After an initially quiet existence at the garden centre McGreen, Törtel, a Greek tortoise, suddenly finds himself among a motley crew of animals – the wild animals of Müggeldorf. That's the end of peace and cosiness as he knows it because the animals are at loggerheads with the Müggeldorf people; each group is feeling increasingly annoyed by the other one. The parties wind each other up more and more until neatnik Hermann Lüttkewitz starts a witch-hunt to blame the animals for a series of robberies. Yet now Törtel, who has never been particularly brave, becomes a true hero: He witnessed how the real culprits committed the crime, and this helps the forest animals – in cooperation with the village pets – to catch the thieves. This is a tongue-in-cheek tale about friendship, being different, and surpassing oneself. (7+)

84

Gerhardt, Paul (text)

Gleich, Jacky (illus.)

Geh aus mein Herz

(Go forth, my heart)

Frankfurt am Main: Hansisches Druck- und Verlags-Haus, 2009. – [21] p.

(Edition Chrismon)

ISBN 978-3-938704-89-9

The Creation

»Geh aus mein Herz und suche Freud« (Go forth, my heart, and take delight) is a well-known hymn by German baroque poet Paul Gerhardt. In this book, Jacky Gleich interprets the first eight verses of the hymn in her trademark visual style. Her illustrations feature subdued colours, a distorted perspective, and mischievous facial

expressions with the pictures sporting large planes of colour but still seeming delicate. While Gerhardt praises God's Creation in his song, Gleich uses it to design a chronological series of pictures that focus on the development of a girl: She grows into a young woman, gets married, has children, and grows older. Each verse in the hymn corresponds to one stage in the girl's life. Thus, Gerhardt's text is not simply interpreted literally but enriched by additional dimensions. (5+)

85

Gernhardt, Robert (text)

Junge, Alexandra (illus.)

Familie Erdmännchen

(The Meerkat Family)

Berlin: Aufbau, 2009. – [32] p. + 1 original drawing

ISBN 978-3-351-04101-4

Meerkat – Searching for a house

The chaotic meerkat family, consisting of eight members, is looking for a new home. They want a house where they can dwell and tell, sit and spit, whine and dine. Yet it shouldn't cost more than a few pennies. Robert Gernhardt's poem from the 1970s, created to look like a newspaper ad, is as topical today as it was then. As if the quirky verses by the writer, illustrator, and painter, who died in 2006, were not enough, Alexandra Junge has added witty, pictures. Despite their realistic touch, they sometimes seem almost surrealistic and are reminiscent of M. C. Escher's work due to their fractured perspective. With their abundance of details, they – together with the succinct verses – invite readers to spin their own yarns. (5+)

86

Gerster, Petra / Stoll, Andrea (text)

Schattauer, Corinna (co-author)

Ihrer Zeit voraus. Frauen verändern die Welt

(Ahead of their times. Women change the world)

München: cbj, 2009. – 288 p.

ISBN 978-3-570-13403-0

Woman/Famous person/History

By now it should be a well-known fact that women are the stronger sex. Yet those who need some extra tutoring about strong women should definitely read this book. In it, popular TV-journalist Petra Gerster and her co-authors introduce outstanding women of world history. Covering a huge time span, the concise portraits start in ancient times and continue via the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, coming right up to the nineteenth and twentieth century. All the women presented here have achieved

extraordinary things in politics, science, or the arts, and have often ventured into uncharted terrain. These achievements were at best ignored; at worst, they lead to hostility and slander. To this day, they are often eyed with scepticism (by the patriarchal society). (10+)

87

Griesbeck, Robert (text)

Teich, Karsten (illus.)

Schuld war nur das Brauseschwein!

17 Zuspätkommgeschichten

(It's the sherbet-pig's fault! Seventeen stories about being late)

Köln: Boje, 2009 – 127 p.

ISBN 978-3-414-82197-3

Way to school – Delay – Excuse – Imagination

Every single day, Lucie is late for school; but she is never at a loss for an excuse why – on the contrary. Once she supposedly faced immediate death by a street roller and only escaped by boldly jumping into the sewage pipes; another day, she met a green sherbet pig tasting of pistachio. Whatever next! Even though Lucie's adversary, her teacher Mrs. Whitebread, grows more exasperated every day – as is clearly visible in the zippy illustrations – child and adult readers will greatly enjoy Lucie's tale spinning and her malleable interpretation of the truth. The book's episodic structure allows the chapters to be read separately; however, experience has shown that most readers are immediately asking for more. (6+)

88

Grimm, Jacob / Grimm, Wilhelm (text)

Pacovská, Květa (illus.)

Hänsel und Gretel

(Hansel and Gretel)

Bargteheide: Minedition, 2009. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-3-86566-078-7

Hansel and Gretel – Folktale

Hansel and Gretel – old chestnut? Not at all! Květa Pacovská, who illustrated »Little Red Riding Hood« some years ago, has taken on another Grimm tale and proves once again that her art is far from outdated. In her folktale re-interpretation, the visual language seems unbelievably multi-faceted. Sketchy, more or less stylised figures are jotted down onto the paper in expressive lines and brush strokes. Around them, an explosion of colours, mostly red and white, erupts, often placed against a black background, complemented by embossed silver elements. Next to the temerarious figures, Pacovská has

positioned the witch's house, which is a strictly graphical composition but thanks to its colourfulness corresponds well with the boisterous protagonists. (5+)

89

Hammer, Agnes

Herz, klopf!

(Heart, beat!)

Bindlach: Script 5, 2009. – 274 p.

ISBN 978-3-8390-0104-2

Kidnapping – Internet – Search

Lissy and Franka have been friends since they were little; Lissy knows how to stand up for herself while Franka is a pale, quiet, and bookish outsider. When Franka suddenly disappears, Lissy, feeling responsible for her younger friend, starts looking for her single-handedly. Soon she discovers more than the police, because they do not follow the hints consistently. Lissy stumbles into dangerous situations but eventually manages to free Franka. She had been taken captive by a mentally-ill Internet-chatroom-partner. The detective story is a captivating read; still, it is equally fascinating to look behind Lissy's tough façade: Mouthing off or using her fists are the only ways in which the caring and sensitive girl can express (or rather hide) her helplessness. (13+)

90

Hanika, Beate Teresa

Rotkäppchen muss weinen

(Little Red Riding Hood has to cry)

Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2009. – 222 p.

(Fischer Schatzinsel)

ISBN 978-3-596-85336-6

Grandfather – Granddaughter – Sexual abuse

Told from the viewpoint of the thirteen-year-old victim, this quiet, haunting novel chronicles the story of a sexual abuse and its insidious justification, but also the way to overcome its terror. Memories that surface like nightmarish scenes prove that the grandfather has been abusing his granddaughter Malvina for years. The grandmother accepts it, the father orders her to stay quiet. That's why she silently strives to endure it all. A neighbour finally persuades Malvina to speak up so that the grandfather is prosecuted. Within her family, however, only her sister Anne takes her side. Thanks to many intertextual references – »Little Red Riding Hood« being the most prominent one – the book creates a dense symbolic language. Thus it constructs a multi-layered text that raises many questions and provides links for further discussion. (12+) ♦

91

Hückstädt, Christian (text/illus.)

Neue Stiefel hat Frau Gans

(Ms. Goose has new boots)

Düsseldorf: Sauerländer, 2009. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-3-7941-9159-8

Vegetable – Pun

You mustn't play with food? Oh yes, you must! Carving, crafting, and arranging all kinds of fruit and vegetables imaginable, from cabbage and fennel to pears, Christian Hückstädt creates cunning crocodiles, long-legged giraffes, and cute elephants. A few of his vegetable animals are placed within vague, stylised scenes; yet most of them are depicted on their own against a monochrome background, the colour of which is often the complementary colour to that of the fruit or vegetable used. In addition, the author has also written short, rhymed nonsense verses about the behaviour and characteristics of his healthy creatures, printed in rambunctious, colourful typography. Thus the rhymes do not merely flank the fruit and vegetables put on stage here, but further accentuate the pictures. (4+)

92

Kasch, Petra

Bye-bye, Berlin

(Bye-bye, Berlin)

Ravensburg: Ravensburger Buchverlag, 2009. – 252 p.

ISBN 978-3-473-34791-9

Berlin/1995 – Germany/Post-Reunification – Loss of social status – Friendship

This teenage novel deals with feelings of forlornness and with identity crises in both parts of Germany. In 1995, 13-year-old Nadja and her father are living in East Berlin. Once a renowned photographer in the German Democratic Republic, Nadja's father has gone into a tail-spin because, even though he could make a lot of money with his photos, he despises capitalism. His daughter is left to fend for herself. Together with some friends, she organises a spontaneous exhibition that becomes a huge success. »Bye-bye, Berlin« may seem awkward at first glance due to its confusing mixture of brittle language and fairytale-like elements; yet, it's exactly this disturbing combination that constitutes the novel's strength. Although the topic of reunification often causes people to become cynical, reading this book will encourage them to take their lives into their own hands. (13+) ◆

93

Michaelis, Antonia

Wenn der Windmann kommt

(When the wind man comes)

Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 2009. – 319 p.

ISBN 978-3-451-70916-6

Imaginary world – Illness – Threat – Differentness

Patrick meets mysterious Pareidolie, who lives with her mother in a shed. The two of them are hiding from the »wind man« who supposedly threatens them. However, when Patrick meets the wind man, he turns out to be Rebecca's father Kurt. Kurt tells the boy that Rebecca is ill and her perception of reality is not correct. Although Patrick doubts Kurt's version at first, he finally considers it a lot more plausible than that of Pareidolie and Rebecca. Eventually, he manages to persuade Pareidolie that her mother needs help. The atmospheric story, told from Patrick's and Pareidolie's points of view, uses the protagonists' uncertainty to explore the boundaries between »normal« and »abnormal«; nevertheless, it also shows that »normal« does not necessarily mean »better«. (10+)

94

Muszynski, Eva (text)

Teich, Karsten (illus.)

Cowboy Klaus und der fiese Fränk

(Klaus the Cowboy and mean Fränk)

Berlin: Tulipan, 2009. – [39] p.

(Tulipan-ABC: A)

ISBN 978-3-939944-36-2

Cowboy – Fear – Courage

Klaus the Cowboy likes to play it safe, and darkness isn't exactly his thing either. Yet one day, he needs to brave the black night to pick up his grandmother from the stagecoach. Equipped with his lucky belt-buckle, he sets off – closely followed by mean Fränk, who intends to rob the stagecoach in town. Once there, the big confrontation is inevitable – yet it is not between Klaus and the gangster, but between Fränk and his own grandma. Since her rude grandson has no manners whatsoever, she lays into him until Fränk and his cowboy hat almost shrink into the earth. Klaus and Grandma Klaus, however, walk home happily and contentedly. A witty and encouraging book that plays with onomatopoeia, »Cowboy Klaus« is highly recommended not only for beginning readers. (5+)

95

Nürnberger, Christian (text)

Bußhoff, Katharina (illus.)

Mutige Menschen für Frieden, Freiheit und Menschenrechte

(Brave people for peace, freedom, and human rights)

Stuttgart: Gabriel, 2009. – 253 p.

ISBN 978-3-522-30158-9

Courage – Human Rights

In this book, Christian Nürnberger introduces twelve international figures from different centuries (yet with a focus on the twentieth century). All of them have one thing in common: They demonstrated immeasurable courage, either through small deeds or great ones, in their everyday lives or on the political stage. They confronted traditionalist thinking and demanded gender equality, like Alice Schwarzer. Equal rights are also what Nelson Mandela and Rosa Parks, who both fought against apartheid and racism, wished for. Others, such as Mahatma Gandhi, advocated pacifism, or demanded freedom of the press, such as Anna Politkovskaya. In a memorable way, Nürnberger describes the portrayed heroes' paths and their steadfastness. In the face of ostracism, hostility, and threat to life and limb, they still remained true to themselves and their beliefs. (12+) ♦

96

Opel-Götz, Susann (text/illus.)

Prinzessin Anna oder wie man einen Helden findet

(Princess Anne or How to find a hero)

Hamburg: Oetinger, 2009. – [30] p.

ISBN 978-3-7891-6956-4

Princess – Hero – Choice of partner

This is a princess-fairy tale with a difference: When spoiled princess Anna's father runs off, she is left behind perplexed and angry. He only left her half of his kingdom, not all of it. The second half will be hers as soon as she has found a hero. In order to lure a prince to her, Anna uses tried and tested methods such as kissing frogs or following Snow White's example. Yet, to no avail. When Anna looks through her telescope and spots Jakob the puppeteer, she marches off in his direction. Even though Jakob might not be classic hero-material at first sight, the two fall in love – happy ending. In a truly original way, the author combines several popular fairytales to create an entirely new one that she narrates using a detailed and ironical visual language. (3+)

97

Pautsch, Oliver

Der Bruch

(The breach)

Stuttgart: Thienemann, 2009. – 300 p.

ISBN 978-3-522-20044-8

Father – Son – Suspicion – Trust

After several years in prison, Klaus suddenly re-appears. His son Johannes spends all of his spare time with him. Klaus does not merely mouth platitudes, he takes Johannes seriously. Still, sometimes the boy starts wondering: Why did Klaus end up in the clink? And what is inside the room that Johannes is forbidden to enter? When he reads about a burglary in the newspaper, his father suddenly disappears, and on top of that, the police are knocking on their door. Johannes's doubts about Klaus's integrity seem to prove true. Yet the suspicion turns out to be unfounded – and that's exactly why this is a story about trust, truth, and a complex father-son-relationship. Told from Johannes's point of view in an unpretentious way, the book offers a gripping read – especially for boys. (13+)

98

Poppe, Grit

Weggesperrt

(Locked away)

Hamburg: Dressler, 2009. – 330 p.

ISBN 978-3-7915-1632-5

German Democratic Republic/1989 – Regime criticism – Re-education

It's 1988 in the GDR: When Anja's mother applies for an exit visa, she is arrested; her daughter is brought to an institution for non-conforming teenagers. At first, Anja is placed in an open »Jugendwerkhof« (i.e. a youth detention centre). After she tries to run away, however, she ends up in the dreaded closed youth prison. Draconian measures, such as solitary confinement and excessive physical exercise, are the order of the day. While she is at hospital, the girl manages to escape, and in October 1989, shortly before the Fall of the Berlin Wall, she and her mother are eventually reunited in Leipzig. The story is based on the fate of several authentic people and accurately describes life in the GDR. It's an oppressive book that lays open Anja's anger and fear but also her survival strategies in the arbitrary dictatorial system. (12+)

99

Raab, Ann Cathrin (text/illus.)

Ein Mann geht in die Welt

(A man goes out into the world)
Rostock: Hinstorff, 2009. – [32] p.
ISBN 978-3-356-01326-9

Loneliness – Boredom – Trip around the world – Imagination

Bored out of his mind, an inquisitive man leaves his home and sails across the sea with his boat. Full of curiosity, he arrives at a foreign country, where a woman shows him exciting new places and customs. He returns back home, satisfied with all the new impressions – and suddenly home life isn't so dreary anymore either. This book can be read both as a plea to fight couch-potato-ing and as a confirmation of the power of imagination. Just like the text transgresses the borders of reality, so do the illustrations, which assimilate a child's painting style: Figures with huge heads and small bodies surrounded by bold black outlines are moving through a two-dimensional landscape that disregards commonly employed perspectives, e.g. by combining bird's-eye-view with frontal view. (5+)

100

Schiller, Friedrich (text)
Brosinski, Jenny (illus.)

Die Bürgschaft

(The hostage)
Berlin: Kindermann, 2009. – [29] p.
(Poesie für Kinder: Sonderband)
ISBN 978-3-934029-34-7

Friendship – Faithfulness – Poetry

In 2009, for the 250th anniversary of Friedrich Schiller's birth, many of his well-known texts were re-issued; some of them, such as »The hostage«, as picture books. Jenny Brosinski offers a refreshingly new visual interpretation of this ballad about friendship and faithfulness in a race against time. In an effortless, witty, and uninhibited style, she attends to this classic. Her pencil- and colour-pencil sketches and drawings mixed with watercolours are teeming with bizarre details and play with distorted perspectives; her use of speech bubbles is reminiscent of the comic-strip style, while pictures in various sizes add an unexpected vitality to the text. It's the contrast between Schiller's old-fashioned language and the cheeky illustrations that turns this German classic into a truly enjoyable read. (7+)

101

Schott, Hanna (text)
Junge, Franziska (illus.)

Tuso. Eine wahre Geschichte aus Afrika

(Tuso. A true story from Africa)
Leipzig: Klett Kinderbuch, 2009. – 91 p.
ISBN 978-3-941411-06-7

Tanzania – Homelessness

After their parents' death, brothers Tuso and Daudi grow up at their aunt's place. Since she always makes them feel that they are a real burden to her, the boys run away. At first, they fight their way towards the small town of Mohsi; from there they are planning to travel to the capital Dar Es Salaam. Yet in the hustle and bustle, Tuso loses his brother and is suddenly all alone. Only just four years old, the little boy learns to survive on the streets and befriends a stray dog. A few years later, Tusa is extremely lucky: Picked up by two Europeans, he ends up in their children's home where he is able to attend school. This book is based on a true story. Despite being a book for beginning readers with a simple typeface and short sentences, it already introduces different narrative perspectives. (6+)

102

Singer, Claire (text/illus.)

Karlotta verzettelt sich

(Karlotta slips up)
München: ArsEdition, 2009. – 105 p.
ISBN 978-3-7607-3604-4

Holidays – Letter – First love

Twelve-year-old Karlotta's crush Manolo often slips her little love-notes, which she finds utterly romantic. To spice up the drab everyday life during the holidays, she decides to adopt the note-sending technique on their campsite. When she discovers that Patricia from the neighbours' tent receives tiny messages from »Hans« (who actually is »her« Manolo happening to be on another campsite closely without Karlotta's knowing it) she does not only take peeks at them but secretly sends off her own notes and poems under Hans's name. Naturally, this results in contradictions and confusion. Karlotta's distress is the readers' delight. This book is truly refreshing; it will captivate readers with its slapstick humour, lively dialogues, and witty language. (10+)

103

Spinnen, Burkhard

Müller hoch Drei

(Müller times three)

Frankfurt am Main: Schöffling, 2009. – 291 p.

ISBN 978-3-89561-043-1

Siblings – Parents – Search

By interweaving realistic and fairytale-like elements with slapstick components, Burkhard Spinnen successfully creates an ironical-satirical coming-of-age novel with a difference. In this fast-paced road movie-ish story, Paul's parents suddenly disclose to him that they are going to divorce HIM and go on a world trip, leaving the first-person narrator dumbstruck. Things don't improve when, out of the blue, appear a talking dog as well as a hitherto unknown sister. Hoping to play happy family, she persuades Paul to go looking for their other sister – the three of them having been triplets – to lead a carefree teenage life together. Unfortunately, however, the world of sibling No. 3 isn't in apple-pie-order either. Thus, the three siblings travel back and forth through Germany having plenty of weird adventures. What fun! (10+)

104

Wagner, Antje

Unland

(Un-Land)

Berlin: Berlin-Verlag, 2009. – 379 p.

(Bloomsbury Kinderbücher & Jugendbücher)

ISBN 978-3-8270-5339-8

Secret – Shadow world

Fourteen-year-old Franka moves into a housing project somewhere in provincial Germany. Soon, more and more weird things are happening there. When Franka and her friends start looking into them, they discover the »Un-land«, the real world's negative counterpart where the shadows of the world's people dwell. They hate their existence and are trying to lure the »real« people into their realm in order to be able to sneak into the »real« world. Franka and her gang fall into their trap and are turned into shadows. The book is dramaturgically refined and a truly gripping read. With its shadow-world theme, it also raises the question of real vs. unreal, and normal vs. abnormal, thus automatically touching upon issues of identity and personality. (13+)

Switzerland

105

Fil [i.e. Philip Tägert] (text)

Atak [i.e. Georg Barber] (illus.)

Der Struwelpeter oder lustige Geschichten und drollige Bilder nach Dr. Heinrich Hoffmann

(Slovenly Peter or funny stories and droll pictures based on Dr. Heinrich Hoffmann's book)

Zürich: Kein & Aber, 2009. – [89] p.

ISBN 978-3-0369-5260-4

Struwelpeter/Slovenly Peter – Disobedience – Education – Moral

Since its original publication in 1845, Heinrich Hoffmann's famous »Struwelpeter« – a collection of both mischievous and moralistic picture stories – has inspired numerous parodies and »Anti-Struwelpeters«. This version by two renowned comic-strip artists outclasses the former works in several respects. In a completely anarchic mode, Fil and Atak stride through Hoffmann's universe with its naughty, animal-torturing boys and vain, pyromanic girls. With new rhymes and pictures, their book is just as exaggerated, bold, and cunningly meaningful as the original; and perhaps all the more so because the author and illustrator have turned Hoffman's »moral of the story« has been turned into blatant schadenfreude. (10+)

106

Olten, Wanja (text)

Olten, Manuela (illus.)

Kein bisschen dreckig

(Not a whit of dirt)

Zürich: Bajazzo, 2009. – [48] p.

ISBN 978-3-905871-05-0

Washing – Hygiene – Germs

Mean germs – this book's endpapers are teeming with them. Mum is convinced that these filthy things inhabit the first-person narrator's hands. Therefore, washing hands is compulsive. »But my hands are spick and span,« the little girl thinks. Yet then she starts wondering: Didn't Mum say that although germs are so tiny you can't see them, they still make you sick? Suddenly the most appalling scenes tumble through her mind: high fever, hospital, injections! Might it be better to wash the hands after all? Oh, stuff it! It can't be that bad... So in the end, the girl skips the deep-cleansing. This enchantingly undidactic book, filled with illustrations delineating pert facial expressions, directly reflects children's real-life environments. (3+)

107

Schärer, Kathrin (text/illus.)

Johanna im Zug

(Johanna on the train)

Zürich: Atlantis, 2009 – [38] p.

ISBN 978-3-7152-0582-3

Train journey – Pig – Interaction

An illustrator is sitting at her desk drawing a little pig inside a train. That's all she can think of for the moment. All at once, the pig comes alive and starts nagging. She wants a black spot on her hide; and a name: Johanna; and a shirt. Dutifully, the artist follows all the instructions and the story takes its course. This book does not only deal with Johanna's train journey but also with its own creation process. The metafictional level is complemented by detailed colour-pencil illustrations that always tell more than the text itself. The play with various picture sizes creates a dynamism that is taken up by the dialogue between Johanna and her creator and then continued in the ensuing interaction between the protagonists and the readers. (3+)

108

Schroeder, Binette (text/illus.)

Ritter Rüstig & Ritter Rostig

(Sir Lusty and Sir Rusty)

Zürich: NordSüd, 2009. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-3-314-01701-8

[English language edition published by NorthSouth Books as »Sir Lofty and Sir Tubb«]

Knight – Friendship – Envy – Conflict – Reconciliation – Peace

In her new picture book, renowned German illustrator Binette Schroeder explores the technique of collage. Creatively tapping into a great variety of visual sources, she delineates a parable about friendship using her trademark visual language of delicately chiselled, surreal-like scenes in tinted colours permeated by subtle irony. Sir Lusty and his wife Amarone get along so well with Sir Rusty and his wife Salbadrine that they let the wall between their two castles crumble and tumble down. One day, however, the most beautiful flower grows exactly on the boundary – and each couple soon claims it for themselves. Envy and resentment slowly create a wall of ice between the Lofties and the Tubbies. Yet when spring comes, seven seedlings of the beautiful flower suddenly bloom in both couple's gardens – and peace is eventually restored. (6+)

Africa

La Réunion (France) (French)

109

Ecoormier, Joëlle

Je t'écris du pont. Nouvelles

(I am writing to you from the bridge. Stories)

Saint-André, Île de La Réunion : Océan Éd., 2009. – 140 p.

(Océan Ados)

ISBN 978-2-916-53360-5. –

Suicide – Identity – Parents – Child – Puberty

This book contains six successful stories from La Réunion that capture the moods and everyday cares of adolescents with linguistic and thematic accuracy. It focuses on the difficulties of knowing oneself, of loving a person, of trusting him or her, of dealing with discrimination, of breaking free of dependencies or familial demands, and of finding one's own way. Taboos from life on the island of La Réunion thereby come to light, e.g., the question of just how conflict-free the coexistence of different cultures on the island really is. Joëlle Ecoormier is a young talented story-teller in the tradition of new magical realism, which maintains the balance between detailed, sensitive observation and exuberant imagination. (14+) ♦

110

Robi [i.e. Chloé Robineau] (text)

Chaveron, Maité (illus.)

Elle a de qui tenir!

(From whom she inherited everything!)

Saint-André (Île de La Réunion): Océan Éd., 2009. – [32] p.

(Océan Jeunesse)

ISBN 978-2-916-53372-8

Family – Newborn – Ancestry – Similarity – Differentness

Typically, as soon as a child is born the big »similarity contest« begins. Everyone wants to find out whose hair, mouth, ear shape, laugh and most all whose (wonderful or reprehensible) character the child has inherited. This book humorously plays with such projections and the wish lying behind them, namely to see children as the result of their (biological and cultural) heritage. It then suggests welcoming newborns as unique beings and accompanying children on their individual way. Maité Chaveron, with a great deal of sensitivity for colours and shapes, illustrates a song from Chloé Robineau (i.e. Robi) about the hybridization of cultures and the great diversity that exists within a single family. (4+)

Europe

Belgium (French)

111

Crowther, Kitty (text/illus.)

Annie du lac

(Annie of the lake)

Bruxelles/Paris: École des Loisirs, 2009. - 40 p.

(Pastel)

ISBN 978-2-211-08546-5

Loneliness – Dream – Love – Water – Giant

Annie lives alone in a house by the lake. Submerging herself more and more in imaginary worlds, one night she has enough of life and walks into the water. There she learns that the three islands in the lake are in reality the attractively decorated hats of giants who sit on the lake bed. The next day she meets them and declares herself ready to help Basile, Tile and Emile get to the sea and to the female giants who live there. At the end of the journey, however, Emile wants to return with Annie, in order to lead a happy life with her (in human form). In her unmistakable style, Kitty Crowther has invented a lively parable about the power of dreams and the way »out of darkness«. Her pictures, too, seem to glow from the inside. (8+)

112

Hammer, Béatrice (text)

Dubois, Claude K. (illus.)

Miss Catastrophe

(Miss Klutz)

Bruxelles: Alice Jeunesse, 2009. – 125 p.

(Les Romans; 22)

ISBN 978-2-87426-109-1

Circus – Dolt – Self-confidence – Motivation

Noémie spreads a little chaos wherever she stops and goes. She is »unbelievably clumsy«, her mother believes. She herself was also made fun of in the family for being a »klutz« and does not trust her daughter with anything anymore. Noémie fights against this prejudice. In a circus school, she learns some tips and tricks in order to become more graceful in her movements – the key is to enjoy learning and to develop endurance. At the end of the year, the former »Miss Catastrophe« can even juggle, to the great amazement of her parents, and has won in self-confidence. This inspiring picture book on self-esteem and patience shows children and their parents how to develop coping strategies even when others discourage one. (8+)

113

Herbauts, Anne (text/illus.)

Sans début ni fin. Petite parabole

(Without beginning and end. A little parable)

Noville-sur-Mehaigne: Esperluète Editions, 2008. – 20 p.

ISBN 978-2-930223-93-3

Loss – Deprivation – Poverty

Around a skein of red wool, accompanied by a short text full of allusions, Anne Herbauts »spins« poetic objects and collages that tell tales of loss and deprivation. The red wool skein pulls through the whole fanfold, where, with a mixture of respect and impressive lightness, people who are »missing« something are presented: nameless people, people without history, people without possessions, homeless people, people without rights, as well as carefree people, ageless people... Anne Herbauts's book is a successful collection of parables that deliver an unusual opening to discuss with children questions of having and being, dignity and respect, and the nonsense of blanket categorizations in a »precarious society«. (5+)

114

Rascal (text/illus.)

Comme mon père me l'a appris

(Like my father taught me)

Bruxelles/Paris: École des loisirs, 2009. – 24 p.

ISBN 978-2-211-09414-6

(Pastel)

Inuit – Education – Hunt – Independence

In poetic images inspired by the magical beauty of Inuit-drawings and a text, as short as it is concise, that relies on the power of repetition, Rascal lets an Inuit boy describe how he was prepared for the art of the hunt by his father. The book talks memorably about the contrast between education and the moment of making one's own decision. A good hunter does not leave anything to chance, so the boy pays attention to his dreams before the hunt. Carefully he checks his weapons, practices attentiveness, silence, and patience, in order to be able to act quickly in the decisive moment of the hunt. This moment exceeds the young Inuit's abilities. When the hunted seal surfaces, he raises his weapon, but cannot kill the animal. (3+) ♦

France (French)

115

Baumann, Anne-Sophie (text)

Sourdais, Clémentine (illus.)

Cherchons les petites bêtes!**Découvertes et activités**

(Let's look for small creatures! Discoveries and activities in the garden)

[Toulouse]: Actes Sud, 2009. – 138 p.

(Actes Sud junior)

ISBN 978-2-7427-8355-7

Nature – Animal world – Plant world – Interactive game

This book offers an introduction –pedantry free! – on exact observation and respectful living with nature. It merges aspects of a guide book and of an activity book in a very entertaining manner. Its precise charm lies in informatively introducing the animal and plant worlds, while making room for playful suggestions from the realm of crafts, decoration, cooking, dressing up, etc. The fact is also taken into account that today's urban children often do not have a garden or access to their »own« green space and so must find other ways to get to know insects, spiders, snails, little mammals, and birds. (4+)

116

Cumont, Louise-Marie (illus.)

Au lit!

(Off to bed!)

Nantes: Éd. MeMo, 2009. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-2-35289-052-2

Night – Sleep – Dream

In sleep we reveal unknown facets of ourselves. With much humour, artist Louise-Marie Cumont treats this topic – in a »paper version« of her book made out of fabric. The fabric pictures show the relaxed, the tortured, the worried, the happy, the amorous sleepers, the family sleepers, the estranged, the researcher engaged in nocturnal struggle with his mathematical demon, as well as the cat lover who can't enter dreamland without her cats – and much more. The different sleep »moods« and postures always correspond in a lovely way to the highly unusual bed sheets of the sleepers. This nice picture book makes do without words, while still opening many doors for commentary and questions. (3+)

117

Daeninckx, Didier (text)

Corvaisier, Laurent (illus.)

Missak, l'enfant de l'Affiche rouge

(Missak, the son of the red poster)

[Voisins-le Bretonneux]: Rue du Monde, 2009. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-2-35504-080-1

Manouchian, Missak – World War II – France/1943 – Vichy-France – Résistance – National socialism – Armenia/1915 – Genocide

A blood-red poster hangs in France in November 1943: It calls for a hunting down of the resistance group Manouchian. Almost all members have a migratory background like their legendary leader, the Armenian poet Missak Manouchian. He and twenty-two of his comrades are betrayed shortly thereafter and executed. Missak retrospectively talks about his life: his happy childhood in Turkey that ended with the Armenian genocide of 1915, his years of exile in Lebanon and in France. The book wins through its authenticity and clever composition. Black-and-white pages alternate with brightly coloured paintings: The black-and-white contrast stands for suffering undergone, the coloured pages symbolize Missak's happy memories, as well as his hopes. The volume includes a very good documentary appendix. (8+) ♦

118

Dedieu, Thierry (text/illus.)

Aagun

<proper name>

[Paris]: Seuil Jeunesse, 2009. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-2-02-099613-6

Mongolia – War – Cunning – Enemy

Being constantly plundered by a neighbouring warrior people, the inhabitants of a Mongolian tent village ask prince Batoor for help. To their disappointment, he sends only his warrior Aagun, who forces them to adopt a new tactic: They are to give the enemy the loot of free accord. While the one-time aggressors lead comfortable lives, Aagun forces his charges to perfect themselves in the survival techniques of hunting, fishing and so on, so that the warrior people become more and more dependent on them. This is a provocative fable about the art of »embracing thine enemy« in order to be victorious over him. From thick black ink strokes, Dedieu spins wonderfully filigreed forms, which represent the essential moments in the text and force a closer look. (5+)

119

Deru-Renard, Béa (text)

Osterwalder, Hans Ulrich (illus.)

Sophie au temps des cerises. Sous la commune avec Nadar et Louise Michel

(Sophie at cherry time. In the Paris Commune with Nadar and Louise Michel)

Paris: École des Loisirs, 2009. – 45 p.

(Archimède)

ISBN 978-2-211-09456-6

France/1871 – Paris Commune – School – Child labour – Michel, Louise – Nadar, Felix – Nadar, Paul

Child workers in Paris in 1863 can only dream of going to school. So it is with Sophie, too, who instead of reading must toil in the household of the eccentric photographer Nadar, where she also meets Nadar's son Paul. One year later, Sophie's dream is suddenly realized. Supported by the courageous Republican Louise Michel, she attends school and then even completes training to be an elementary school teacher. But when her benefactor Louise – as a supporter of the Paris Commune – is banned to New Caledonia for ten years, Sophie decides to follow her into exile. The text, as concise as it is sensitive, and the newly restored period photographs help form the outstanding character of this non-fiction book. It conveys a lively impression of the life conditions and everyday experience at the explosive end of the Second Empire in France. (9+) ★

120

Dubos, Heidi

Et moi dans tout ça?

(And what will happen to me?)

[Clichy]: Éd. du Jasmin, 2009. – 63 p.

(Collection Roman Jeunesse; 13)

ISBN 978-2-352840-46-6

Divorce – Family – Parents – Daughter – Move

Iola is seven years old when her parents divorce. Both quickly find a new partner (each with a child) and seem strangely calm during this time of familial upheaval. Only Iola does not know anymore where her place is. She hopes for reconciliation, in vain. Her mother decides to move to another city with her partner, and Iola, for whom separation from her father is hard to take, increasingly retreats. A new school, new problems: a strict teacher, who does not understand Iola's daydreams, and an unfriendly class! But Iola in the end finds a friend and a teacher who encourages her great talent for inventing

stories and for painting. This story treats in a clear and caring way the many questions that children pose themselves when their parents divorce. (8+)

121

H. M. [i.e. Hervé Moisan]

Samira

<proper name>

[Paris]: Grasset-Jeunesse, 2009. – 234 p.

(Roman Grand format)

ISBN 978-2-246-75881-5

School – Gender relations – Rape – Migration – Second generation

At Rimbaud college, located in a rich quarter of Paris, classmates of Samira form a committee to support her. The emigrant – due to a purported love affair – has to hide from her family, which seeks to violently »retrieve« her. Shortly hereafter two students are shot. The police also consider Samira a suspect, who conceals the real reasons for her flight: She is expectant after having been group raped. The novel is a successful mix of various genres: Detective story, thriller, school tale. Different topics, including gender relations, violence, and double standards, are broached at a fast clip and with a good dose of teenage slang from the perspective of sixteen-year-old Alex, who does not curry the reader's favour. (14+) ◆

122

Jacquet, Frédérique (text)

Davodeau, Étienne (illus.)

Jeanne de la zone

(Jeanne from the zone)

Paris: Éd. de l'Atelier, 2008. – 100 p.

ISBN 978-2-7082-4018-6

Paris/1900 – Suburb – Solidarity

At the start of the twentieth century, little Jeanne grows up in the so-called »zone« in Paris, a poor quarter that lies between the fortifications of the city and the many factories around Saint Denis. Yet Jeanne lives out a protected and free childhood there; she learns much from her context, one where neighbourly help and solidarity still belong to the shared culture. In contrast to her father, who earns a scant income from work as a ragman, she goes to school and later works as a nurse in a factory: an early success story from the suburbs. One of the rising stars of the French graphic art scene, Étienne Davodeau, has lovingly illustrated this book. Many terms from culture and society are explained in a well-documented extra section titled »In Jeanne's world.« (10+)

123

Leblanc, André (text)

Barroux (i.e. Stéphane Barroux) (illus.)

Le piano rouge

(The red piano)

[Paris]: Le Sorbier, 2008. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-2-7320-3921-3

China/1965-1976 – China/Cultural Revolution – Zhu, Xiao-Mei

Inspired by the life of well-known pianist Zhu Xiao-Mei, this picture book is exemplary in portraying the many victims of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. A young girl, on the fast track to becoming a classical pianist, is sentenced in 1970 to many years in a re-education camp. At night she secretly practices on a piano that she had smuggled into the camp. In April 1975, her piano is publicly destroyed and she is condemned to further draconian punishments. When she leaves the camp in 1976, she takes with her only the tiny transcriptions of Bach's »Well-tempered Piano«, which she clandestinely assembled there. The text is accompanied by evocative, enigmatically assembled collages, which keep to a red and black colour scheme. (8+) ♦

124

Maret, Pascale

Le monde attend derrière la porte

(The world is waiting behind the door)

Paris: Magnier, 2009. – 207 p.

ISBN 978-2-84420-751-7

Religious fundamentalism – Christianity – Sect – Emancipation

The founding of Christian fundamentalist groups in France inspired Pascale Maret to write this novel, which describes in a very nuanced way the process of disassociation from a sect. The family of fourteen-year-old Sarah lives according to the dictates of the so-called »Rigorous sect«, which to Sarah seem increasingly absurd. After a thwarted escape, she ends up in a spiral of sanctions, whose culmination is her »deportation« to a rigorous family in Scotland. In the end, Sarah and her younger brother are helped by an aunt who left the sect years earlier. The novel is very convincingly written from Sarah's perspective, who – all alone – tries to find truth. The succinct narrative style, which avoids unnecessary drama, draws the reader in right away. (12+)

125

Mourlevat, Jean-Claude

Le chagrin du roi mort

(The sorrow of the dead king)

[Paris]: Gallimard Jeunesse, 2009. – 402 p.

ISBN 978-2-07-062387-7

King – Death – Sorrow – Fraternity – Betrayal

On the island of Petite Terre (somewhere in the North Sea), the inhabitants, after the death of their good king Holund, are at the mercy of the power aspirations of sinister Guerolf. His desire for power also pulls apart the boys Brisco and Aleks, who consider themselves brothers – yet Brisco is in reality a nephew of king Holund. Guerolf, who once killed Brisco's father, has him kidnapped in order to train him to fight against his own people in Petite Terre. Aleks becomes a soldier while searching for the boy he assumes to be his brother. He falls in love with beautiful Lia and flees with her, is captured and the brothers must then face each other as enemies. This novel is a sparkling work of wonder: a saga that grips readers with its poetic language and psychological depth especially. (12+)

126

Piquemal, Michel / Witek, Jo (text)

Deemoes (illus.)

Tout savoir sur le sexe sans tabous ni complexes

(All about sex, no taboos and no complexes)

Paris: De La Martinière Jeunesse, 2009. – 237 p.

ISBN 978-2-7324-3930-3

Sexuality – Sex education – Gender relations

Is there need for yet another sex education book for teenagers in this »tabooless« epoch, when sexual topics (including the marketing of sex) have long since permeated all social spheres? Yes there is, because despite (or precisely because of!) flooding on all channels, young people still have many unanswered questions! This is a modern sex education book created by an experienced author duo. In a respectful and direct tone, it treats the possible insecurities and ambivalences of teenagers, while taking into account the very different ways boys and girls find answers. This book performs a successful balancing act between clear, scientific argumentation and being a sensitive guide to what could be a »fulfilling sexuality«. (13+)

127

Rozenfeld, Carina

Les clefs de Babel

(The keys to Babel)

[Paris]: Syros, 2009. – 273 p.

(Soon; 5)

ISBN 978-2-74-850840-6

Natural catastrophe – Civil war – Hierarchy

A natural catastrophe made the world uninhabitable for centuries. Its survivors live in the giant »tower worlds of Babel« After a devastating civil war over access to clean resources, enmity between the towers set in. All connections between the vertically oriented tower worlds were sealed off. After a millennium has passed, five teenagers from the different worlds, equipped with special magical powers, must overcome their differences and begin a dangerous journey to find a way into the outer world. Young author Carina Rozenfeld succeeds in creating an interesting mix of adventure, science fiction, and fantasy novel, which convinces through its narrative strength, suspense, and metaphorical coherence. (12+)

128

Servant, Stéphane

Guadalquivir

<river name>

[Paris]: Gallimard, 2009. – 198 p.

(Scripto)

ISBN 978-2-07-061808-8

Nephew – Grandmother – Journey – Search for identity – Racism

Young Frenchman Frédéric is torn between episodes of wild rage and of desperation after the suicide of his Spanish father. He recently joined the »La Meute« gang, a group of aggressive skinheads who overrun their part of town with violence and arson. When at the end of her life Frédéric's very ill grandmother wants to return to Spain, Frédéric finds himself in the position of having to accompany her. This »initiation voyage« straight through Andalusia, a trip marked by fierce disagreements with a Moroccan woman named Kenza, and the search for his family's history transform Frédéric. This extraordinary debut novel very precisely depicts Frédéric's inner transformation and at the same time treats topics such as racism from the perspective of a (one-time) skinhead. (14+) ♦

129

Solet, Bertrand

Jean Moulin, héros de la Résistance

(Jean Moulin, hero of the Résistance)

Paris: Oscar éd., 2009. – 98 p.

(Histoire & Société; 38)

ISBN 978-2-3500-0494-5

Moulin, Jean – France/1940-1943 – World War II – Résistance

In this exciting biography from the successful series »History & Société«, Bertrand Solet narrates the last three years of Jean Moulin, the brilliant strategist who unified the competing parts of the French Résistance in the World War II during the German occupation. In so doing, Solet does not stoop to »hero worship«, but rather is able to honour Moulin's life work and scintillating personality with a critical respect. Moulin's life story and the appended documentation present further members and important stages of the French Resistance. In June 1943, Moulin was delivered through betrayal into the hands of the sadistic Gestapo chief of Lyon, Klaus Barbie. Moulin won this final, unequal fight, though he died from the effects of his torture. (9+)

130

Teisson, Janine (text)

Concejo, Joanna (illus.)

Au clair de la nuit

(In the light of the night)

Urville-Nacqueville: Møtus, 2009. – 64 p.

(Pommes pirates papillons; 20)

978-2-907354-94-3

Night – Moon – Poetry

Thirty short prose poems by Janine Teisson explore the proverbial moods and daily transformations of the moon's shape, colour, and volume. Seemingly mundane figures of speech or proverbs are masterfully transcribed into dreamy images or carefully commented on through illustrations. All cheeky questions turn enigmatic once fused with picture and text: One says, the moon is »full« – but with what? Why does the moon lose its horns? Why is the moon red with rage? The pencil drawings of Joanna Concejo also deliver slightly surreal interpretations of the moon's adventures, for example the moon dangling like an egg between a branch fork or suddenly falling into the water. This book is a wonderful invitation to dream. (8+)

Italy (Italian)

131

Ballerini, Luigi

Zia Dorothy

(Aunt Dorothy)

Firenze: Giunti Junior, 2009. – 182 p.

(Gru – Giunti ragazzi universale)

ISBN 978-88-09-74218-5

Italy – London – Cultural exchange – Family life – Trip

»Aunt« Dorothy from England is really unique because of her eccentric life style. She has fallen in love with Italy and hence ends up adopting an Italian family, which she now and again drops in on without prior notice. She continually ushers in surprises and happy moments. One day, however, instead of the aunt a curious tureen arrives, which contains her ashes. In her will she requested that she be able to spend a few more days with her nephew Pietro and her niece Caterina. A series of stupendous adventures and trips to London thus ensues. This is a story that is »British« in all senses of the word; it is entertaining, light, and has a wide cultural horizon, peppered with many English quotations. (9+)

132

Buongiorno, Teresa (text)

De Conno, Gianni (illus.)

Abul Abbas – elefante imperiale

(Abul Abbas – the emperor's elephant)

Roma: Ed. Lapis, 2009. – [28] p.

(I Lapislazzuli)

ISBN 978-88-7874-130-0

Christianity – Islam – Respect – Tolerance – Friendship – Charles the Great – Hārūn ar-Raschīd

This story takes place in the Middle Ages and concerns the mutual respect and friendship between the Christian emperor Charles the Great and the Muslim caliph Hārūn ar-Raschīd. The two men, different in mentality and faith, overcome their differences on the basis of their education and principles. The new friendship is sealed with the caliph's gift to the emperor of an elephant who makes it through an adventure-filled voyage to Europe. The book is a strong testament to the fact that political problems and every polemic can be dissolved if peoples respect each other, and to the fact that in reality only friendship and working together can bear fruit that many consider only confrontation and war are able to produce. (5+) ◆

133

Bussolati, Emanuela (text/illus.)

Giardinieri in erba

(Hobby gardeners)

Firenze: Ed. Scienza, 2009. – 47 p.

(I quadernini)

ISBN 978-88-7307-434-2

Gardening – Nature observation

This guidebook invites children, armed with a bag full of vetch seeds and practical instructions, to assemble a craft corner – even on a table in a small room – that will not be too messy. It presents precise information and explores the fundamentals of the life of plants: air, water, earth, and sunshine. There is, however, still an important fifth element in order to learn to understand the language of plants and their survival tricks: care, observation, patience, attentiveness, inspection, performed via a playful method based on direct observation, curiosity, and personal discoveries. (8+)

134

Carioli, Janna (text)

Orecchia, Giulia (illus.)

I sentimenti dei bambini.**Spremuta di poesie in agrodolce**

(The feelings of children. Freshly pressed sweet-sour poems)

Milano: Mondadori, 2009. – 49 p.

(I sassolini: Per la scuola primaria; 4)

ISBN 978-88-04-58481-5

Emotion – Rationality – Coming of age – Poetry

The author here inquires into the emotions of children through children's rhymes and poems. They complement the delicacy and uniqueness of a topic that invites emotional more than rational consideration: from anger to loneliness, from boredom to upset, but also from happiness to the joy of growing up and conceiving of an extraordinary future. The author succeeds in getting on eye-level with children children and accessing their lively and happy or their withdrawn and bitter emotional states. In so doing she gives child readers the possibility of identifying with the various emotions in the poems. For adults, it offers an opportunity to reflect on how they, too, once felt, and to understand the emotional world of children. (8+)

135

D'Adamo, Francesco

Storia di Ismael che ha attraversato il mare

(The story of Ishmael who crossed the sea)

Novara: De Agostini, 2009. – 159 p.

(Le Gemme)

ISBN 978-88-418-5579-7

Illegal immigration – Admittance

Ishmael, an African fisherman, tries to reach by sea the desired country of Italy. There he hopes to build a new life and to find work to support his family. When he has collected the required sum his odyssey begins. Starting with the boarding of an old unsafe boat, manned by unscrupulous ferrymen, it ends with a devastating ship breach, where with his own eyes he sees women, old people and many children die. The novel constructs an unsparing picture of the numerous stories of desperate people escaping from war and poverty, which often end tragically. This book will shake up people who frequently indifferently push the fate of others from their minds.

(11+) ♦

136

Dell'Oro, Erminia [et al.] (text)

Bruno, Iacopo [et al.] (illus.)

Non calpestate i nostri diritti. Scrittori e illustratori per i diritti dei bambini

(Do not ignore our rights. Authors and illustrators for children's rights)

Milano: Piemme Junior, 2009. – 187 p.

(Il battello a vapore)

ISBN 978-88-566-1095-6

Children's Rights – Solidarity

This volume contains ten original stories from the most important Italian authors and illustrators. It was published on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child of the United Nations and deals with the rights of children and adolescents. All of the stories seek to unsettle their readers by stirring the readers' conscience. They make clear and tangible the ten basic rights of the child: the right to equality, identity, protection, participation and freedom of discrimination, the right to health, nutrition, schooling, minority protection, play and free time. More than a celebration, it is an advisement to march forward on the path of solidarity with those children unfortunate enough to be unable to satisfy even their basic needs. (10+) ♦

137

Guarnaccia, Steven (retelling/illus.)

Novajra, Francesca / corrainiStudio (transl.)

I tre porcellini

(The three little pigs)

Mantova: Ed. Corraini, 2009. – [32] p.

(Bambini)

ISBN 978-88-7570-197-0

Pig – Threat – Wolf – Subterfuge – Survival – Folktale

The fairytale of the three little pigs is transposed by Steven Guarnaccia into the houses (made from scrap, glass, mortar, and bricks) of three important architects of the twentieth century: Frank Gehry, Le Corbusier, and Frank Lloyd Wright. In their own well-known buildings, surrounded by objects invented by some of the most well-known architects and designers in the world, one day they receive visits from the big bad wolf (in blue jeans, boots, and black leather jacket, straddling a motorcycle). In the end papers of the book, one finds a useful listing of the designer objects that appear in the course of the story, in order to find them on the pages and to recognize them. This is a picture book that deals with art in a sophisticated and unusual way. (4+)

138

Ossorio, Antonella / Zoungrana, Adama

Se entri nel cerchio sei libero. Un'infanzia in Burkina Faso

(If you step in the circle, you are free. A childhood in Burkina Faso)

Milano: Rizzoli, 2009. – 205 p.

(Rizzoli narrativa)

ISBN 978-88-17-02938-4

Burkina Faso – Child – Exploitation – Integration – Multiculturalism

This novel tells about the life of Adama, called Basina by friends and family, a child like many others in Burkina Faso. He is oppressed by his father and kept like a slave. He loves school, but his »padre-padrone« (father and master) finds learning useless, and so Adama runs away. In order to survive, he works in a mine, like many children his age and even younger, and daily risks his life with hard and dangerous work. But fate permits him to encounter men and women who change his life, who help him to enter another world, through the front door, as a privileged person and not a despairing one. (11+) ♦

139

Piumini, Roberto (text)

Mariani, Mirella (illus.)

La valle dei mulini

(The valley of the mills)

San Dorligo della Valle (Trieste): Einaudi Ragazzi, 2009. – 131 p.

(Einaudi Ragazzi: Storie e rime; 390)

ISBN 978-88-7926-772-4

Environmental protection – Egoism – Friendship

This story with its straightforwardly simple plot – which revolves around a stream that becomes a matter of contention between inhabitants of villages in a valley in the Alps – continually brings alive important topics that are dear to Roberto Piumini: sincere friendship, the sense of integrity, respect for nature and for the work of human beings. And most of all, it celebrates the value of stories, especially those that are true, which latch themselves strongly to our souls and that guide our ideas and dealings. They are always present to our mind, almost like the still majesty of the glaciers that surround the little valley through which the precious water flows. (8+)

140

Sanna, Alessandro (text/illus.)

Butters, Isobel (et al.) (transl.)

Una casa, la mia casa

(A house, my house)

Mantova: Ed. Corraini, 2009. – [38] p.

ISBN 978-88-7570-226-7

House – Family – Metamorphosis

Shortly after the earthquake hit the Italian Abruzzo region in 2008, this book, a poem in pictures about the house, was »dedicated to all children of the world who have lost their houses.« The stylized silhouette of a little house, which in its simplicity and its delicacy seems nearly Zen-like, continually takes on imagined forms of our experience, our needs and our feelings. Sometimes it turns into a father that builds and maintains the house, sometimes a dog that protects it as it protects us, or sometimes a mother, a playground, etc. The topic of the house as archetypal symbol engages the imagination of children; the last pages of the book are left for them to invent their own favourite houses. The short accompanying text also appears in English, French, German, Spanish, and Japanese translations. (3+)

141

Serreli, Silvia (text)

Agliardi, Allegra (illus.)

Viola cambia scuola

(Viola changes schools)

Torino: EDT, 2009. – [28] p.

(Giralangolo)

ISBN 978-88-6040-452-7

Immigration – Integration – School – Interculturalism

This picture book, very colourful and presented in large format, describes, from the perspective of little Viola, the experience of initial integration that many children from other countries experience in Italy. The book describes the school admission process – a very current topic in Italy – where students many and in part very different cultures are brought together. The picture book presents this experience as a positive one of living together and sharing with one another. Children are encouraged to give each other the right signals in order to aid others, to understand one another, and to make themselves understood. (4+) ♦

142

Tamaro, Susanna (text)

Orecchia, Giulia (illus.)

Il grande albero

(The big tree)

Milano: Salani, 2009. – 153 p.

ISBN 978-88-6256-094-X

Environment – Trust – Wonder

Susana Tamaro delivers a delightful, uplifting, fairytale-like story, which lets one hope and believe that nothing is impossible if the will and the heart are wholly present. The protagonist is a 300-year-old, majestic Austrian pine tree, which during its slow growth has been witness to historical events both great and small. One day, however, it is selected as a Christmas tree and brought to St. Peter's Square in Rome. The cutting down and death of the large tree symbolize the death of nature. Totally unexpectedly, a little inhabitant of the tree, the little squirrel Crik, who obstinately insists on retaining his inherited home, hatches a plan to change the course of events. He will have to turn to the white-clothed little man, who appears now and again in St. Peter's Square. Yes, indeed, that's the pope, the great Karol Wojtyła. And a miracle does occur... (7+) ★

Portugal (Portuguese)

143

Saldanha, Ana

Para maiores de dezasseis

(For Sixteen-year-olds and up)

Lisboa: Caminho, 2009. – 211 p.

(Livros do dia e da noite)

ISBN 978-972-21-2055-5

First love – Sexuality – Coming of age – Search for identity – Seduction

Though she stands on the cusp of the unfamiliar and alluring world of adulthood, fifteen-year-old Dulce in some ways remains a child. The bodily and physical changes the young woman undergoes, her questions, insecurities and mood swings – all these are seen through the prism of her budding relationship with Eddie, twice her senior. She is infatuated with him, is in love, wraps him around her finger. He for his part uses his age and experience to his gain, but also must fear the juridical consequences of his relationship with a minor. Without drawing on worn clichés, Ana Saldanha portrays Dulce's life in a convincing manner, realistically and in an authentic language oriented to the life world of the adolescent reader. (14+)

144

Viana, António Manuel Couto (text)

Cruz, Afonso (illus.)

Bichos diversos em versos. Poesia infantil

(Diverse animals in verse. Children's poetry)

Lisboa: Texto, 2008. – 30 p.

ISBN 978-972-47-3780-5

Animals – Poetry

The animal poems of multiply awarded and translated poet António Manuel Couto Viana (born 1923) are characterized by humour and a wonderful rhythmic language, which give the texts pep and wit. A double page is dedicated to every animal in this rhymed bestiary in picture book format. With a wink, the poems describe the fate of the turkey fattened for Christmas dinner, for example, or the lion's transition from crowned king to elected president. Afonso Cruz congenially translates the texts into colourful illustrations. At the centre, displayed on nearly empty backgrounds, the animal protagonists act, echoing the humour of the verses in their exaggerated gestures. (5+)

Spain (Spanish)

145

Albo, Pablo (text)

Carrasco, Aitana (illus.)

Gigante poco a poco

(Giant piece by piece)

[Villaviciosa de Odón]: Almadra, 2009. – [26] p.

(Pez volador; 4)

ISBN 978-84-9270-243-5

Giant – Outsider – Differentness – Respect

Manuel's parents are the size of windmills. Small wonder that this would have consequences at some point. When Manuel turns seven, his feet suddenly grow gigantic, his eyes become larger, and soon the giant child towers above his friends at four times their size. No one in his class is bothered. Quite the opposite, the other children contentedly ride on Manuel's shoes or find shelter under his umbrella. Everything would be superb if it weren't for people who take the boy to be a monster. Vividly but not brashly narrated, this picture book shows how simple it could be to take everyone as they come. The illustrations visualize the topic playfully. They depict a lively world with distorted perspectives in which the big/little distinction isn't taken too seriously. (4+)

146

Cansino, Eliacer

OK, señor Foster

(Okay, Mr. Foster)

Zaragoza: Edelvives, 2009. – 196 p.

(Colección Alandar; 113)

ISBN 978-84-263-7239-0

Spain/1969 – Authoritarian state – Freedom of opinion – Nonconformism – Son – Father

This novel is set in the last decade of the Franco regime in Spain. In the Andalusian fishing village of Umbria, ten-year-old Perico experiences how the authoritarian system – embodied in the self-aggrandizing policeman Efrén – attempts to monitor people even in their private lives. Nonconformism and free thinking – values that Ismael, the tanner, and Foster, the English journalist, believe in – are eyed sceptically. Mistrust and timidity lie like mildew on a society that has spread a cloak of silence over its history. This intimate play has only a few roles and deals with the winners and losers of history, but also with friendship and trust. It is told convincingly from the perspective of the boy, who gradually grasps the conflicts of adults. (11+)

147

López Domínguez, Xan (text/illus.)

Mis historias perdidas

(My lost stories)

Barcelona: Libros del Zorro Rojo, 2009. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-84-92412-32-7

Memory – Imagination – Storytelling

This picture book strings together fragments of memories: memories of stories that ought to be uncovered like treasures. Here they function as occasions to inspire story-telling, setting readers' imagination into motion. The text is a sort of magic box of mysterious sounding titles: there is, for example, the story of the line who flees from the blackboard into the winter fog; or Red Riding Hood, who repeatedly heads to the deepest corners of the forest; or the battalion of soulless automatons who can do nothing except march. In his characteristic way, Xan López Domínguez constructs strangely proportioned, artificial seeming figures. Spherical or stretched lengthwise, these move, nearly floating, in a stage-like park landscape. (8+)

148

Luján, Jorge (text)

Isol (illus.)

Ser y parecer. Un poema

(Being and appearing to be. A poem)

[Madrid]: Kókinos, 2008. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-84-96629-36-3

Being – Appearance – Self – Identity – Poetry

Jorge Luján, an Argentinean living in Mexico, has distinguished himself as one of the internationally best known children's poets. Artists from different countries have illustrated his poems, notably usually in single editions. »Ser y parecer« is – thank goodness! – not the only book that Luján has made in collaboration with illustrator Isol, also an Argentinian. Like his other enigmatic, linguistically enchanting, and in the truest sense »poetic« poems, this collection once more focuses on philosophical questions, especially those concerning the self, being, and identity. The marvellous collaged pictures take up the enigmatic character of the verses and give observers room for their own questions and thoughts. (5+)

149

Nesquens, Daniel (text)

Magicomora (i.e. Sergio Mora) (illus.)

Papá tatuado

(Tattooed Papa)

[Barcelona]: A buen paso, 2009. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-84-9372111-0-7

Adventure – Storytelling – Imagination – Exaggeration

Papa has ants in his pants, loves wandering the world above all else and seldom is with his family. Like a fascinating picture book, countless tattoos on his body bear witness to adventures encountered during his journeys. These are – in finest tall tale tradition – spectacular, breath-taking, dangerous, spine-tingling, exaggerated beyond measure and affirm one thing above all else: Papa is the biggest, the strongest, the bravest – whether he is face to face with a blood-thirsty tiger, lethal spiders or fire-spewing volcanoes. The coloured illustrations provide great pleasure, too, as they weave between dream, fantasy and reality. Crazy, playful, surreal and tongue-in-cheek kitschy, they serve as the best evidence for the limitlessness of the imagination. (9+)

150

Tazón Cubillas, Aura (text)

Bustos, Luís (illus.)

Los gamopelúsidos

(The Gamopelusidians)

[Barcelona]: Ed. Bambú, 2009. – 201 p.

(Bambú: Jóvenes lectores; 10)

978-84-8343-056-9

Island – Animal-human – Hierarchy – Discord – Reconciliation – Prophecy

Inventive Martín reaches Gamopelusía on a converted swimming bicycle. The island, which is mainly made of cheese, is inhabited by feathered, scaled, and furry creatures, all of whom are the progeny of gods who take on animal form, e.g., those of India and Ancient Egypt. They live in a society paralyzsed by nonsensical rites, lamed and fragmented by unresolved conflicts from a civil war long past. When the island is threatened by power-hungry rodents and ends up being destroyed, Martín succeeds in unifying and evacuating the Gamopelusidians before the island sinks into the sea. This energetically narrated story is full of imaginative, funny insights and is also an entertaining read, by virtue of its humour and playful language. (8+)

Spain (Catalan)

151

Hernández, Pau Joan (text)

Batet, Montserrat (illus.)

L'illa de la Pedra inquieta

(The island of the Restless Stone)

Barcelona: Ed. Cruïlla, 2009. – 174 p.

(El vaixell de vapor: Sèrie taronja; 168)

ISBN 978-84-661-2153-8

Friendship – Adventure – Stone – Secret – Magic

When Marc moves with his parents to a small town in the country, at first he is concerned: how will he manage? After some false starts, he finally befriends Nora and brothers Jem and Ki. There is plenty of room to play in an untended park and at an enchanted river. Marc's dreams of a stone with magical powers of attraction are unsettling, though. The search for it leads the four to an island in the river. What begins as an exciting excursion ends as a threatening adventure, which the friends survive with a healthy dose of fright. In a concentrated and sensitive way, Pau Joan Hernández tells the gripping story from the boy's perspective. Tension builds in such a way that one reads the book in one fell swoop up to the last page. (9+)

152

Paüls, Lena (text)

Gil Capeta, Àgata (illus.)

La draga sense escates

(The scaleless lady dragon)

Barcelona: Publ. de l'Abadia de Montserrat,

2008. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-84-9883-066-8

Dragon – Flaw – Healing

Saint George being the patron saint of Catalonia, dragons naturally play an important role in its tradition, culture and also literature. This book is, for once, not about a blood-thirsty fantastical creature but rather a quite civil representative of the species. While the lady dragon plaguing a town seems a bit threatening at first, she in reality only seeks people's help, as she is missing the identifying mark of all dragons: armour-like scales. This picture book reveals how, after a few less than successful attempts, the green lady is made happy thanks to the magical powers of the water in the village pond. The cheerful, somewhat hyper illustrations suit the lively character of the story very well. (4+)

Spain (Galician)

153

Albo, Pablo (text)

Díez, Miguel Ángel (illus.)

Fortes, Antón (transl.)

O último canto

(The last song)

Pontevedra: OQO, 2009. – [32] p.

(Colección Q)

ISBN 978-84-9871-072-4

Rooster – Musicality – Wake-up call – Father – Son

A rooster is the pride and joy of a small village. It is a very particular rooster – a highly talented bird who wakes the inhabitants with a wonderfully sung (not crowed!) greeting to the sun every morning. The grief is hence all the greater when his »O sole mio« is one day forever stilled. As much as everyone tries – an ant, Evaristo's cow, or the unmusical Don Bieito, for instance – no one can replace the rooster, until finally his son musters himself and steps into his father's footsteps of his marvellous song. In muted colours, Miguel Ángel Díez expressively illustrates the text. The double-page illustrations get at the basic tone of the story, offering poetic and fable-like elements alongside grotesque exaggeration and surprising perspectives. (4+)

154

Aneiros, Rosa

As de bolboreta

(Butterfly wings)

Vigo: Xerais, 2009. – 225 p.

(Fóra de xogo; 123)

ISBN 978-84-9914-028-5

Interculturalism – Globalisation

A café in Santiago de Compostela is the main setting for this novel. Here the paths of more than a dozen people with very different roots, backgrounds, experiences, and values cross daily. For instance, the course of the lives of Lola and Eusebio, an old married couple, and Iqbal, the son of Pakistani parents could not differ more. Narrated in non-linear fashion, the book consists of short, dialogue-driven episodes, which run parallel and are all interconnected. The structure of this heterogeneous, puzzle-like kaleidoscope expresses the world at the start of the twenty-first century. This world is fragmented and individualized, yet at the same time it grows together across dividing borders – not without conflict, but also not without productive encounters. (14+) ◆

Switzerland (French)

155

Beurret, Elisabeth / Brazs, Jean-Pierre (text/illus.)

La fleur de feu

(The fire flower)

[Genève]: Éd. Notari, 2009. – [40] p.

(L' Oiseau sur le Rhino)

ISBN 978-2-940408-06-1

Fern – Botany – Paper production – Art

Many peoples consider the fern to be a holy plant possessing magical powers. In botany, too, the fern is an exceptional plant because it actually never blooms. However, there is a special moment (apparently around the solstice) when it takes on a different, glowing colour.

Artist Elisabeth Beurret, fascinated by the magical power of the ancient plant, has observed and collected specimens from different countries for many years. Beurret here shows a part of her art studio, how she makes »sculptured paper« out of fern fibres, shapes, and then processes these anew in order to »trap« the particular fire of the plant. This is a nice book with striking photographs and short prose texts that show how an art project develops out of an encounter with a plant. (10+)

Latin America**Argentina** (Spanish)

156

Baredes, Carla / Pineau, Pablo (text)

Basile, Javier (illus.)

La escuela no fue siempre así

(School wasn't always like this)

[Buenos Aires]: Iamiqué, 2008. – 36 p.

(Las cosas no fueron siempre así)

ISBN 978-987-1217-16-8

School/History – Instruction/History – Education/History

The publishing house Iamiqué, which exclusively publishes non-fiction books, comes through once again with its series »Las cosas no fueron siempre así«, proving that one can convey content in a simultaneously competent and entertaining manner. This volume deals with the history of schooled education. The chapters, each spread across a double page, deal with a broad spectrum ranging from ancient times through today, with short texts accompanied by humorous, coloured illustrations.

Some topics include compulsory education and the right to education, writing utensils, the furnishing of schoolrooms and the historically exclusive character of schooled education, which formerly was reserved for the progeny of the social elites. The book speaks directly to its readers, always keeping the world experienced by today's children in view for comparison. (8+)

157

Ferro, Beatriz (text)

Pico, Elenio (illus.)

Radiografía de una bruja

(X-ray of a witch)

Buenos Aires: Ed. del Eclipse, 2008. – [30] p.

(Libros álbum del eclipse)

ISBN 978-987-9011-90-4

Witch – Wickedness – The Evil

Though the title might suggest it, this book has nothing to do with a medical examination. Nonetheless it gets to the bottom of several important questions: What exactly is a witch and what makes her so wicked (a 110 point score on a 100-point scale of wickedness!)? Witches are shrewd, wilful, and straight-laced, while at the same time being quite poor spellers. They cultivate offspring by laying an egg every 300 years and brooding on it for just ten minutes. Readers learn this and other absurdities, not the least of which is that maliciousness easily spreads among human beings, too. Elenio Pico has illustrated this crooked picture book with miniature witty-wicked pictures, which visualize the cunning of witchcraft. (5+)

158

Ramos, Pablo

El sueño de los murciélagos

(The dream of the bats)

Buenos Aires: Alfaguara, 2009. – 156 p.

(Serie roja)

ISBN 978-987-04-1222-9

Argentina/1980 – Military dictatorship – Economic problem – Friendship

Argentina 1980, during the time of military dictatorship. Their families facing great financial difficulties due to the country's economic crisis, Gabriel, Marisa and some friends try to solve their parents' money worries with the help of Sara the »witch«. On the cover and initially, the book seems to be a piece of fantasy literature; however, it soon reveals itself to be a realist story that provides a glimpse into a bitter epoch of Argentinean history. In so doing, the brutality of the authoritarian regime is

broached, as well as the necessity of simple people to overcome all obstacles – without the help of magic. This book is characterized by clear language, a quick pace and marvellous humour. (14+)

159

Siemens, Sandra

El hombre de los pies-murciélago

(The man with the bat feet)

Buenos Aires: Grupo Ed. Norma, 2009. – 158 p.

(Zona libre)

ISBN 978-987-545-563-4

Outsider – Exclusion – Harassment – Violence – Group pressure

This novel tells the story of Esper, who is ostracized by his schoolmates and brutally harassed. He does not have the courage to confide in other people, nor the power to fend off his tormentors. His attempt to make himself »invisible« by being as unremarkable as possible, in order to avoid hostility-spurred violence, is unsuccessful. This disturbing, distressing story, composed like a mosaic with the perspectives of perpetrators and hangers-on woven in, recalls an ancient tragedy. Inexorably, like a ticking time bomb and driven by an inner urge, the plot heads toward catastrophe. The readers are involuntarily made into powerless witnesses and mute accomplices. (14+) ★

160

Yiso, Reinaldo (original text)

Isol (adapt./illus.)

El bazar de los juguetes

(The toy shop)

Buenos Aires: Además, 2009. – [22] p.

(2 x 4 = Tango para pibes)

ISBN 978-987-23530-5-6

Tango – Imagination – Poverty

The series »2 x 4 Tango para pibes« makes the exciting attempt to introduce children to tango, which expresses both a dance and an attitude toward life. Reinaldo Yiso (1915-1978), rooted to his home town of Buenos Aires his entire life, is one of the great poets and composers of this genre. His tango »El bazar del los juguetes«, which starts off this picture book, tells of a toy shop that awakens memories of a childhood lived in poverty and the love of a mother for her child. On the following pages, Isol interprets Yiso's verses using marvellous pictures and few words. They tell about toys of the sky, of the water, of the air and of dreams, and in the process summons the power of free, creative, and unlimited imagination. (6+)

Brazil (Portuguese)

161

Bojunga, Lygia

Querida

(Darling)

Rio de Janeiro: Casa Lygia Bojunga Ed., 2009. – 240 p.

ISBN 978-85-89020-21-3

Father – Death – Jealousy – Family – Love

This novel is another masterpiece by the winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Award and the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. Pollux, a nine-year-old boy, lost his father in a car accident and faces the fact that five months later his mother is getting married to a diplomat. Pollux is jealous about his mother's relationship. Insecure and afraid of losing his mother's love, he decides to look for an uncle he only knows through photographs. Written in a colloquial tone, this adventure casts its readers as spectators of the great theatre of life. Besides Pollux's story, Bojunga traces parallel stories, reflecting on issues such as family, love, poverty, making reference to her passions: theatre, writing, and the sea. (12+)

162

Coelho, Ronaldo Simões (text)

Lago, Angela (illus.)

Bichos

(Animals)

Belo Horizonte: Aletria Ed., 2009. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-85-61167-04-2

Countryside – Farm – Animals – Poetry

Asked by his grandson to write about the creatures that live on the farm, Ronaldo Simões Coelho writes in a playful way about the spider, the worm, the ants, the butterflies, the snails, the grasshopper, the beetle, the hen, the bee, the hummingbird, the bat, the squirrel, the frogs, the armadillo, the woodpecker, the sparrow, the monkey, the crickets. Even the lizards are present in these delightful poems, which are linked to each other, provoking laughter and fun as readers are led on a playful tour of farm life. The illustrations and graphic art by Angela Lago enhance the text, allowing the reader to discover the details of each animal. (6+)

163

Machado, Ana Maria (texto)
 Facchini, Luciana (illus.)

Sinais do mar

(Signals of the sea)

São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2009. – [56] p.
 ISBN 978-85-7503-770-6

Sea – Poetry

In this first poetry book by Ana Maria Machado, winner of the 2000 Hans Christian Andersen Award, readers are completely immersed in the sounds of words and sight of images provided in the verses. The sea, a source of inspiration to many poets, has also left its mark on Ana Maria Machado. The nineteen poems are waves of rhyme and alliteration, and reference important writers like Herman Melville, Daniel Defoe, and Robert Louis Stevenson. They recall the signs left by the sea, the smell of the sea, the roar in a shell, the sun that embraces us. The book's graphic art mimics the movement of the waves, with illustrations inspired by poems and songs, such as »Ondas do mar de Vigo«, Fernando Pessoa's »Ode marítima« and Dorival Caymmi's »O mar«. The special rough paper lets the reader feel the sand's texture when touching the pages. (8+)

164

Mello, Roger (text/illus.)

Carvoeirinhos

(Coal mine kids)

São Paulo: Companhia das Letrinhas, 2009. – [44] p.
 ISBN 978-85-7406-371-3

Coal mine – Child labour

An irreverent hornet narrates its encounter with a boy who works illegally in a coal mine. At the same time, it tells the story of a wasp larva's transformation. Roger Mello, nominee for the 2010 Hans Christian Andersen Award, constructs a text that reflects on similarity and difference, harsh reality and imaginative fantasy. The boy's house and the hornet's house are similar: round and made with mud. But what is home for the hornet is in reality a charcoal-making oven that feeds other ovens in a steel factory. Combining fiction and reality, the book denounces the exploitation of child labour. The book is remarkable in its layout and the use of colours and shades. Cut-out flames, in luminous hues, seem really to be alive and blaze out from the pages. (9+) ★

165

Queirós, Bartolomeu Campos de (text)
 Ruano, Alfonso (illus.)

Tempo de vôo

(Time to fly)

São Paulo: Ed. SM, 2009. – 48 p.
 ISBN 978-85-60820-75-7

Time – Humanity

Bartolomeu Campos de Queirós, winner of the 4th SM Ibero-American Children's Literature Award and nominee for the 2010 H. C. Andersen Award, here presents in beautifully poetic, metaphorical prose a dialogue on time between an old man and a boy that is simple and sophisticated at the same time. In dialogue with the reader, he also expresses feelings of respect for children, life, and humanity. In a smooth and wonderful way, reality and fantasy, the common and the complex, past, present and future bring together things that seem distant from one another, such as childhood and old age, children's curiosity and mature life experience, young readers and adult readers. The illustrations, by renowned Spanish illustrator Alfonso Ruano, are inspired by surrealism, sending the reader to a fantastical and dream-like world. (8+)

Chile (Spanish)

166

Pavez, Ana María / Recart, Constanza (text)
 Hojas, Isabel (illus.)

Sabores de América

(Flavours from America)

Santiago, Chile: Ed. Amanuta, 2009. – 29 p.
 (Colección Ñandú)
 ISBN 978-956-8209-51-3

America – Fruit – Vegetable

»Sabores de América« is a plant guide, cook book and cultural history book in one. Nineteen kinds of fruit and vegetable are presented, all of which originated on the American continent and today are known the world over. Some of them are indispensable basic foods, such as potatoes, corn, tomatoes, sunflowers, and pumpkin. But a kitchen without vanilla or chilli is no longer conceivable either. In short texts, the plants are described and their historical importance laid out using examples. There are also delicious recipes on hand – e.g., spaghetti with peanuts, vanilla cookies or bean salad – that are easy to replicate. The humorous illustrations create additional appetite to cook and to learn more about the plants. (8+)

Colombia (Spanish)

167

Montaña Ibáñez, Francisco

No comas renacuajos

(Don't eat tadpoles)

Bogotá: Babel, 2008. – 107 p.

ISBN 978-958-8445-02-1

Poverty – Hunger – Violence – Suicide

This story unfolds on two time lines and describes a childhood utterly destroyed by poverty and violence. David (called »the immortal one«), who lives in an orphanage and all but mutely shares a friendship with the narrator of the story Nina, seems disturbed. He is the key to the second time line narrated retrospectively. Their mother dead, their father vanished – it is within this scenario that a group of five siblings must fight for bare survival in dismal housing. Lacking hope for any amelioration of their situation, the oldest brother kills his siblings and finally himself. Only David survives. The book paints a ruthless picture of a bitter reality. The titular tadpoles are a symbol for profound poverty and abasement, as well as for life and survival. (12+)

Mexico (Spanish)

168

Aerssen, Ignacio van

Observa, imagina...

(Look, imagine...)

México, D.F.: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes [et al.], 2008. – 39 p. (Alas y Raíces)

ISBN 978-970-35-1466-3

Art – Abstract painting – Art appreciation

This book seeks to involve children with artworks that at first glance might seem alien, awkward, unapproachable and unexplainable. Using the example of a painting by Alberto Colleoni titled »Proyección simétrica« (1967), the author takes the observer on a voyage of discovery. Come closer, please, let your eyes wander, focus on details and connect these to your own experience. What could this blue field or that little yellow box mean? Even after one gradually develops an idea of what could be hiding behind the shapes and figures, the book gives the reader complete freedom to discover something else or in fact nothing at all. In a simple, persuasive way, the book conveys the inspiration as well as the challenges that interaction with art can bring. (6+)

169

Birmajer, Marcelo (text)

Monroy, Manuel (illus.)

Villegas, Marta (original idea)

El nombre de la ballena

(The name of the whale)

México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2009. – [30] p.

(Los especiales de A la orilla del viento)

ISBN 978-607-16-0094-3

Language – Diversity – Peace

A magician reasons that the source of all misunderstandings, conflicts, and indeed even wars lies in the linguistic diversity of human beings. Thus he conjures the sound of words from their mouths and the meaning of words from their hearts and moves these into the stomach of a gigantic whale. To solve all problems, he invents an artificial language for human use. But even seeming perfection has a cost: the well-meant homogenization process ushers in a uniformity that gradually induces boredom and irritation. In the end, a child succeeds in re-establishing necessary diversity; peace among peoples must now be reached by other means. Manuel Monroy illustrates the text with abstract shapes and symbolic figures. The pictures insightfully elaborate the clear message of the parable-like story. (5+)

Peru (Spanish)

170

Chirif, Micaela (text)

Alayza, Gabriel (illus.)

Buenas noches, Martina

(Good night, Martina)

Lima: Ed. Peisa, 2009. – [20] p.

(Peisa quirquincho) ISBN 978-9972-40-439-9

Going to bed – Night – Toy – Coming alive

Bedtime does not have to be boring time! A wild tumult breaks out in Martina's room when her stuffed animals come alive in the dark. Among those romping around are, for example, song-cawing parrots and a giraffe whose long neck makes for a wonderful slide. Even the fish on Martina's pyjamas wriggle free and elegantly jump into a glass of water. At the end of this nightly bedtime fiesta, everyone snuggles under the covers. No wonder Martina is not afraid of sleeping »alone«. The short, simple text of this picture book is accompanied by brightly coloured illustrations that aptly capture a child's happy mood when between dream and reality. (3+)

Venezuela (Spanish)

171

Sáez Castán, Javier (text/illus.)

El pequeño rey. General de infantería

(The little king. Infantry general)

Caracas/Barcelona: Ed. Ekaré, 2009. – [24] p.

ISBN 978-84-936504-8-3

King – Toy army – Insect – Mischief

With a fine sense of humour, this picture book tells of a child-like king, who recruits a quirky troupe of bugs and roaches to replace his broken toy soldiers. Confronted by impressively large enemies – a toad, a mole, and a peacefully grazing cow –, the soldiers, at first nearly unstoppable in their thirst for battle, soon turn out to be true scarecrows. Nonetheless, in the end the king and his army celebrate the triumphant conquest of a cow pie. The circular pictures of this book, which is the first volume in the new »Little King« series, recall children's book illustrations of the early twentieth century. Javier Sáez Castán's style is characterized by fine lines and delicate coloration in pale pastel tones. Worth noting is also the love for ironic detail. (4+)

North America**Canada** (French)

172

Lemieux, Geneviève

Le cirque Copernicus

(Copernicus Circus)

Saint-Lambert (Québec): Soulières éd., 2009. – 188 p.

(Collection Graffiti; 53) ISBN 978-2-89607-102-9

Authoritarian upbringing – Manipulation – Sports – Drug

Nick, living in a country of the future, enrolls in the elite circus school Copernicus. Strangely, the location of the facility is kept secret and the laws of gravity are virtually powerless there. Instead of school and acrobatics-training, Nick encounters a rigid system of military drills and constant surveillance. He watches aghast as students mutate into euphoric zombies, prepared to do gymnastics for the circus at the peril of their lives. Before the big public show, Nick schemes a revolt. This brilliant science fiction novel strongly latches on to topics such as power and manipulation, but most of all persuasively introduces the current controversy surrounding sports and drug-use. (11+)

173

Ouimet, José

La nuit des cent pas

(The night of one hundred steps)

Montréal [Québec]: Hurtubise, 2009. – 168 p.

(Collection Atout; 128: Histoire)

ISBN 978-2-89647-224-6

Québec/1970 – Civil rights – Terrorism

In October 1970, the discussion concerning the future of the francophone province of Québec radicalized itself. A terrorist group, the FLQ (Front de Libération du Québec), killed a minister and kidnapped a diplomat. After this, a state of emergency is proclaimed and civil liberties are suspended. More than 500 arrests follow. The family of trade unionist Réal Boivin, who avoids threatened arrest, is also affected by the house searches, 36,000 in total. Boivin's sons Gilles (22) and Daniel (16) experience their lives and friendships change drastically. For José Ouimet, like many of his generation, October 1970 was highly defining; in this convincing detective story with strong documentary components, he reflects on how fragile the foundations of a democratically constituted society can be. (12+)

174

Roberge, Sylvie / Mercier, Johanne (text)

Ribard, Nancy (illus.)

La photographie numérique

(Digital photography)

Saint-Lambert (Québec): Dominique et compagnie,

2009. – 32 p.

(Curieux de savoir: avec liens internet) (Les Arts)

ISBN 978-2-89512-709-3

Photography – Camera

This volume is an appealing mix of picture book and non-fiction book, introducing children to digital photography in a truly vivid way. The picture book component centres on six-year-old Henri-Louis, who tells his class about his latest tricky mountain climb. No one believes him, so in order to prove the truth of his account, Henri-Louis ends up presenting an enlarged digital photograph showing himself at the summit. The subsequent non-fiction section of the book explains the main components and functions of a digital camera and gives insights into the possibilities of this new technology. Using playful means, children are advised in observation technique and subject choice and can also gather tips and tricks for successful shots. (6+)

175

Rondeau, Sophie (text)

Péladeau, Éric (illus.)

Louka cent peurs

(Louka 100 times fear)

Gatineau (Québec): Vents d'Ouest, 2009. – 79 p.

(Vive le vent!; 5)

ISBN 978-2-89537-166-3

Fear – Courage – Self-confidence – School

Shy Louka is to give a short class presentation on the topic of »collecting«. A catastrophe! He is extremely afraid to speak in front of his class and he can't think of anything to say about his assigned topic, as he does not collect anything – except his many great and small fears! He ends up deciding to talk exactly about that: fear. He collects that which he (and others) are afraid of and thereby learns something surprising from his close environment. Even Michael, »his class nemesis« who often bugs him in the breaks, shares a few of his dark secrets with Louka. In the end, Louka garners great applause for his collection. The wittily illustrated, inventive, and lively story makes it clear that fear can be lessened if one marches straight through it. (8+)

Denmark (Danish)

176

Andersen, Hans Christian (text)

Margrethe <Queen of Denmark> (illus.)

De vilde svaner

(The wild swans)

[København]: Kristeligt Dagblads Forl., 2009. – 90 p.

ISBN 978-87-7467-037-7

Curse – Metamorphosis – Fairytale

Danish Queen Margrethe II illustrates Andersen's popular fairytale »The wild swans« with decoupage that assembles auction catalogue and art magazine cut-outs. Eleven brothers are transformed into swans by their mean step-mother; they return to human form only at night. Their youngest sister, Elisa, is also thrown out of the house, and when she finds her brothers, she knits them mail coats made from nettles. In so doing, she releases them from the curse. The illustrations seem lush and baroque on the one hand, (post)modern and eclectic on the other. In this way, they translate Andersen's typical narrative style into a visual language. (4+)

177

Finderup, Mette

Blink. En kærlighedsroman

(Blink. A love story)

[København]: Gyldendal, 2009. – 239 p.

ISBN 978-87-02-07500-7

Love

Love is the leitmotif in this novel made up of vignettes variously staged in Hirtshals in North Jutland, in Copenhagen, in Odense, and on the island of Møn. Love can at times be horrible, at times romantic, at times unrequited, and at times heart-breaking. Thus, Julie writes love letters that are never supposed to be mailed (which happens by accident anyhow), Kasper and Nicklas fight each other over Amanda, and Uffe claims that he is gay in order to get rid of Pernille. Like in a roundelay, the paths of the figures criss-cross in the widely cast panorama of characters. Teenage boys and girls of diverse natures come to form more or less intimate relationships with each other, thus binding the individual chapters together into a whole. (12+)

178

Hartmann, Thomas (et al.) (text)

Arhøj, Anders (illus.)

Stå op! Godmorgenhistorier af 11 danske stand-up-komikere

(Wake up! Good-morning stories by eleven Danish stand-up comedians)

København: Phabel, 2009. – 161 p.

ISBN 978-87-705-5578-4

Waking up – Intertextuality

Mad world! Instead of well-worn good night stories, this book contains good morning stories. Eleven Danish stand-up comedians – standing up qua waking up being not so far-fetched – were each asked to compose a »wake up story«. The result: funny, snappy texts that like to spin off well-known children's book classics, are quirky and have entertaining punch lines. In »Hvem er det, der snakker?« (Who's speaking?) it turns out that a ventriloquist's dummy is not the normal little puppet, but a big »human being«, which the little ventriloquist's dummy carries around with him. Vibrant vignettes, along with teeming whole-page illustrations that recall search puzzles, bring comedy and strangeness into the visual context. (5+)

179

Jensen, Lasse Bo

Den syvende engel

(The seventh angel)

[København]: Haase, 2009. – 398 p.

ISBN 978-87-559-1239-7

Time travel – Deadly sin – Apocalypse

When David Berner encounters the unusual clockmaker Albert Kronbuch, a crazy adventure begins: As a time traveller, David fights in the medieval »City of the Banished« against prince Kilian and his diabolical clock tower. Kilian has suspended time in order to usher in one of the deadly sins at each chiming of the clock. Under the power of the clock tower, jealousy, gluttony, and avarice hold sway among the city's inhabitants. David succeeds in destroying the clock – but then apocalypse threatens. Rousingly told, a masterful weaving together of the two temporal levels, questions concerning the being of time and the world in itself are touched on. Thus, this book is not only a fantastic-realistic »historical novel«, but also opens up a philosophical dimension and can be read as a coming-of-age novel. (12+)

180

K., Oscar [i.e. Ole Dalgaard] (text)

Karrebæk, Dorte (illus.)

Idiot!

(Idiot!)

København: Høst & Søn, 2009. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-87-638-1103-3

Mental handicap – Mother – Son – Perception

If Scandinavian children's and adolescent literature is known for breaking taboos, then »Idiot!« is a perfect example. The story centres around the »idiot« August, who goes through the city with his mother, frolicking around with a plastic bag on a leash, into which the wind blows. The personal narrative perspective and the often elliptical and association-driven passages illustrate without distortion how August experiences the world. They convey not only loyalty to the protagonist, but also reveal his linguistic wit and his gift for combination. Verbal talk, expressed in the reactions of his mother, stands in contrast. She seems stressed and tired. But even though she calls her son »my little monster«, her care and love become evident. The pictures, kept within a subtle coloration scheme and seen on the lower half of the pages, flow like a film. They play with different perspectives and transcribe August's visual perception. (7+) ★

Finland (Finnish)

181

Kanto, Anneli

Tulikärpäset

(Fireflies)

Hämeenlinna: Karisto, 2009. – 176 p.

(Futistyttö; 1)

ISBN 978-951-23-5098-8

Adoption – Single mother – Differentness – Outsider – Bullying

Eleven-year-old Oona describes everyday life with her adoptive single mother and her older adoptive brother. At the centre stands the relation of the girl to her somewhat crazy mother, who always comes up short financially. On the one hand, Oona loves her very much, on the other curses her for bringing her from China to Finland as a baby. The reason for these reproaches, which Oona never openly expresses, is her situation at school: Because she looks different, she counts as an outsider. She is bullied by her schoolmates and even physically threatened. Only when playing soccer does Oona find acceptance.

Scandinavian Languages

»Tulikärpeset« describes the state of being different, but also shows that one can find something that makes one happy, despite all troubles. (8+)

182

Rannela, Terhi

Amsterdam Anne F. ja minä

(Amsterdam Anne F. and I)

Helsinki: Otava, 2008. – 199 p.

ISBN 978-951-1-23030-4

Frank, Anne – Love – Self-discovery – Homosexuality

Fifteen-year-old Kertu has two problems. The first is her jealous ex-girlfriend Mira, the second is Jimi, her new online flirt, of which she doesn't know where things are headed. Saddled with this »baggage«, she travels with her mother to Amsterdam, where she reads the diary of Anne Frank and visits the Anne Frank Museum where the family's hiding place is reconstructed. Kertu recognizes herself in many aspects of Anne's writings. Her time in Amsterdam is emotionally turbulent; while there, she clarifies her own feelings, so that – back in Finland – she wants to reconcile with Mira. In evocative language, the novel portrays Kertu's self-discovery in a very poignant and sophisticated manner. (12+)

183

Tiitinen, Esko-Pekka

Villapäät

(Woolheads)

Helsinki: Tammi, 2008. – 134 p.

ISBN 978-951-31-4397-8

School – Music – Search for identity

Timppa is fifteen and the class clown; most of the time he speaks faster than he can think. When his music teacher lets him play guitar for the first time, Timppa is delighted – so delighted that he even mucks out his grandma's cow shed in order to get his own guitar. He forms a band with three friends. When a friend of his mother puts together a program for the Christmas party of the Finnish Red Cross, without missing a beat Timppa offers to perform a musical with his band – even though he can only play two chords so far... The humorous story about the development of the quirky musical captivates not only through its lively dialogue, but also convincingly describes the personal development that Timppa experiences through creatively working on the musical. (12+)

Norway (Norwegian)

184

Ekman, Fam (text/illus.)

Tidens tann

(Tooth of time)

[Oslo]: Cappelen Damm, 2009. – [28] p.

ISBN 978-82-02-29585-1

Dentist – Fantasy trip – Present

Filling the Dentist has collected ninety-nine teeth, but in order to make a necklace for Miss Pling he needs still one more. He pulls Professor Thought's tooth. But the latter's wisdom tooth makes Filling ruminant and cry. In his sea of tears, he swims to a foreign land, where he must pay the tooth as toll. Recognized to be worthless, the tooth is thrown away – and so Filling's sadness also disappears. At home again, Filling receives a baby tooth as a present and finally finishes his necklace. The dreamy, slightly absurd story gives much room to one's imagination. The illustrations are also inviting in this respect: Fam Ekman's collages, which combine black and coloured pencil drawings with glued papers, borrow from Cubism and seem at once naive and surreal. (5+)

185

Hagerup, Hilde

Jeg elsker deg

(I love you)

Oslo: Aschehoug, 2009. – 69 p.

ISBN 978-82-03-25127-6

Mother – Daughter – Illness – Loss

Ellen's mum is seriously ill. In quiet, simple, short sentences that recall free verse and are pervaded by a dense symbolic language, Ellen describes her attempts to find someone who will love her when her mother is gone. Ellen recalls better times, reflects on sickness and death, but still dresses up, gives out presents, flirts with the school librarian, and likes her teacher. Every day her affection goes out to a different person. Ellen is discouraged, but bravely prepares herself for the coming loss. Thanks to Ellen's perspective, pathos and sentimentality are avoided, and although the book is deeply sad, little glimmers of hope do shine through continually. (10+)

186

Parr, Maria (text)
Irgens, Åshild (illus.)

Tonje Glimmerdal

<proper name>

Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 2009. – 281 p.
ISBN 978-82-521-7403-8

Autonomy – Cross-generational friendship – Family – Forgiving – Country life

»With verve and self-confidence« – with this battle cry, Tonje Glimmerdal, the fearless, self-sufficient heroine of the novel, plunges on skis into the depths, landing in the snow with a half somersault. With her best friend Gunnvald, who is six times her senior, she concocts the most superb games. She earnestly supports the old man, though, when he needs to reconcile with his daughter Heidi. With her hard head, Tonje brings the two back together. The book captivates through its characters – tomboy Tonje with the big heart, and Gunnvald, the cranky, lovable sheep breeder –, through its dramaturgy, as well as through its mixture of fast-paced situation comedy and sense for quiet tones. A fabulous children's novel! (8+)

187

Sortland, Bjørn (text)
Belsvik, Inger Lise (illus.)

Jenta med heilt jamne, mjuke augebryn

(The girl with the even, soft eye brows)

Oslo: Solum, 2008. – 18 p.+ 34 p. + 1 CD
ISBN 978-82-560-1541-2

Bosnia-Herzegovina/1992-1995 – Civil war – Blindness – Friendship

The author and illustrator, both decorated by many awards, have put together a special book. It is typeset in black and Braille text and contains haptic elements that take the plot into account. In it, a young blind boy and his friendship to Saja are narrated from the first-person perspective. Saja is the girl with eyelashes like feathers and the beautiful eyebrows. Saja often attends to the boy – out of sympathy, he thinks. When chaos breaks out after a bomb alarm – the story takes place at the start of the Bosnian War – the boy succeeds in calming the people in the air-raid shelter he is in with music from his Discman, an act for which he wins Saja's heart. (6+)

188

Various authors (text)
Rasmussen, Gunvor (illus.)

Eventyrboka

(Fairytale book)

[Leikanger]: Barn Skald, 2009. – 220 p.
ISBN 978-82-7959-138-2

Fairytale – Intertextuality

In this fairytale anthology, new texts are collected alongside variations of classic, usually folk-based tales. Jon Hjørnevik, for instance, in »Kladden og trollet som ingen kunne målbinde« (Kladden and the troll that no one could silence) plays with the well-known »Prinsessa som ingen kunne målbinde« (The princess whom no one could silence). »Old« as well as new fairytales draw on the characteristic elements, typical contents, and expressions of the genre. In this way, they form the familiar chord, though a sprinkling of current references lend a modern note. The illustrations help with this latter task, too: Even though the unusual, eccentric figures somewhat recall the characters in Chris Riddell's books, Gunnvor Rasmussen creates a pictorial language all his own, not least due to his colour scheme. (5+)

Sweden (Swedish)

189

Bečević, Zulmir

Svenhammeds journaler

(Svenhammed's diaries)

Stockholm: Alfabeta, 2009. – 185 p.
ISBN 978-91-501-1179-8

Migration – Integration – Friendship – Diary

His parents want to make him a »true Swede«, so instead of calling their son Muhammed, they call him Svenhammed. Yet Svenhammed belies all parental effort, showing that integration hardly works. Svenhammed not only has to cope with the typical troubles of teenage life, he also has to deal with his hybrid cultural identity. Initially comic, the book turns increasingly serious as Svenhammed's casual remarks, but also his anger at the »closed society«, are accompanied – and this is the frightening part – by a substantial dose of resignation. Even though it is Swedish society and »migration politics« that are particularly exposed here, Svenhammed's experiences are undoubtedly universally valid. (12+) ♦

190

Berg, Aase

Människoötande människor i Märsta

(Human-eating humans in Märsta)

Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2009. – 213 p.

ISBN 978-91-27-11874-4

Puberty – Coming of age

What is special about this diary-style novel is its verse form. Sixteen-year-old Tove talks about her friends Klara and Britta, about parties and her sailing course, about her first love, Leon, about her envy of Klara and her doubts about their friendship, about problems with her parents, against whom she is rebelling. Tove wants to be like a lizard, swift and strong – no way she wants to become like adults, who only work, work, work and forget real life and all their dreams in the process. With its concise language and lyrical and musical as well as colloquial tone, this book convincingly transmits the protagonist's thoughts and feelings. (12+)

191

Kieri, Katarina / Nilsson, Per

I det här trädet

(In this tree)

Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 2009. – 234 p.

ISBN 978-91-29-67121-6

Outsider – Coming of age

Two of the best-known Swedish teen book authors tell in alternating manner about Siri and Jakob, two quiet, lonely outsiders. They often times run into each other and take note of the other. Jakob calls Siri »bird girl«, Siri calls Jakob the »(be)wild(ered) boy«, yet actually neither has anything to do with the other. From the first-person perspective, Siri dissects her situation at school, gives her fears about her alcoholic father free reign or thinks about Fatima, »a kind of friend«. Jakob's chapters are told in third person and portray his fears and feelings of guilt regarding his brother. The insecurity and the searching disorientation of the two protagonists is aptly mirrored in the book's marked poetic, floating tone. (12+)

192

Melin, Märten

Amor anfaller

(Cupid attacks)

[Stockholm]: Eriksson & Lindgren, 2008. – 123 p.

ISBN 978-91-7377-019-4

First love – Social pressure

That love can be complicated, eleven-, twenty-three-, sixty-seven-year-olds know, and so does Artur. He is in the fifth grade and smitten. But not only is his object of worship the best friend of his dumb sister Ronja, she is also only in the third grade! What would the others say, if he dated a third grader... Artur is discouraged, but has no choice. Struck by Cupid's arrow, nothing can help – Tammi is it. The story is told from the perspective of Artur, who wavers between whooping with joy and deathly affliction, and charms through linguistic wit and situation comedy. Love-sick Artur is a wonderful role model for anyone who has ever been in love. (9+)

193

Nilsson, Ulf (text)

Eriksson, Eva (illus.)

När vi var ensamma i världen

(When we were alone in the world)

Stockholm: Bonnier Carlsen, 2009. – [32] p.

ISBN 978-91-638-6098-0

Siblings – Responsibility – Clock

In kindergarten, the five-year-old narrator learns about reading clock time. When it is three o'clock and no one picks him up, he goes home. There, standing before closed doors, he thinks right away that his parents are dead. After picking up his little brother from daycare, they build a house in the garden. The big brother does not want the little one to sense the tragedy that has occurred, and takes care of him in a touching way. Everything is to be the same as always. But suddenly Mama and Papa are standing there, upset because both boys disappeared early from kindergarten – reading the clock apparently did not work so well after all... The successful duo Nilsson/Eriksson has yet again come up with an enchanting picture book, which carefully calibrates and compellingly conveys the sensitivities of children. (5+)

Slavic and Baltic Languages

Bulgaria (Bulgarian)

194

Samuilov, Viktor (text)

Levieva, Jana (illus.)

Čudovište v kášti

(A monster in the house)

Plovdiv: Žanet 45, 2009. – 72 p.

ISBN 978-954-491-497-4

Poetry

In this poetry collection by popular Bulgarian author Viktor Samuilov (born 1946), the world of adults and their mode of expression are portrayed and poked fun at from the perspective of children. The spirited childish reflections deal with letters of the alphabet, figures of speech, and the sense of time, with the aim of answering questions such as where children come from, whether Santa Claus exists, and so on. In an appealing and interesting way, Jana Levieva (born 1967) has modelled the book on the form of a house, using various print and paint techniques, with original collages out of corrugated cardboard and a typography that calls to mind old typewriter print on absorbent paper. The page numbers are represented by photographed and painted house number signs. (5+)

195

Vasileva, Zoja (text)

Levieva, Jana (illus.)

Vesela četa s bosí kračeta

(A funny flock with bare feet)

Plovdiv: Žanet 45, 2008. – 66 p.

ISBN 978-954-491-421-9

Child – Idiom – Figure of speech –

Etymology – Poetry

In this felicitous picture book, Zoja Vasileva (born 1955) presents children with thoughtful and poetic verses, frankly and at their level. The book reflects on children who consider the activities of adults to be a game and whose curiosity makes them want to get to the bottom of all things. Drawing on the difficulties of children to comprehend idiomatic expressions and figures of speech and referring to child-constructed etymologies, it develops unforeseeable connections between things and arrives at amusing conclusions. The book, which includes Jana Levieva's mainly black-and-white drawings into which photographs of brightly coloured fingers protrude, serving a different function on every page, was awarded the Christo Danev Prize in 2008. (4+)

Croatia (Croatian)

196

Balog, Zvonimir (text/illus.)

Dijete koje se nije htjelo roditi

(The child that did not want to be born)

Zagreb: Profil, 2008. – 171 p.

ISBN 978-953-12-0916-8

Birth – Refusal – Love

In his newest novel for children, young adults, and adults, the popular Croatian author Zvonimir Balog exaggerates the principle of Oskar Matzerath (in Günter Grass's novel »The Tin Drum«). Whereas Oskar only refused to grow any further, the main character of this book refuses to be born at all, thereby vehemently expressing his right to self-determination. Neither his mother nor his grandmother, nor many other people up to the president of the country and other statesmen can convince the child to be born. The arguments of the figures who appear are deconstructed by the author and refuted by the child. Only the child's big brother and his girlfriend can change his mind. Balog tells the story of a love that refutes all logical argumentation and throws all experiences and presumptions into disarray. Written in his uniquely playful and witty style, Balog's book makes readers laugh with its brilliant and dynamic dialogues. (7+) ★

197

Đokić, Ana (text)

Bernobić, Dilana (illus.)

Canan, Kasum (transl. into Romani)

Trči, Giza! Trči! ili treća noga za tetka

Agima = Prasta, Giza! Prasta! trito prno vaš e tezako Agimeske

(Run, Giza! Run! or A third leg for uncle Agim)

Zagreb: Knjiga u centru, 2009. – [40] p.

(Slikovnica – prozor u svijet)

ISBN 978-053-7514-22-5

(Text in Croatian and Romani)

Roma [Gypsies] – Discrimination – Hooligan – Violence – Loss – Rediscovery

This bilingual picture book vividly portrays a day in the life of the Roma girl Giza. Giza and her sisters step out of the house, are attacked, and run away. In the midst of this, her uncle's walking stick goes missing. Giza however succeeds in finding the stick again. The avant-garde illustrations by Dilana Bernobić (born 1976) impressively reflect the different sentiments. They are marked by cleverly chosen picture frames and perspectives and con-

vince by means of an interesting page layout, as well as by the hand-written typeface and the way the text merges with the book's overall design. (5+) ♦

Czech Republic (Czech)

198

Rezková, Milada (text) / Urbánek, Lukáš (illus.)

Doktor Racek jede na prázdniny

(Doctor Seagull goes on vacation)

Praha: Raketa, 2008. – [72] p.

ISBN 978-80-86803-14-2

Vacation – Trip – Motorcycle

This unconventional and highly entertaining picture book for beginning readers tells about Dr. Seagull's motorcycle trip. Dr. Racek is a toy made of synthetic material (similar to Playmobil) and his motorcycle is also a toy. His trip is depicted in whole-page photographs, photo montages, and collages, which are in part enhanced with drawings. Dr. Seagull encounters many things, people, and animals on his journey, all of whom are introduced to the reader in the witty drawings. The text, partially in verse, is drawn into the composition, sometimes printed, sometimes in various hand-written executions. The appendix contains schematic images of a motorcycle. (5+)

199

Stach, Jiří (text/illus.) / Uhlířová, Lenka (text)

Velká cesta Malého pána

(The big trip of the little gentleman)

Praha: Meander, 2008. – 63 p.

(Umělecké edice Modrý slon; 27)

ISBN 978-80-86283-62-3

Dwarf – Trip – Fantasy world – Folktale

Shaken up and troubled by a dream and by the sense that he is missing something, a little gentleman begins a journey into the unknown. On his trip he encounters the most wondrous beings who have their origin in the literal (mis)understandings of idiomatic phrases. Every one of them requests something of him and promises the little gentleman to help him if he brings them what they need. And so he is sent from one place to the next, following the principle of the cumulative tale. Jiří Stach's photographs of absurd objects, his photo montages, and his schematic drawings of imaginary objects in bizarre landscapes lead the reader into a fantasy world, a world with alienated elements of the real world and in which nothing is impossible. (5+)

200

Štulcová, Renata (text)

Fučíková, Renata (illus.)

Růže a krokvice

(The rose and the bracket)

Praha: Knižní klub, 2009. – 336 p.

ISBN 978-80-242-2325-4

Bohemia/14th century – Prague/14th century – Legends – Chivalric romance

The title of this young adult novel references the insignias of the journeymen of the medieval carpentry workshop for Prague's St. Vítus Cathedral. The author relies on historical sources and legends about Charles IV, Wenceslaus, King of the Romans, Cosmas of Prague, Chrétien de Troyes, Matthias of Arras, and other historical as well as mythical persons, and in so doing creates an exciting historical novel in the style of a chivalric tale concerning the golden age of Bohemian history. The plot, set in the fourteenth century, mainly unfolds in the castle of Prague, in St. Vítus Cathedral and in the Karlštejn castle during the period leading up to Christmas and on Christmas Eve. The detailed illustrations by Renata Fučíková appear as if painted on silk; the choice of colours calls to mind medieval manuscript illuminations. (12+)

Estonia (Estonian)

201

Kalamees, Katrin (ed.)

Various artists (illus.)

Elas kord...

(Once upon a time...)

[Tallinn]: Avita, 2008. – 179 p.

ISBN 978-9985-2-1362-9

Folktale

This oversize format book contains a collection of twenty-nine lesser known fairytales. Alongside folktales from twenty-three European and Asian countries and fables of the North American Indians, there are art fairytales by Hans Fallada (Germany), Zacharias Topelius (Finland) and Petras Cvirka (Lithuania). The illustrations, some of which are full-page, come from twelve of the best Estonian illustrators, who work in very different styles and techniques. Thanks to the tasteful construction of this book out of paper in different pastel hues, they form a harmonious unity despite their heterogeneity. (5+)

202

Raud, Piret (text/illus.)

Härra Linnu lugu

(Mister Bird's story)

[Tallinn]: Tammerraamat, 2009. – 35 p.

ISBN 978-9949-449-37-8

Pretension – Outsider – Identity – Love – Assimilation

In this amusing picture book, the author-illustrator shows how a somewhat pretentious bird isolates himself from his kind in order to try out new ways of living. While leading life as a fox, he meets an exceptionally nice bird dame, who is, however, afraid of the fox. He hence transforms himself back into an ordinary bird and even takes part in the bird's song festival, which he formerly found utterly boring. The special value of this picture book lies in the lively illustrations. The ink drawings, coloured in warm tones, are imaginative and often surprising in their humorous effect. (3+)

Latvia (Latvian)

203

Bērziņš, Māris (text)

Šorno, Rūdolfs (illus.)

Resnais svešnieks jeb 5. A klases skolnieka Kristera, viņa draugu un nepārspējamā Cūkmena pārdzīvojumi un piedzīvojumi

(The fat stranger or The trials and tribulations of Christer from 5A, his friends, and the inimitable pigman)

[Rīga]: Liels un mazs, 2008. – 108 p.

ISBN 978-9984-820-16-3

Environmental protection – Forest

This children's book is characterized by dramatic plot turns and prompts readers to fight against the defacement and the pollution of forests. In an exciting story filled with plenty of odd situations, the author calls on readers to monitor themselves carefully in order to be sure that they have not grown a pig's snout (the symbol for those who damage the environment). The larger plan of »you reap what you sow« unfolds here: everyone that lives responsibly will be rewarded and everyone that unloads their garbage into the forest gets it back. The book is illustrated with funny pictures showing the mutation of environment enemies into pigs. The dust jacket doubles as a poster; there is also a supplement containing fun stickers. (8+)

204

Zvirgzdiņš, Juris (text)

Pētersons, Reinis (illus.)

Lāča Bruņa medības

(The hunt for Bruno the Bear)

Rīga: Liels un mazs, 2009. – 119 p.

ISBN 978-9984-820-19-4

Hoax – Bear hunt – Gang of children

This imaginative story about children and bears in the Latvian forests is dedicated to the memory of Bruno the bear (JJ1), who was shot in the Bavarian Alps in 2006. The father of Kaspar, the protagonist of the story, fabricates a newspaper hoax in order to save his job. The story of the bear occupies the whole country, but while playing Indians with his friends in the woods, Kaspar meets a whole pack of bears who are highly educated and can speak and write. Together with their nemesis, the Internet-Indian, who only sits at home in front of his computer, Kaspar and his friends succeed in saving the bears from the hunters spurred on by the newspaper hoax. (7+)

Lithuania (Lithuanian)

205

Jonutis, Marius (text/illus.)

Kirminas paukštis. Tavo pirmoji knyga apie skraidymo meną

(The worm bird. Your first book about the art of flying)

Vilnius: Tyto alba, 2009. – 95 p.

ISBN 978-9986-16-686-3

Bird – Worm – Flying – Nature – Determination

This book has a two-part structure. Every second double page, colourfully illustrated and styled with both modern art and folklore in mind, conveys the story of a worm who learns how to fly from a bird – following the motto »You can achieve anything your heart truly desires.« But because the worm does not possess a bird's nature, he does not fly south with the birds in the fall, but turns back into an ordinary worm and crawls into the earth. On the remaining black-and-white pages, inserted between the plot, the author reflects practically and philosophically on the story. (7+)

206

Morkūnas, Gendrutis (text)
Žutautė, Lina (illus.)

Blusyno Pasakojimai

(The Flea House tales)

Vilnius: Nieko rimto, 2008. – 136 p.

ISBN 978-9955-683-63-6

Nonsense

This book by Gendrutis Morkūnas (1960-2009) contains thirty-one thoughtful and artful stories that move in the spaces between realism, fantasy, and tall tale. The titular Flea House is the name that a traffic light bestows on a compact car stuffed with family members. One after the other, the passengers tell funny, curious stories: florists emigrate and cats take their places; irons catch a viral infection; a computer program produces photos of people as they will look in thirty or fifty years. The comical water colour illustrations emphasize the character of these novel stories. (7+)

Poland (Polish)

207

Machowiak, Aleksandra / Mizieliński, Daniel (text/illus.)

D.O.M.E.K.. Doskonałe akazy małych i efektywnych konstrukcji

(HOUSE. Excellent designs of small and effective constructions)

Warszawa: Dwie siostry, 2009. – 155 p.

ISBN 978-83-608-5088-6

House design – Living space – Architecture

In this fascinating non-fiction book, the authors present extraordinarily designed abodes and their inhabitants from the four corners of the world. The unique features of each house are explained with text as well as cartoon pictures that show both inner and outer views. The book covers a sickle-shaped house in England, a house in New Mexico (USA) that uses wind and solar power, an inflatable house in Japan, a house in Iran made out of plastic sacks filled with sand, spherical houses hanging in trees in Canada, a sleeping nook on wheels for homeless people in the USA, a house made out of concrete pipes in Austria and many more. They stand witness to the creativity of their builders and at the same time showcase their very different environments and external conditions, as well as the differing needs of their inhabitants. (7+)

208

Tuwim, Julian (text)
Butenko, Bohdan (illus.)

Pan Maluskiewicz i wieloryb

(Mr. Tiny and the Whale)

Warszawa: Dwie siostry, 2008. – [16] p.

ISBN 978-83-608-5064-0

Dwarf – Ship ride – Whale

In this large format picture book, the text of the classic author of Polish children's prose is paired with the illustrations of the grand master of Polish (satirical) book illustration. This story first appeared in 1939 and Bohdan Butenko's timelessly modern illustrations were added to it in 1956. In merry and poetically ambitious four-line stanzas, Julian Tuwim reports on the adventure of Mr. Tiny, who is as big as a coffee bean. The little man absolutely wants to see a whale; to this end, he builds himself a ship and begins a journey ripe with adventure. (3+)

209

Wechterowicz, Przemysław (text)
Woldańska, Aleksandra (illus.)

Mrówka wychodzi za mąż

(The ant marries)

Kraków: Czerwony Konik, 2009. – [30] p.

ISBN 978-83-926726-8-5

Ant – Marriage – Misalliance

In this picture book coming out of the young Polish press Czerwony Konik, an ant posts a marriage ad to which the most varied candidates respond. The first one is an ant soldier, but then highly unusual applicants follow: a sparrow, a boxer, a wolf, an elephant, a gorilla, a raccoon, a shark, an octopus, and a kangaroo. The last one in the long line is an ant-eater, whom the ant is quite taken with, and... rather than the anteater eating the ant, they live happily ever after together! The illustrations, vivid in colour and often covering a large surface, derive most of their charm from their little witty details. (3+)

Russia (Russian)

210

Sedov, Sergej (text)

Flitman, Asi (illus.)

Skazki »Detskogo Mira«. Žizn' zamečatel'nych igrušek

(Fairytale from the department store »World of the Child«. The life of notable toys)

Moskva: Samokat, 2008. – 69 p.

ISBN 978-5-902326-74-8

Department store – Toy – Adventure – Folktale

In this book especially suited to beginning readers, beloved Russian children's book author Sergej Sedov recycles an idea found in E. T. A. Hoffmann's »The Nutcracker«, describing what toy animals do at night in the legendary Russian department store »Detskij mir« (World of the Child). The story revolves around their relations to one another and their competition to find out who among them is strongest. The plush mouse tells the other stuffed animals fairytales, a giraffe bicycles, a stuffed crocodile would rather be made of rubber, an orang-utan roller-skates, a dog paints pictures, and bears arm-wrestle. (5+)

211

Timofeevskij, Aleksandr (text)

Petrova, Natalja (illus.)

Pust' begut Neuključži

(Just let the dolts run)

Moskva: Samokat, 2008. – 78 p.

ISBN 978-5-902326-81-6

Poetry

The author of this collection is a very popular writer of many children's poems and songs in Russia, which have in part become Russian cultural heritage. Here he tells short stories in verse form, clearly following in the footsteps of classic authors of Russian children's poetry (such as Kornej Čukovskij) and using popular figures from Russian children's books, like the crocodile Gena, popularized by the author È. Uspenskij. Timofeevskij's poems are easy for children to understand despite their nonsensical moments, and they are exceedingly catchy and musical. Natal'ja Petrova amusingly illustrates the poems with naive, cartoon-like coloured drawings. (4+)

Slovakia (Slovak)

212

Šebesta, Juraj (text)

Ilkovičová, Katarína (illus.)

Ked' sa pes smeje

(When the dog laughs)

Bratislava: JUGA, 2008. – 221 p.

ISBN 978-80-89030-39-2

Coming of age – Parents – School – Conflict – Love

In this young adult novel, Tomáš, a high school student, searches for his place in life, in his family, and in society. He acts cool in order to hide his vulnerability and his disappointments. The author (born 1964), who obviously has not forgotten his own childhood and coming of age, keenly observes those growing up around him and portrays their behaviour authentically. The teenage slang used in the dialogue too is convincing. The hero and all other characters are depicted as lively, non-stereotypical persons with whom many a reader will identify. (12+)

213

Milčák, Ján (text)

Milčáková, Renáta (illus.)

Rozprávkový vláčik

(The fairytale train)

Levoča: Modrý Peter, 2008. – 84 p.

ISBN 978-80-85515-87-9

Journey – Everyday life – Old age

Three anti-heroes, all seniors who did not know each other before, meet at a train station and travel to Surprise station together. On the way, they talk about totally mundane things and in this manner come to know each other better. Like the heroes in the story, readers must adapt without prejudice to the changing circumstances and allow themselves to be led to the promised surprise. The book demands attentive readers, but it may be that children in particular will decipher the text more intuitively than adults, who may try to rationalize the connections. The poetic black-and-white graphics are enhanced in a lovely way by occasional yellow elements. (5+)

Slovenia (Slovenian)

214

Pegan, Vanja (text)

Zudič, Fulvia (illus.)

Kozlovič Smotlak, Doriana [et.al.] (transl.)

Tonin

<proper name>

Piran: Mestna knjižnica Pira, 2009. – [44] p.

ISBN 978-961-90416-5-9

Friendship – Solidarity – Respect – Outsider

This story unfolds in the hinterland of Piran, in the inner country of Istria. It deals with the friendship between a shepherd boy and a solitary basket weaver who does not have it easy, due to his heavy frame and his stutter. The tale, enriched by fairytale elements, purveys general humanistic values such as friendship, solidarity, goodness, and the respect for others. Reflecting the nationalities in the Slovenian part of Istria, the picture book is bilingual in Slovenian and Italian; in the appendix, the text is translated into Croatian, English and French as well. The water colour illustrations are also impressive, with thick contours and large textured colour fields. (3+)

215

Vidmar, Janja (text)

Sobočan, Urh (illus.)

Pink. Za mojo generacijo

(Pink. For my generation)

Radovljica: Didakta, 2008. – 139 p.

ISBN 978-961-261-069-2

Yugoslavia/1970-1980 – Socialism –

Coming of age

This spirited young adult novel is set in Maribor, the second largest city of Slovenia, not far from the Austrian border. With the help of autobiographical reflections, Janja Vidmar (b. 1962) narrates young Jancas's transformation, towards the end of socialism and before the fall of Yugoslavia, from a little girl – a proud pioneer of President Tito – to a rocker, who loses her innocence the day before Tito's death. Through the personal experiences of the protagonist, which are linked with historical events, the author depicts humourously and with dialogue in authentic slang the story of a generation of adolescents, their striving for Western values and products (Levi's Jeans) and their everyday problems. (12+)

Ukraine (Ukrainian)

216

Komova, Olena (text)

Hapčyns'ka, Jevhenija (illus.)

Pirats'ki istorii

(Pirate stories)

Kyiv: Rozumna dytyna, 2008. – 36 p.

ISBN 978-966-2929-40-9

Pirate – Seafarer – Adventure – Charity

This picture book narrates the adventures of a wholly untypical band of pirates. The pirates do plunder, but in the end they give their victims more than they take. The lively stories of course have to do with treasure hunting, but they also take on the Flying Dutchman, a unique version of the discovery of America, the origin of pirate nicknames, the invention of the sail, how pirates sewed sails from their pants, etc. The witty illustrations depict the pirates as figures with toddler proportions – big heads, little saucer eyes and friendly faces. In addition, this book is lovingly embellished by vignettes and individual smaller pictures. (4+)

Other Languages

Belgium (Dutch)

217

Biessels, Carli (text)

Linden, Martijn van der (illus.)

Juwelen van stras

(Rhinestone jewellery)

Tielt: Lannoo, 2009. – 92 p.

ISBN 978-90-209-8189-6

World War II – People in hiding

The young Jewish girl Jeske tells about the period of half a year in which she was brought to »the big house« of Aunt Gé and Uncle Kas. She does not know where her parents and her two brothers are, but realizes that she is better off not asking about them. She feels comfortable: There is Leendert, a great storyteller, and there are Klara and Ingrid, together with whom she goes to school. She also meets extraordinary Uncle Jo-otje. When Jo-otje has to hide himself, Jeske still communicates with him via drawings and letters. Words and images become more and more important for her and serve as something to hold on to or as a way to escape. By writing from the girl's perspective and using a powerful metaphorical language, the author manages to verbalize the pain following the loss of family and identity, but also succeeds in expressing hope for a better future. (9+)

218

De Doncker, Wally (text)

Derave, Veerle (illus.)

Het begint ergens

(It starts somewhere)

Leuven: Davidsfonds/Infodok, 2009. – 105 p.

ISBN 978-90-5908-298-4

Philosophy – Storm – Climate change

After a heavy storm ravages his own garden and knocks down a tree that kills a goat, the author lets his dog Spot and his cat Mouse tell a story about global warming and its consequences. The animals are more sensitive to the approaching danger than humans, even the gulls shriek that the North and South Poles are melting and insects buzz about climate change. The story reads smoothly, but is not superficial or too casual. The demise of the goat and the enormous damage caused by the storm give the animals reason to reflect on climate change. In the back of the book, various philosophical questions related to the story can be found. The black-and-white illustrations in collage style fit the poetic text remarkably well. (8+)

219

De Kockere, Geert (text)

Verhaert, Loes (illus.)

Van uil tot mol. Fabels

(From owl to mole. Fables)

Wielsbeke: De Eenhoorn, 2009. – [32] p.

(Medaillon)

ISBN 978-90-5838-557-4

Fable

This book contains seven fables, each with a very clear moral that invites readers to critically reflect on their own moral characters. When an owl eats a mouse, the moral is, »Never ask an owl for the way!« When a hippopotamus believes a fish that says he is pink, the moral is, »Never believe what you are told by a fish.« In other fables, a proud octopus is confused, a foolish chameleon discovers its tongue, and a silly mole loses a game of hide-and-seek. Every fable, introduced by a double-page illustration, describes a meeting and sheds light on human characteristics in a funny way. The fables are very well constructed and are perfectly suited for reading aloud. The very colourful illustrations speak to one's imagination. (5+)

220

De Moor, Paul (text)

Raveel, Roger (illus.)

De schilder, de duif en de dingen

(The painter, the dove and the things)

Tielt: Lannoo, 2009. – 77 p.

ISBN 978-90-209-8195-7

Art – Painter

A boy, extraordinarily talented in observing things and colours, is determined to be a painter. He receives considerable praise for his drawings and paintings. »,Roger Raveel is one of us' [...]. ,He is an artist.' That is when I realized what an artist was. An artist can make dry eyes wet and wet eyes dry.« In twenty short stories, each combined with an illustration in black and white, the life of the boy and the influence of his environment on him are portrayed in striking and imaginative ways. The observations of the main character are told very vividly. The illustrations that accompany each chapter do not simply reflect the stories in a literal manner, but rather express their moods and sentiments. The author and illustrator create a unique combination of text and image. (10+)

The Netherlands (Dutch)

221

Boerendans, Henriette (text/illus.)

Aap beer cheeta

(Ape, bear, cheetah)

[Amsterdam]: Nieuw Amsterdam, 2009. – [58] p.

ISBN 978-90-468-0539-8

Animals – ABC-book

This is an alphabet book portraying twenty-six animals that young children are familiar with, like a monkey, squirrel, giraffe, butterfly, and zebra. The short texts tell something about the animals, mostly regarding their appearance, eating habits, and natural habitat. On the adjacent pages, there are wood carvings of the animals. This way of illustrating is not frequently seen in books aimed at this age group, but the illustrations are pleasant and striking. Aside from giving children a way to learn the alphabet, this fine artistic book provides them with basic information about animals and familiarizes them with art. (4+)

222

De Sterck, Marita

De hondeneeters

(The dog eaters)

Amsterdam: Querido, 2009. – 197 p.

ISBN 978-90-451-0771-4

Flanders – World War I – Epilepsy – Dog – Running away

At the end of 1917, while the war is still raging, seventeen-years-old Victor, who suffers from epilepsy, is accompanied by a sheepdog who knows when he is struck by an epileptic attack. When the dog disappears, grief-ridden Victor decides to head for the town of Boom to find the dog. He only takes along some money, a pocket knife, and a pile of letters from his older brother Nest, who is a soldier on the front. The story, which only covers six days, is told from Victor's perspective. »De hondeneeters« is a rare, original, historically well-documented novel and a convincing coming-of-age story at the same time. It describes the lives of ordinary people who are constrained by the war, end up in unfamiliar situations and whose daily occupation consists of nothing more than the struggle to survive. (14+) ★

223

Exel, Natasja (text/illus.)

Lubberding, Wendy (transl.)

Nadia en het fantastische haar = Nadia and her fantastic hair

(Nadia and her fantastic hair)

[Wezep]: Exel, 2009. – [42] p.

ISBN 978-94-90203-01-6

Mexico – Bird

Nadia, living in Mexico, has a lot of adventures, because she is not an ordinary girl: She can talk to birds, for example, and her hair is special, too. After their nest fell from a tree, mother and father sparrow are allowed to brood their eggs in Nadia's hair. This is the first volume of a series of bilingual (Dutch and English) illustrated stories about Nadia. The story is well-structured and the main character really comes to life. The text is perfectly suited to be read aloud and to make children familiar with the English language. The text has an attractive typography and fits very well with the playful, colourful and often humorous illustrations. Both the Dutch and English texts are also available online as a download on the website www.nadiabooks.com. (6+)

224

Haeringen, Annemarie van (text/illus.)

Waarom waarom

(Why why)

Amsterdam: Leopold, 2009. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-90-258-5319-8

Question – Suriname

Little Tapir drives his mother crazy by coming up with never-ending questions and forever asking »why« about almost everything. His mother sends him to his Uncle Sloth and Aunt Anteater, who have no time for his curiosity. When he asks what kind of food alligators eat, he is told to catch one and find out. When the alligator grabs hold of little Tapir's nose, it is stretched, making him look like a kind of elephant. The author, who has received many awards, made this picture book together with a group of children in Moenga, Suriname. The element of repetition is well crafted, creating a nice way of telling the story that keeps the reader's attention. The story can easily be read aloud in an interactive way. The illustrations, in Van Haeringen's characteristic style, closely match the text. (4+)

225

Menten, Tosca (text)
Hees, Elly (illus.)

Dummie de mummie en de gouden scarabee

(Dummie the mummy and the golden scarab)

Houten: Van Goor, 2009. – 251 p.

ISBN 978-90-475-0880-9

Single parent family – Mummy – Friendship – Differentness

In Egypt, 4,000 years ago, the son of a pharaoh has just passed away. He is mummified and is given the golden scarab of Mukatagara with him, which will protect him on his journey to the underworld. After his scarab has been hit by thunder, the mummy wakes up in the present in Goos's bed. Together with his father Klaas, the young boy tries to take care of »Dummie« and to protect him from the outside world. Since nobody can know that Dummie is a mummy, people are told he is a grand-nephew. This leads to both exciting and funny situations. This cheerfully told story has a lot of humour and can be read from beginning to the end without pause. The black-and-white pen drawings emphasize the humorous character of the story. (8+)

226

Rempt, Fiona (text)
Smit, Noëlle (illus.)

Ik moet zó nodig!

(I have to piddle urgently!)

Houten: Van Goor, 2009. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-90-475-0983-7

Pet – Prank

Bram has to pee very urgently, but since the moment his dad has come to pick him up from school, he cannot find an unoccupied toilet. After hopeless searching and close to desperation, he sees a dog that has the same problem. Together, they pee against a tree, just when the local orchestra is passing by. With a lot of vim and humour, this everyday experience is represented in brightly coloured, original illustrations. Aside from the urgent need of Bram, whose posture and facial expressions are vividly portrayed, there is a lot that can be discovered in the illustrations. The text consists of only a few lines per illustration, where the sentence »I have to piddle urgently!« is repeated every time. This is a very attractive, humorous picture book. (3+)

227

Riphagen, Loes (text/illus.)

Huisbeestenboek

(A lot of pets in the house)

Baarn: De Fontein, 2009. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-90-261-2716-8

Pet – Prank

This wordless picture book shows the same living room with a window, a door to the toilet and the first steps of an open staircase on every page. A lot of things happen in this setting. On the flyleaf, the animals living in the house are introduced. When father and daughter leave the house, the animals – the real ones, the toy ones and the ones shown in pictures – come to life and turn the house upside down. Nonsensical situations make this an original, quirky picture book, in which the reader starts looking for differences by comparing the single pages again and again. The joyfully coloured illustrations offer a lot of possibilities for little children to look, discover, tell, and point out. (4+)

228

Sauers, Mariëlle van (text)
Lemmens, Tineke (illus.)

Zeemist

(Patchy fog from the sea)

Rotterdam: Lemniscaat, 2009. – [56] p.

ISBN 978-90-477-0189-7

Farewell – Illness – Loneliness

In a long inner monologue, the main character tells about what is on her mind. She experiences her disease as a growing shell inside her head, with which she seems to be melting together. The sea is her consolation, »my friend«, a presence that cannot be described in words. She has to help her friends and family with their grief, instead of vice versa. The girl's emotions and profound thoughts are described in short sentences, sometimes in a style similar to a telegram. Subtle drawings of shells, the sea, and her impressions, made using coloured ink blots, amplify the tone of the story. This book is a jewel due to the harmony of its poetic and philosophical text with its illustrations and general layout. The story, dealing with existential problems, is addressed to both children and adults. (9+)

Other Languages

229

Törnqvist, Marit (text/illus.)

Wat niemand had verwacht

(What nobody expected)

Amsterdam: Querido, 2009. – [60] p.

ISBN 978-90-451-0732-5

Loneliness

All people are in a hurry, and nobody pays attention. A girl that is walking out front falls into a deep trench. At first, everyone acts concerned and throws food, clothes, and letters into the trench. Soon, there is only one man left who cares. Finally, a playing boy discovers the girl when his new ball falls into the trench. Since the girl is too tired to throw the ball up again, the boy starts looking for a way to get his toy back. The mixed media illustrations by celebrated author/illustrator Marit Törnqvist create a poetic atmosphere that perfectly suits the wonderful story. The crowd changes from being drawn in black and white to being coloured as the story unfolds. (6+)

The Netherlands (Frisian)

230

Geest, Berber van der (text)

Wijnstra, Babs (illus.)

Mem, wat ite wy hjoed?

(Mum, what will we have for dinner?)

[Gorredijk]: Bormmeer, 2009. – [40] p.

(Aksjeboek foar bern; 23)

ISBN 978-90-5615-223-9

Animals – Figure of speech – Food

Rolf and his little brother are hungry and want to eat, but their mother still has to prepare dinner. While she is cooking, she sings short songs full of fantasy words. Various sayings pass by, like: healthy as a fish, thirsty like a horse, hungry like a wolf, and, finally, full as a mouse. That is of course due to all the delicious food: pancakes! Every time the mother compares Rolf to a certain animal, he changes into that animal, which can be recognized as being Rolf by the red pair of trousers he is wearing. Mother's songs, captured in smooth Frisian language and full of repetitive elements and word play, swing across the pages. The mixed media illustrations are colourful and depict the characters by means of round, friendly shapes. This is a nice and stylish interactive picture book. (2+)

Hungary (Hungarian)

231

Boldizsár, Ildikó (text)

Szegedi, Katalin (illus.)

Királylány születik

(A princess is born)

Budapest: Naphegy K., 2009. – [36] p.

ISBN 978-963-98690-7-3

Birth – Wish

The endless potential present at the birth of every human being can be actualized with the help of good advice. This basic optimistic idea runs through this picture book, where the focus is chiefly on the life of girls. Here, every girl is born as a princess and bestowed, like in a fairytale, beauty, goodness, patience, truthfulness, as well as unforeseen help in life through the advice of fairies from all over the world. The fantasy world of the fairies is complemented by the real environment – sun and moon, wind and weather – and all take care that the heroine of the story, a new-born girl, achieves fairytale-like perfection. The author and the illustrator support and inspire one another in this picture book. Fairytale wishes and magical names find themselves echoed in beautiful pictures by means of an artistically employed collage technique. (3+) ★

232

Kiss, Attila

Ambultan utazása

(Ambultan's journey)

Budapest: Móra, 2009. – 297 p.

ISBN 978-963-11-8679-6

Scythians – Steppe – First love – Adventure

Ambultan, a young Scythian, falls for his first great love, a girl named Hunaj, only to be rejected by the girl's father. In order to prove his love, Ambultan goes on a quest to find a healing flower which can save his love from death. His journey through the steppe to the blue mountains is a romp through time that draws on the mythology, sagas, and legends of the horse-riding peoples of the steppe who lived in the Eurasian realm in the first millennia BC and who are also the ancestors of the Hungarian people. Ambultan persists through many adventures and adopts as his life's maxim that he must watch out for his fellow creatures, in order to be able to rely on them in times of conflict. This gripping novel has an open end, which likely means that the hero will face many more adventures in volumes to come. (10+)

233

Schein, Gábor (text)

Rofusz, Kinga (illus.)

Irijám és Jonibe

(Irijám and Jonibe) <proper names>

Budapest: Csodaceruza K., 2009. – [56] p.

ISBN 978-963-88673-0-8

Fish – Bird – Love – Folktale

The red fish queen Irijám and the grey bird king Jonibe are bound by a deep love, living through its heights and its valleys, pains and joys, the air and water, earth and fire that surround them and participate in it, as well as the sun and moon. After seven painful years of pining for each other while being separated by seven seemingly unconquerable seas, the wind, fire, and water help the lovers to reunite and to enjoy the completeness of their love in a nest in a tamarind tree. Powerful warm colours, evocative and yet spare illustrations underline the agreeable rhythm of the fairytale. With delicate feelings and a poetic linguistic construction, it speaks to child and adult readers alike. (6+)

234

Villányi, Rózsa (text/illus.)

Barátom, Cvek Edli

(My friend, Cvek Edli)

Budapest: Ad Librum, 2009. – 52 p.

ISBN 978-963-9934-23-8

Fox – Rabbit – Friendship

The idiomatic enmity between fox and rabbit transforms itself into profound friendship in this book. After the little fox becomes an orphan because of a hunter, he leaves his den and forest in a panic. But he finds no peace in his new, unfamiliar surroundings, returns home and realizes that the den is occupied by a rabbit. After long debate, the two decide to stay together until the spring. In the days and weeks that follow, Dozo, the fox, and Cvek Edli, the rabbit, decide to become friends. They help each other, pay attention to the moods and feelings of the other and thus overcome all adversity and enemies. The wittily told story is aptly complemented by black-and-white children's drawings. (5+)

Greece (Greek)

235

Anagnōstu, Katerina (text)

Chadulu, Katerina (illus.)

O skantzochoiros pu ēthele na tu chaidepsun

(The hedgehog who wanted to be petted)

Athēna: Minōas, 2008. – 31 p.

(Mikroi anagnōstes: 6+)

ISBN 978-960-699-881-2

Hedgehog – Friendship – Fear – Integration

The quills of the little hedgehog are still weak, and he will feel very insecure in the dangerous forest until the day when he can walk around with sharp quills. Then he will be without enemies, but also without friends. However, there is a way to make friends despite being prickly and so not be lonely anymore. The hedgehog needs only think of something nice and his thorny armour is immediately transformed into cuddly fur – soft like his soul. The delicate, detailed illustrations demonstrate how individuality instead of individualism, as well as closeness and acceptance can be reached through sensitive behaviour. Warm and neutral tones, menacing drop shadows, and friendly sunshine make mood and atmosphere tangible. (6+)

236

Darlaseē, Angelikē

Tote pu krypsame enan angelo

(When we hid an angel)

Athēna: Patakēs, 2009. – 226 p.

(Synchronē logotechnia gia paidia kai gia neus:

Syllogē peristeria; 139)

ISBN 978-960-16-3338-1

Angel – Helplessness – Exploitation – Altruism – Perseverance

Three children find an exhausted, injured, helpless angel close to a village school. They decide to use all means to save him, so that he can return to heaven. With the angel under their care, they relentlessly pursue their goal and never give up hope – not even in the face of the forbiddingly grim, labyrinthine adult world nor the outbreak of a horrible war. The broken angel shows the three children, plagued by loss, the way. This novel, composed in the style of magical realism, unfolds before a backdrop of dreamy and realistic elements. It dwells on the conflict between benevolence and selflessness on the one hand and greed, betrayal, and violence on the other. (12+)

Other Languages

237

Dēmētriadu, Kikē (text)
Andrikopulos, Nikolas (illus.)

Ē Arētē tēs rodias

(Ariti of the pomegranate tree)

Athēna: Libanēs, 2009. – 26 p.

(Paidikē bibliothēkē)

ISBN 978-960-14-1914-5

Love – King – Change of values – War – Zest for life – Literary fairytale

A king is entranced by the sight of a little girl peacefully sleeping under a blooming pomegranate tree in her gardens. For nine months, it is only in his dreams that he can show his caring for her and can experience the child's joy, for every time he visits her she is sleeping. But the dream experiences sometimes reveal a toy in her hand, sometimes crumbs on her dessert plate, sometimes a path of camomile petals by the pomegranate tree for her tiny footsteps. Soon he no longer wants to think about starting his planned war – for which child can sleep with war raging outside? The message of peace, hope, and human closeness, which this fascinating fairytale enchantingly conveys, is expressed with ambiance, originality, and vivid colour by illustrator Nikolas Andrikopulos. (6+) ★

238

Dikaiu, Elenē (text)
Fusekēs, Dēmētrēs (illus.)

Ta phantasmatakia tēs gyalinēs aulēs

(The ghosts of the glass courtyard)

Athēna: Patakēs, 2009. – 195 p.

(Syllogē Chelidonia; 168)

ISBN 978-960-16-3313-8

Ghost – Outsider – Courage – Helpfulness – Friendship

Where to go when one's parental home is torn down? Not an easy question, when one wanders about the city as a young ghost in search of a new haunt. Two talented ghosts, brothers, finally find a home in some ancient wine amphorae, which are located in an archaeological excavation site situated in a schoolyard and covered by thick protective glass. The two ghosts could transform themselves into lightning fast coloured shadows and hit upon the cleverest of ideas, if they only felt that someone accepted them, even perhaps loved them. The ghosts must remain invisible, though, until one day they have no other option but to introduce themselves to the children. This imaginative story is about a friendship that goes beyond the limits of two totally different worlds. (9+)

239

Kolyda, Eugenia (text)
Lada, Ephē (illus.)

Ē giagia stēn paramythochōra

(Grandma in fairytale land)

Athēna: Monternoi Kairoi, 2009. – 149 p.

(Ellēnikē paidikē logotechnia: Taxidi stis lexeis, 9+)

ISBN 978-960-691-332-7

Alzheimer – Grandmother – Granddaughter – Imagination – Storytelling

Grandma has »zhei«! Lukia's beloved grandma, who used to tell everyone wonderful fairytales, is still the same, but yet all of a sudden so unfamiliar! Little Lukia does not give up contact with her, though. Grandma's tales are even nicer now, even if she does not start them with »Once upon a time...« anymore. In order to hear about strange creatures, familiar names and unfamiliar lands, which slip out of the treasure trove of grandma's new world, Lukia and her brother sit with her and hope that she finds her memory again. The book portrays the way that a family comes to terms with Alzheimer's disease (»zhei«). The changes connected with the disease and the family's affection for the grandmother are presented in a very humane fashion, emphasized by the delicate, expressive pictures of Ephē Lada. (9+)

240

Kontoleōn, Manos (text)
Papatsaruchas, Basilēs (illus.)

Elitsa ē paparuna?

(Little olive or poppy flower?)

Athēna: Ankyra, 2009. – 27 p.

(Istories gia tis axies tēs zoēs: Agapē kai filozōia)

ISBN 978-960-422-798-3

Dog – Child – Friendship – Death – Overcoming grief

Under an olive tree, among the beaming red poppy flowers in a field, a boy and a puppy meet. »Little Olive or poppy flower« becomes a new family member and loyal playmate of the boy, even helping him with his homework so that his teacher is pleased with it. One bitterly cold evening, however, the animal does not come home. Injured, it seeks to sleep for ever more under the olive tree. The boy writes about the pain, but also about the joy of the overall experience, and his grandpa wants to share his writing with everyone. Many children let »Little olive or poppy flower« into their hearts, where it will always remain. The insight of the author into the world of the emotions of children, who know how to deal in a unique way with

loss and grief, is lovingly enhanced by the detailed and evocative illustrations of Basilēs Papatsaruchas. (6+)

241

Kritsōtakē, Eirēnē (text)

Petrakēs, Tītos (illus.)

Ο Karankiozēs, ē Kokkinoskuphitsu

kai o Katēramenos Lykos

(Karagiosis, Red Riding Hood and that darn wolf)

Athēna: Libanēs, 2009. – [90] p.

(Paidikē Bibliothēkē)

ISBN 978-960-14-1944-2

Shadow theatre – Red Riding Hood – Prejudice

Here traditional, highly popular Greek shadow theatre, which has been preserved in its original form for almost two hundred years, meets classical European fairytale. The pasha of a neighbouring seraglio is bothered by the party raging in the barracks of Karagiosis, a hunch-backed, pugnacious survival artist. In order to calm the rowdy bunch, Karagiosis tells the story of »Red Riding Hood«. The theatrical performance teases out the best facets of the fairytale characters, as well as of the shadow puppeteers, freeing them of conflicts caused by their prejudices and allowing them to find their identities. In a highly entertaining and original way, the book transmits pedagogical content pertaining to socialization. The artfully worked figures were crafted and photographed by Petrakēs himself, a master of the shadow theatre. (7+)

242

Petrobits-Andrutsopulu, Lotē (text)

Gusēs, Spyros (illus.)

To paidi apo tē thalassa

(The child from the sea)

Athēna: Patakēs, 2009. – 66 p

(Sta bathia ... 4000 leuges; 6)

ISBN 978-960-16-3070-0

Refugee – Philanthropy – Friendship – Immigration – Integration

Phoibos gets lost in a big department store and is brought to a police station. While waiting for his father to pick him up, he meets Hasan, a boy who fled to Greece by boat, thereby losing his family for good. Phoibos's father does his best to enable the young boy to receive asylum as soon as possible and be put in a home for refugee children. A deep friendship develops between Phoibos and Hasan. The book carefully treats the difficult topic of immigration, much discussed in Greece, from the perspective of a native family who try by all means to bring

about the successful integration of the refugee. The author is nominated for the 2010 Hans Christian Andersen Award 2010 for her complete oeuvre. (7+)

243

Sakka-Nikolakopulu, Nannina (text)

Parisē, Diatsenta (illus.)

Ē Giola me to mpaloni

(Jola with the balloon)

Athēna: Libanēs, 2009. – 67 p.

(Paidikē bibliothēkē)

ISBN 978-960-14-1923-7

Imagination – Reality – Siblings – Self-discovery

In this imaginative story, a girl who has just received a little sister meets Jola, her age, in the garden, where she descends from the nut tree with her golden balloon. By means of the balloon, the two girls fly to lost ships, which still reveal their heading, listen to the songs of sea shells, and follow the paths of the clouds and the birds. On the shared journey, the girl learns to »separate the blossoms from the thorns«, to look into and beyond herself. She also learns to love her little sister, herself, and life. The gaily coloured, light-flooded watercolour illustrations seduce the reader into the world of the fantastical. The illustrator is nominated for the 2010 Hans Christian Andersen Award for her complete oeuvre. (9+)

Turkey (Turkish)

244

Tosuner, Necati

Keleş Osman

(Osman the scamp)

İstanbul: Günışığı Kitaplığı, 2008. – 127 p.

(Köprü kitaplar; 1)

ISBN 978-975-6227-97-8

Country life – Boredom – City

Ten-year-old Osman lives in a small village in the country. There he dreams of adventures and an exciting life and believes he could find these in the far-away, enticing big city. With his friend Hasaan he goes to the metropolis of Istanbul. There he soon learns that there can be a great gap between dream and reality, and that the big city is totally different from what he had hoped and imagined. The story portrays the boy's experiences in beautiful, literary language. The everyday life of children and young adults confronted by the social realities of Turkish society is persuasively described. (10+)

Other Languages

Lebanon (Arabic)

245

Mahīdalī, Nabīha (text)

‘Ādila, Fādī (illus.)

Ġarrat Lāl. Hikāya min aš-šara

(Lal’s water pail)

Bairūt: Dār al-Hadīq, 2009. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-9953-496-28-3

Poverty – Water bearer – Water – Fertility

This picture book tells of Lal, a young man who earns his small income from carrying fresh water to a house on a hill daily. Because one of the jugs on his shoulder leaks, every day he loses a part of his precious load. Lal is very annoyed by this, but cannot replace the defective jug with a new one. The reward for his drudgery comes after a few months: By the side of the dusty, barren path that he daily walks on, the most beautiful flowers suddenly bloom. Fadi Adila’s illustrations capture the extreme contrasts of nature – the warm brown of the ground, the almost aggressive bright orange of the sun and the cool blue-green of the water – so well that the reader can almost feel them. (7+)

Palestine (Arabic)

246

Sihwail, Dīmā (text)

Abū-‘l-Hāḡḡ, Dīmā (illus.)

Īmān wa-‘t-tā’ira al-waraqīya

(Iman and the kite)

Ramallah: Tamer, 2008. – [26] p.

ISBN 978-9950-326-32-3

Kite – Imagination – Peace – War – Violence

Iman, a young Palestinian girl, visits a kite festival in Gaza. There one of the kites asks her if she would like to accompany it on an excursion into the clouds. The imaginary voyage takes them to a world full of joy and love, far away from the threat of military planes and from the weapons of the occupying soldiers that define the girl’s everyday life. In this simple, straight-forward story, Dima Sihwail describes the wish to experience a childhood without violence and fear. The illustrations in warm hues underline the fairytale-like character of the hopeful story. (7+)

Iran (Persian)

247

‘Amū-zāda Ḥalīfī, Farīdūn

‘Aẓīmī, Nidā (illus.)

Kalāghā ānfluwānzā-i murūṭ nimīḡīrand

Tīhrān: Našr-i Ufuq, [2008] (= 1387 [h.š.]). – [20] p.

(Kalāghā-i Būlwār-i Sā’at; 1)

ISBN 978-964-369-460-9

Raven – Bird flu – Cooperation – Solidarity – Rescue

Each of the five volumes in this series concerns the world of ravens. Indirectly they humorously mirror the everyday life of adolescents in contemporary Iranian society. The first volume describes two rival raven groups, who nest on »Crop Boulevard«. The Ghashang live on telephone poles, the Mashang in tree crests. The expansion of the dangerous bird flu forces the antagonists to cooperate in order to avoid becoming victims of the disease. They manage to escape the flu virus in a creative, quite crazy way. With their comic-like elements and highly stylized forms, the lively black, white, grey and red illustrations really get at the character of the story. (10+)

248

Hal-atbarī, Farīda (text)

Šaft-ī, Faršīd (illus.)

Kafšhā-i āhani

(The iron shoes)

Tīhrān: Šabāwīz, [2009] (= 1388 [h.š.]). – 30 p.

ISBN 978-964-505-304-6

King – Power – Search for a bride – Trial – Folk tale

This literary fairytale, composed using enchanting language, tells of a king who is afraid of marrying off his daughter. Because he is wary of a future son-in-law trying to take his crown, he puts a farm boy who also asked for the princess’s hand, through his paces. After seven days and seven difficult and dangerous tests – he must, among other tasks, win a wrestling match, demonstrate his hunting ability, prove his alertness and conquer monsters – he is finally allowed to take the princess as his bride. Coloured illustrations, which recall in part old book illustration, in part free style painting, as well as original black-and-white vignettes accompany the text. (6+)

249

Şālahī, Ātūsā (text)

Haddādi, Hudā (illus.)

Dilam barā-i tū tang ast

(I long for you)

Tihṛān: Našr-i Paidāyiš, [2007] (= 1386 h.š.). – 46 p.

ISBN 978-964-349-451-3

Girl – Emotion – Everyday life – Poetry

This volume contains a small collection of twelve stories, which focus with sensitivity on the everyday lives, feelings and thoughts of adolescents in Iran. Topics such as the first delicate, confusing pangs of love – so the title poem – or the wonderful feeling of becoming a sister for the first time are addressed. The author succeeds in gently capturing the mundane in a poetic, contemporary language. The illustrations, variously brown-hued, were made by digitally processing and distorting photographs in an unusual way on the computer. (13+)

250

Šams, Muḥammad Riḏā (text)

Muḥtārī, Mahmūd (illus.)

Tanbal pahlivān

(The lazy hero)

Tihṛān: Kānūn-i Parwariš-i Fikrī-i Kūdakān

Nauḡawānān, [2008] (= 1387 [h.š.]). – 52 p.

ISBN 978-964-391-400-4

Laziness – Coincidence – Probation – Mother – Son

The author has transcribed the traditional folktale of »lazy Hassan« into an entertaining play for children. In the twelve episodic, humorously illustrated scenes, he uses the slang of today's adolescents in Iran, and thereby makes the material fresh and current. The play tells the story of Hassan, a lazy, well-fed and spoiled boy. The day comes when even his hen-like mother is fed up. She throws him out of the nest. Now the good-for-nothing boy is helped by chance several times: The governor takes him into his castle. There Hassan fights – not out of courage, but out of pure fear – and is victorious against enemy soldiers. Highly honoured, the ne'er-do-well returns to his mother. (8+)

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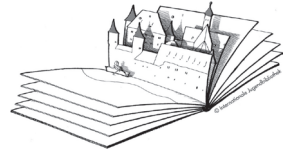
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